

Professionalism does matter

You are the face of the organization in which you work. You have both internal and external customers who will either perceive you as a professional... or not. Depending on the environment in which you work, there

In a survey by TheLadders.com, 4 out of 5 employees said that swearing in the workplace was unacceptable. Other offensive behaviors cited...

98.7%: Eating someone else's food from the refrigerator

95.6%: Bad hygiene

88.2%: Bad habits

82%: Wastefulness

63.5%: Sneaking peaks at the mobile device during meetings

may be certain norms or guidelines as to how you are to present yourself. Sometimes, the rules are very clear, and other times there are gray areas. Regardless of the organization's handbook policy, it is important that you are perceived in a way that will help, and not hurt, your career.

With that said, how might your co-workers perceive you? Have you ever considered that it may be very different than you perceive yourself? In the upcoming weeks, think about the full picture of "you." Are you polite and respectful when speaking to others? Does your workplace wardrobe consist of appropriate attire? Do you practice appropriate hygiene? Do you respect authority?

There is a fairly clear tie to inappropriate dress and discipline, harassment and lack of career advancement. Different companies have different norms in regard to business dress. If you are not "dressed the part," you may give the impression you are incapable of the job and

instead have to work to counteract the negative impression made by your attire.

Consider Judy, the Payroll Clerk sporting sweatpants who'd love to be CFO someday, or Jim, the Stockroom Associate always covered in stains who wants to apply for Distribution Manager. If you want to get the part, look the part. Trying your best to dress appropriately, speak and act your part will help guide you in the right direction.

If you're not sure if your organization has a professionalism or dress policy, ask your Human Resources Department or check your employee handbook. And remember, lack of a written policy is not an excuse to neglect acts of "maintenance," including personal hygiene. Your routine doesn't have to be high-maintenance in order to act and appear capable and dressed for the job.

And, if you struggle with your outward or "inward" appearance, don't hesitate to call Ease@Work for a confidential consultation with a clinician... we can help! Go to www.easeatwork.com/easey with your organization's user name and password, or call 216/241-3273 or 800/521-3273



EASE@Work newsletters are for informational purposes only and should not replace the advice of a qualified health professional. If you would like to speak with a professional counselor, call EASE@Work: 216/241-3273 or 800/521-3273... We can help!

Helping children manage anger appropriately

How your children learn to handle frustrations and anger when they are young sets the tone for how they will manage these situations when they get older.

About 30% of kids between the ages of 9- and 13-years-old say they get angry at someone their own age every day. About 25% of those children end up in a physical confrontation with the other child.

We know there are all sorts of things that make children and teens angry. Often, they react immediately—lashing out verbally, or physically, at the source of their frustration.

And while they may be able to get away with this behavior to some extent while they are young, any working parent knows that outward expressions of anger in the workplace are not typically tolerated by employers.

Parents need to provide guidance to their children about how to better deal with situations that anger them, so that they will be prepared with acceptable behaviors after elementary or secondary school.

Anger is a normal human emotion, but when it gets out of control, it can lead to violent outcomes at school and at home. According to the U.S. Department of Education, many teens report they have a difficult time keeping their anger under control.

Warning signs that your child's anger may be unhealthy:

- Frequent loss of temper at the slightest provocation
- Brooding—isolation from family and friends
- Damage to one's body or property
- A need for revenge on others
- Decreased social activities

Anger also impacts the a child physically—the heart rate goes up, blood pressure rises and adrenaline levels soar.

Helping your child develop positive conflict-resolution techniques

Parents should use the time following an angry outburst to discuss and practice strategies for dealing with anger.

- Practice a substitute behavior with your child. Role play a scene demonstrating an alternate method for dealing with frustration in the moment, then have your child practice it back to you. Counting, jumping rope, a run around the backyard or visualizing a picture in your mind, such as a peaceful scene, are all good methods to try.
- Reward your child. Sit down with your child and figure out some rewards that he or she can earn by practicing the substitute behaviors on a daily basis or when he/she gets angry.
- Give examples. Think of time when you have effectively dealt with situations that have stressed you or made you feel angry. Share your coping strategy with your child. Not only may your child be able to apply your method for diffusing anger, but it will also show them that it is possible to successfully deal with anger.
- Avoid arguments and discipline consistently. Everyone loses when a confrontation occurs. Avoid arguing with your child and instead deal with your child in a quiet, matter-of-fact manner.

Additional tips for teens

- Listen to music
- Dance with headphones on
- Write it down—in any form—poetry or a journal
- Draw it—scribble, doodle, sketch
- Play a sport or work out (physical activity helps!)
- Meditate, do yoga, or practice deep breathing
- Talk about feelings with someone you trust
- Distract yourself so you can get past what's bugging you

"Parents who teach anger-management strategies and encourage non-aggressive conflict resolution techniques early on may find the teenage years less challenging. If your child has long-lasting feelings of anger or is unable to adopt coping strategies, seek medical assistance and treatment." —U.S. Department of Education

"Treat your child-care worker as you want your boss to treat you with respect, professionalism, adherence to policies and prompt payments."

