

# Employee FRONTLINE

A newsletter from the WA State Employee Assistance Program

## Making Diversity Work for You

When solving problems and searching for new ideas among your workgroup or team, take advantage of the problem-solving capabilities of every team member. Team members bring unique perspectives based on diverse life experience, background, gender, race, culture, or worldview. This strategy is based on a principle called “standpoint theory.” Standpoint theory means that each person possesses a unique perspective, but the more divergent from the norm the background, life experience, or cultural orientation of the employee is, the more diverse that perspective is likely to be. Standpoint theory can better leverage the talents of your team. It also recognizes in practical terms the inherent capabilities of your group’s diverse makeup. Another key value of standpoint theory is its ability to prevent “groupthink,” a situation in which everyone from the dominant or similar background within the group tends to believe the same thing. This unwittingly walls off the group from the opportunity to see the best solution. Who we are and where we’ve lived and what culture, race, or life orientation we experience all contribute to our individual perspectives. This greatly determines how we view problems and set out to solve them. This is what makes diversity in the workplace so valuable as a resource that can advance the mission of your organization.



## Making More of Your To-Do List

There are secrets to successful to-do list management. When tallying your crucial items, do the following to maximize the benefits of this time-tested tool. (1) Add the time needed to each task for its execution; (2) add deadlines to each item; (3) add subtasks for each task that requires multiple steps; (4) draw a line between related items (e.g., get haircut, pick up milk at grocery store); (5) mark whom to delegate the task to, if appropriate; (6) add more items to your list than you can accomplish. Why the last addition to the list? You will discover some items drop off as unnecessary.

This strategy alone can increase productivity 20 to 50 percent. Does the above make you feel like you will be planning all day? You won’t be. Rule #1: It is always worth the time to plan, because time saved makes up for the few minutes involved in the to-do list planning exercise.



## Feedback To Your Boss

You can give constructive feedback to your boss with less unease. The key is making it fully formed, thoughtful, and delivered with timeliness and tact. Do manage your emotions so you are calm and these crucial elements don’t go missing. Your approach: View feedback as a way to enhance your workplace. Doing so will naturally cause you to exhibit a positive attitude. Avoid a negative tone or approach which could be seen as unwelcome complaining or attacking your boss. When you deliver feedback positively, you are more apt to have a receptive audience. Requesting permission to give feedback is also helpful. For example, “I have some thoughtful input on this project we are involved in. Is it okay to share it with you?”

# Frontline Employee

## Tardiness: Ripple Effects That Add Up

Tardiness is a silent hit to productivity. Being 10 minutes late to work may not seem like a big deal, but like many small expenses that create a large hit to your pocketbook, tardiness can add up. Like ripple effects from a rock thrown into a pond, tardiness reverberates throughout an organization. If you're frustrated about coming in late and puzzled over your inability to correct it, get counseling help to curb it. Start with the only book ever written solely on the topic: *Never Be Late Again: Seven Cures for the Punctually Challenged* by Diana DeLonzor.



## Employees and Workplace Ethics

Workplace ethics is a vibrant topic, but in the digital age, where ethical violations can quickly be discovered and big ones exposed internationally on the Web in mere minutes, employers are more concerned than ever. The key prevention concept is grasping how relatively small indiscretions, easily rationalized, can help pave the way to larger events with significant consequences. Every employee is on the front line in the fight to maintain an ethical workplace. Whether it's grabbing a few company ballpoint pens on the way home or serious infractions that might lead to dismissal, there is a prevention signal worth paying attention to that accompanies nearly every incident: a thought of awareness that says, "Don't do it."

## Alcoholism Awareness Month: Self Diagnosis and Referral

It is a myth that alcoholics do not seek help on their own. Like other illnesses, a sense of urgency usually drives the decision. It happens every day by accurate information about the illness arriving in combination with some adverse incident related to alcohol. If you are thinking, "that sounds like me," your next step is an assessment by an experienced professional. Try your employee assistance program or an addiction medicine physician, whom you can find in your area by visiting the membership link at [www.asam.org](http://www.asam.org) (the nonprofit association that addiction medicine physicians join).



## Are You Living Near a Meth Lab?

Are you living near a methamphetamine lab but don't know it? Each year, thousands of children are exposed to the hazardous chemicals carelessly mishandled by brewers of this addictive, psychoactive substance. Illegal and highly explosive methamphetamine labs have grown in number, with more than 11,000 seized in 2012. In the past decade, their numbers doubled within just a two-year period. The behavior of individuals or the ramshackle looks of a suspicious location might give cause for concern, but these signs are clearer: unusual odors like ammonia or ether (think cat urine or rotten eggs); blackened or covered windows; strange ventilation systems and contraptions; elaborate security ("keep out" signs, guard dogs, video cameras, etc.) to warn off trespassers; dead vegetation from dumping chemicals; and large garbage bags of assorted paraphernalia related to lab equipment, clothing, plastic bottles, etc. If you suspect illegal drug lab activity is occurring, contact your local law enforcement agency or the **Anonymous Meth Hotline 1-888-609-6384**.

## Teach Young Children to Dial 911

A 3-year-old child could save a life by dialing 911. Would your little one know what to do if you fell and could not get up? It takes only a short time to teach a child how, why, and



when to phone for help. The most common life-threatening event in the home is falling, with 6,000 victim deaths per year. It may sound ominous to be teaching a small child to dial 911 in an emergency, but if you do an online search, you will discover many stories of lives saved this way.