



EMPLOYEE ADVISORY SERVICE NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the NJ Civil Service Commission's Employee Advisory Newsletter! EAS is committed to improving the quality of life for all New Jersey Civil Service employees by encouraging a good work-life balance. **The EAS Employee Newsletter** contains useful articles and information for managing various well-being and work-life issues in order to create a healthier, happier, and more productive workplace.

Customer Service Excellence

This important session will review core customer service values, barriers to providing great service, and the attitude necessary to successfully meet the needs of customers. The presentation will also discuss customer service excellence skills including active listening, calmly responding instead of emotionally reacting, and how to de-escalate angry customers.

When:

Tuesday, April 23, 2019
10:00 AM - 11:00 AM ET

Register:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/260932098785108226>

Phone: 866-327-9133

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Tips for Providing Excellent Internal and External Customer Service

Do you remember the last time you had a good experience as a customer in a store? Maybe. Do you remember the last time you went into a store and you received bad customer service? Absolutely. With so many choices out there, shoppers won't come back to a store that doesn't value them. They will also tell their friends about that negative experience. With a few simple tips, employees can give the kind of service that will make customers come back again and again.

- **Make a commitment to excellent customer service.** Don't just meet a customer's expectations—surpass them.
- **Establish rapport.** Greeting a customer, giving them a smile, and asking what you can do for them today will help them feel welcome. A little kindness can go a long way in making customers feel valued.
- **Listen.** Really listen to what your customer needs. Never be too busy to talk to a customer.
- **Treat everyone with courtesy and respect.** You know how you like to be treated as a customer—treat everyone that way.
- **Know your product/service.** Make sure you familiarize yourself with the services you are providing. If you don't know the answer to a question, explain that you will find out the answer for them—then do!
- **Be professional.** You are there to advise and assist the customer. Never lose your cool—you're much more in control when you remain calm and collected. If the customer becomes upset, it is especially important to remain respectful and do your best to project a relaxed and unruffled image.
- **Treat all complaints seriously.** Customers who complain are giving you an opportunity to satisfy them. Don't let this opportunity slip away.
- **Never argue with a customer.** It will not help you to point out to a customer when they are wrong. Look for opportunities to fix whatever they are complaining about.

If a Customer Is Angry

- **Listen respectfully.** Make sure the customer knows that you are listening carefully to their complaint.
- **Repeat specifics back to them.** Make sure you have all the details.
- **Explore solutions.** Explain the alternatives. Don't promise more than you can deliver.
- **Take action.** Deliver what you have promised.
- **Check-in.** Make sure they are satisfied with the result.

Source: Workplace Options. (Reviewed 2018). Tips for providing great customer service. Raleigh, NC: Author.

If you are interested in attending a Customer Service Training Course, offered by The Center For Improving Performance (CLIP), please visit: https://www.nj.gov/csc/employees/training/classroom/customer_service.html

April is Autism Awareness Month. Autism, or autism spectrum disorder (ASD), refers to a broad range of conditions characterized by challenges with social skills, repetitive behaviors, speech and nonverbal communication. According to the Centers for Disease Control, autism affects an estimated 1 in 59 children in the United States today.

Autism

What's the Problem?

Autism spectrum disorders are a group of life-long developmental disabilities caused by an abnormality of the brain. ASDs are characterized by problems with social interaction and communication skills and by repetitive behaviors. People with ASD are not identified by physical features, and the range of impairment can be very mild to very severe. A few people with an ASD have unusual "savant" skills, though IQ levels range from profoundly deficient to gifted. The main indicator of ASDs is unusual social development.

Who's at Risk?

It is not known how many children or adults in the United States currently have an ASD. Studies done in the U.S., Europe and Asia since 1985 indicate that there may be as many as 2 to 6 per 1000 children who have one of the ASDs. No one knows exactly what causes ASDs, but scientists think that both genetic and environmental factors play a role. We do know that parental actions do not cause them. Families of children with an ASD face many significant challenges and long-term support services are usually required. Special education services for a child with an ASD can be extremely expensive.

Can It Be Prevented?

Although it is known that ASDs are the result of some abnormality in brain development, little is known about their cause. A great deal of attention has been paid to possible causes and cures for ASD, with little scientific evidence to support these theories. Research does indicate that early diagnosis and intensive intervention can help children gain skills for improved functioning and development. Although there is no available medication that can cure ASDs, some medications may relieve various behavioral and physiological symptoms associated with the disorders.

The Bottom Line

People with ASDs make up a diverse group of individuals who have unique challenges and strengths. Early identification and intervention are very important to help children with ASDs reach their full potential as adults. Parents and professionals need to be aware of the early signs of ASDs and work together.

