



# Supervisor NEWSLETTER

Employee Assistance Program  
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## Supervisors are People Too! Staying Sane in Leadership Roles

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**Whether you are a CEO, board president, charge nurse, manager, director or supervisor in any leadership capacity, by definition you carry a heavy load of unique responsibilities and stressors. You may organize and manage a small or large staff, oversee policies and procedures, monitor work flow, technical systems, budgets, organizational changes, and problems that arise.**

You face challenges related to varied personalities and conflicts among co-workers, or employees facing personal issues impacting the workplace. You are tasked with keeping your staff productive, professional, and hopefully satisfied in their jobs. It's a lot!

Supervisors are a special breed of people and not everyone wants to be at the helm of the ship. Likely hired or promoted into the role because you are committed, dependable and loyal, you carry the burden of making the hard decisions and unpopular choices while answering to those higher up. Being in charge means you cannot control whether or not you are making everyone happy. You probably don't socialize as much with the teams you manage as you try to maintain neutral and appropriate professional boundaries. As the saying goes, "It's lonely at the top."

Surviving the long haul without burning out and giving up can be challenging. How can you stay resilient and aware of your pressure points as a leader, before you are too depleted and weary to recover? Here are some things to consider to endure the demands of your job and hopefully continue to like what you do.

### Beware of perfectionism

Don't get caught in the trap of thinking that in order for something to be done right, you have to do it yourself. Someone else may not have your exact high standards or particular way of working, but they may have ideas for new, shorter or more efficient ways to do a task. It can often be a revelation. Aiming for perfection can be a recipe for becoming worn out and resentful.

What price do you pay for taking on too much or for seeing only one way to do something? Are there work around solutions to something you've done the same way forever that can make your life easier? Decide when something is done well enough so you can move on. Attention to detail is important, but knowing when to let go and become more flexible is also valuable. You will feel accomplished either way. Don't let perfectionism become a crippling road block to your success.

### Work hours and down time

Nobody is going to look out for your personal time off, whether it's your breaks, lunch times or vacation days. Protect your down time and make it part of your strong work ethic. If you are known for going above and beyond the call of duty, chances are you work too many hours. Commitment to the job is one thing, but it is never healthy to be "married" to the job. Try not to forfeit your break time as a way of life. Make time to recharge and reset. Of course there are times when work is too busy. But if you do not feel entitled or able to take time

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off, you may need to re-examine the work flow, your expectations, and staffing plans with your superiors.

### Set limits

Do you have a reputation for being the “go to” person who never refuses a request or is always game to take on more? If so, you may need to learn to set some limits on your good will. This skill can be life changing. If your job position has expanded or changed enough to become overwhelming, your stress is also escalating no doubt. Communicate about the stressors, work flow, and growing demands to your boss.

If you quietly try to rescue and fix the problems yourself, then the organization doesn't see the vision for change ahead. Maybe your role has become big enough to justify hiring extra staff? Let others know when you are overbooked, have too much on your plate, or are barely surviving. Be honest about not being able to take on more or your need to decline and set limits on new tasks.

### Just say “NO” gracefully

Sometimes you just don't know how to say no or decline a work request gracefully, or you feel uncomfortable doing so. Assertiveness skills in management are important and can take practice. Here are some language examples of respectful ways to politely but firmly decline requests and set limits:

- “I'd like to help, but right now my plate is completely full”
- “Thanks for the invitation, but I'm going to have to say no, I'm exhausted”
- “No, I'm sorry I really can't do that, because I will be late to my meeting”
- “Could you please ask someone else, I'm on a tight deadline today”
- “I can't do it this week, can it wait until next week possibly?”
- “I just can't take on anything else until this project is done next month”
- “I really can't because I'm leaving tomorrow for my family vacation”
- “I'm taking my lunch break now but let's about it when I get back”
- “I can't stay late tonight I'm afraid, I have a family commitment”

### Train and teach others

Creating a strong team to distribute the work load, allows staff to share in the accomplishments, successes and meaningfulness of work. Supervisors can delegate and train up workers in areas where they are ready and possibly expressing new interest. Employees bring different talents to the table depending on their backgrounds. This can create a sense of pride and instill confidence in your staff. It might also lighten your load and provide you some back up as a leader. Your job security won't go away but your team skill set will be higher. Groom the varied skills, strengths and special interests of your team.

### Don't fly solo

You are only human. Asking for help is often one of the hardest hurdles to get over. Supervisors may fear that it will be interpreted as a sign of weakness or failure; others worry about confidentiality, judgement and stigma. Knowing when to reach out for support is one of the greatest strengths anyone can model in life and in work. Be proactive and consult with someone about the professional or personal assistance you might want or need. Whether it is related to work stress, medical or health problems, personal relationships, parenting, financial pressures, chemical dependency, legal or mental health issues, please seek support. Take care of yourself physically and mentally.

### Confidential support from your EAP

First Choice Health EAP can help you with resources and guide you in the direction to best support your needs. We also understand the concerns many managers and leadership staff may have, as they want to protect their confidentiality at work. The EAP maintains full confidentiality for all levels of employees using their EAP benefit. Names and identifying information is not reported or disclosed to an employer. Contact us today at 800-777-4114 or on our website at [www.firstchoicееap.com](http://www.firstchoicееap.com) to start the conversation.

You may also contact any Clinical Account Executive you have as a point of contact for a personal and confidential consultation for support.