

## **Consumer and Attendant Care Worker Tip**

**Effective Employee Management Series** – Consumer Management Tips, Helpful Hints and Ideas on how to effectively manage your employees.

### **Dealing with Personality Conflicts/Changes in behavior**

One thing is certain – no two people are alike! That is a good thing – just imagine a world full of people who were all the same and how boring would that be. Human personalities are as varied as looks are, and we come across many different personality types when hiring new people and employing people.

When interviewing potential attendant care works, make sure you pay attention to their personality traits as well as their experience and skillset. Ask questions that will give you a bit of insight as to who they are, what motivates them and how they will act or react to different situations. Chose employees who will best meet your needs.

Sometimes a person’s personality traits are not easily discernible and develop over time to something you did not anticipate. All of a sudden that mild mannered employee is ruling the household, taking control and giving orders. Or an employee who seemed confident in their abilities are now shy and withdrawn, making mistakes or not performing their duties as you need them to.

What does one do when personalities have gone astray and someone becomes manipulative, controlling or conniving? If you can recognize this right at the start, you will better be able to have a conversation with your employee to talk about the issue and come to a resolution. If you let issues go on, and on, (using the ostrich theory that if you bury your head in the sand, the problem doesn’t exist!) it will become more and more difficult to have a conversation because the employee will be more embedded and may have no idea there is a problem and then they could be totally caught off guard when you bring it up. Your ability to recognize any issues that are going on and speak to those issues in a timely fashion will be beneficial in keeping a positive, happy and healthy employee and work environment.

However, sometimes changes in habits/ personalities are subtle and take place over an extended period of time without anyone noticing. Then one day you realize that a worker has taken over and is running your program, maybe giving orders to other workers, or you are giving in to the workers requests for things you should not be, like borrowing money, or allowing the worker to bring their child to work or to make their own schedule. Maybe a worker has been slowly slacking on their responsibilities and nothing is getting done with cleaning because they don’t like cleaning, but they make good conversation, so you have let it slide and now your house has three inches of dust on everything and people are having difficulties breathing when they visit.

Now that you have noticed an issue, what do you do? You will need to have a conversation with your worker. Set time aside, let them know you will be having a conversation, limit distractions and be honest. Do not be condescending or harsh, and if you can take some ownership of the problem (this is my fault because I should not have allowed xyz to occur...) acceptance and resolution will be easier for everyone. Plainly state the issue, do not make the employee guess what you are taking about and then offer a solution to the problem.

We have include examples below to show effective communications when dealing with worker issues. As always, if you need assistance with employee issues you are unsure of how to handle, please contact your Coordinator for support.

We understand that many employees have good intentions and mean no harm by their actions. They are just trying to be helpful and do not believe their actions are inappropriate. We also know that there are those who know full well that they are crossing the line and getting away with it. Here are some examples of crossing the lines and how to respond when that happens.

### **Examples:**

- **Manipulative Personality:** Employee has, over time, manipulated you to let them do what they want, when they want.

I know you dislike dusting, that it's boring for you and we have great conversations in place of your dusting, but I really need you to start dusting twice a week again so that my house is clean. I apologize for slipping in my role as supervisor and you are a great worker, so I am hoping we can get back to a routine where we can accomplish the goals we have in place. Do you think we can do that?

- **Controlling Personality:** Employee has taken control of everything and now gives orders to other employees.

I need to ask you to stop giving other employees tasks to do... even though I know you are good at that, and you like doing that, that needs to be my responsibility. I am the supervisor, and the employees should be getting their instructions from me, not you. That doesn't mean I don't value your abilities as a great employee, because I do, but I hired these employees and I need to supervise them as well – that is my role, and I let that slip, so I apologize for any confusion. I hope we can continue with our great working relationship. Do you think that is possible?

- **Conniving Personality:** Employee has connived to get things from you.

I apologize in advance for allowing you to borrow money from me. That is against the rules. I never should have let it happen and now it has become a regular occurrence and I just can't keep doing that. It is starting to jeopardize our working relationship and it could become a legal issue and I would not want that to happen. You are a great employee and I hope you understand – this was my fault in allowing this to happen, and I would like to get back to a great working relationship. Do you think that is possible?

Again, accepting some part of the problem when some part of the problem is yours will go a long way towards resolution and regaining the supervisory role you need to have so that you can run your program the way you want to, not the way your employees want to. Better still, be a diligent boss, with regular supervisions so employees know how their work related performance stands with you – no surprises!