Case Examples

From the time their first child was about 9 months old, Sally and Jake have noticed something is wrong with him. He does not make eye contact with them, is not soothed by their efforts to comfort him and has not started to babble and play as he should. They visit health care providers to try to find answers. After repeatedly being told they are overly concerned first-time parents and that their son will grow out of it, they finally find a doctor who takes them seriously. At 20 months, their son is diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. They are immediately referred to an early intervention program in their state and begin intensive work at home and at the school. They are told that their persistence in getting their child early intervention has probably contributed greatly to their son's social, emotional and intellectual development.

At 12, Megan is a pretty girl and a gifted musician. Her piano is her world she began playing Bach at age 3. Megan is average in her schoolwork and has very few friends, but her parents and teachers think this is just because she is an introspective young artist. When she enters middle school, however, her parents notice changes: she begins failing classes, seems depressed and becomes overly engrossed with her music. They visit Megan's school counselor who suggests a series of developmental tests. The tests indicate that Megan has Asperger's Syndrome, an autism spectrum disorder. With the aid of therapy including social skills groups and other behavioral interventions, Megan begins to make progress in school and in social relationships, and it is likely she will transition into a productive, independent adult. When Megan's diagnosis is made, Megan's father becomes aware that he probably has a mild form of autism spectrum disorder himself.

Soon after moving to a new town, Sonya and Dan's 8-year old son, Chad, is referred for evaluations by his new doctor. Chad is diagnosed with autism. Sonya and Dan are furious with their hometown doctor, who treated Chad since he was born, for having missed all the early signs. They feel like they could have been doing so much more for him all these years, instead of just trying to convince themselves he would grow out of his odd behaviors and "catch up" with his peers. They call their hometown doctor to share their frustrations with him, and the doctor is shocked and feels guilty for not recognizing Chad's condition. The doctor educates himself about the early signs of autism and contacts the American Academy of Pediatrics to find out about screening tools available for detecting developmental disabilities. Sonya and Dan agree to keep Chad's first doctor informed about Chad's progress to help further educate him about autism. A year later, they meet a family from their hometown at an autism conference and learn that Chad's first doctor referred the family for further evaluations when they first expressed concerns.

Content source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<https://www.cdc.gov/healthcommunication/toolstemplates/entertained/tips/Autism.html>

Indicators of autism usually appear by age 2 or 3. Some associated development delays can appear even earlier, and often, it can be diagnosed as early as 18 months.

Research shows that early intervention leads to positive outcomes later in life for people with autism.

For more information and resources on Autism, visit <https://www.autismspeaks.org/about-us>

How to Deal With Grief

Grief is the normal response of sorrow, emotion, and confusion that comes from losing someone or something important to you. It is a natural part of life. Grief is a typical reaction to death, divorce, job loss, a move away from family and friends, or loss of good health due to illness.

How does grief feel?

Just after a death or loss, you may feel empty and numb, as if you are in shock. You may notice physical changes such as trembling, nausea, trouble breathing, muscle weakness, dry mouth, or trouble sleeping and eating.

You may become angry—at a situation, a particular person, or just angry in general. Almost everyone in grief also experiences guilt. Guilt is often expressed as I could have, I should have, and I wish I would have statements.

People in grief may have strange dreams or nightmares, be absent-minded, withdraw socially, or lack the desire to return to work. While these feelings and behaviors are normal during grief, they will pass.

How long does grief last?

Grief lasts as long as it takes you to accept and learn to live with your loss. For some people, grief lasts a few months. For others, grieving may take years.

The length of time spent grieving is different for each person. There are many reasons for the differences, including personality, health, coping style, culture, family background, and life experiences. The time spent grieving also depends on your relationship with the person lost and how prepared you were for the loss.

How will I know when I'm done grieving?

Every person who experiences a death or other loss must complete a four-step grieving process:

1. Accept the loss.
2. Work through and feel the physical and emotional pain of grief.
3. Adjust to living in a world without the person or item lost.
4. Move on with life.

The grieving process is over only when a person completes the four steps.

How does grief differ from depression?

Depression is more than a feeling of grief after losing someone or something you love. Clinical depression is a whole body disorder. It can take over the way you think and feel. Symptoms of depression include:

A sad, anxious, or “empty” mood that won’t go away
Loss of interest in what you used to enjoy
Low energy, fatigue, feeling “slowed down”
Changes in sleep patterns
Loss of appetite, weight loss, or weight gain
Feeling hopeless or gloomy

Trouble concentrating, remembering, or making decisions
Feeling guilty, worthless, or helpless
Thoughts of death or suicide or a suicide attempt
Recurring aches and pains that don’t respond to treatment

If you recently experienced a death or other loss, these feelings may be part of a normal grief reaction. But if these feelings persist with no lifting mood, ask for help. Call EAS at 609-292-8543 to schedule an appointment with a counselor.

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, National Mental Health Information Center. (n.d.). *How to deal with grief*. (Pub. No. KEN-01-0104). Retrieved July 24, 2017, from <https://www.samhsa.gov>