Candace H. Stapen, U.S. writer

Overcoming discomforts about care-facility visits

For many, visiting a loved one at a nursing home or care facility can be uncomfortable. But when those feelings emerge, consider if you feel that way, how does your loved one feel living there? Your family member or friend may feel

Considering the option of Nursing Home, Adult Day Care or Assisted Living care for your loved one? Be sure to spend time with the caregivers or at the facility you are considering. Assess the employees' professionalism with co-workers and visitors. Watch how the caregivers interact with the families, each other and their superiors. And be sure to assess the senior's level of comfort with the people who will be caring for him or her.

lost and unsure of how to get along in a new environment... chances are they may not be very comfortable either.

"I'm repulsed by what I see in the nursing home."

With all of these feelings, the need for human interaction is even more important. Ties with family and old friends become even more important in helping your loved one adjust to this new phase of their life.

Don't let uncomfortable feelings keep you from letting your loved one know you're still there for them. Think about the following reasons most people avoid visiting loved ones in a care facility and think about how you might overcome your fears.

"Going to the nursing home reminds me that I might be there someday."

This is a common reaction, even for those who have provided care for their loved one at home. The problem lies in seeing a high concentration of older people with physical or mental disabilities gathered all in one place. The sight of so many disabled, dependent older individuals can be disturbing.

"When I visit, all I hear is complaining."

Try to look beyond physical appearances. Think of each person as someone's beloved family member... someone who was once young, vibrant, working, loving—moving about their day much like you. Remember, they have experienced much in life and have a unique personality not dependent upon appearances.

When you have reached a conclusion about the complaint, explain the outcome or solution to your loved one. You may have to do this more than once. Limit the time spent going over the same complaints or chronic complaining. Let your loved one vent, then turn to another specific activity, such as looking at photographs, writing a card or letter, playing a game or visiting another resident.

Manners and etiquette during a nursing home visit

When a resident of a nursing home, there are many things your loved one does not have control over. Meals are at set times, rooms are required to be arranged in a certain way and things that we often take for granted are removed from the nursing home resident's control. Visits are one aspect of personal choice a nursing home resident can still exercise some control over. Consider the following manners when visiting:

- Telephone ahead and ask your loved one if you may visit and when they would like you to come. There may be times during the day that they feel more energetic and would prefer you visit then.
- Nursing homes have minimal restrictions about who may visit. Young children rarely react negatively to a sick or older residents, so do not let this worry you—teens may actually need more preparation. Pets can often be brought in to visit also, with prior approval from the facility.
- Prepare for your visit. Give some thought as to what you will do and talk about while you are there. Your plans, of course, will depend upon the physical and mental capabilities of your loved one.
- When you arrive for your visit, knock at your loved one's door and announce that you are there—give them the opportunity to welcome you in.
- Greetings usually involve some sort of physical contact—a handshake, a hug, a kiss. Nursing home residents are rarely given this type of physical touch. Consider what the quality of your life would be like if no one touched you except to bathe or toilet you? Make some sort of physical contact with your loved one, unless it is absolutely inappropriate for some reason.
- Remember to act as you would if you were visiting in the resident's home, after all this is their home now. Act with the respect and manners you would if this were their private residence. Also, heighten your awareness of appropriate language and behavior, after all, while it is your loved one's home, it is also the home of others.

Ease@Work has Eldercare specialists who can help you navigate through the stresses and information overload associated with caring for an elderly loved one. Make Ease@Work your partner in eldercare by calling Ease@Work at 216/241-3273 or 800/521-3273, or go to www.easeatwork.com/EASEy with your organization's user name and password.

HOW TO COMPLAIN EFFECTIVELY & APPROPRIATELY

There is no reason you shouldn't complain if you feel services you've received were not acceptable or up to par with your expectations. But, there's a right way and a wrong way. Yelling, cursing, not listening to the person handling your complaint—these are wrong ways; Calmly explaining, writing a letter, requesting a specific resolution to the problem—these are right ways. **Suggestions to get what you want when complaining about a product or service:**

1. Detail specifically what happened and include dates, times, full names and addresses if possible. This can be done verbally or in writing. Writing is most effective if you are not able to resolve a complaint at the time the incident occurs or if you are not happy with the outcome.
2. Find the appropriate person to address your complaint to—a manager, CEO or other leader who has the power to provide the resolution you're requesting. Address your complaint to this person and copy anyone else you feel should be involved in resolving the complaint.
3. Tweak your letter and send it to the appropriate parties.
4. In your letter, be sure to provide a clear, concise summary of what you want from the company—whether it's a replacement item, a gift certificate, or the monetary value. Remember to only demand what is reasonable and do not seek reimbursement for things like "emotional distress."
5. Keep copies of everything.
6. Although it may be difficult, be professional at all times and do not use foul language—especially in writing.

PRACTICE CASE:

You receive poor service at a restaurant—the food arrives cold, you mention this to your server, but they don't do anything about your complaint. You leave feeling disappointed in your experience and think about not dining there again.

Write a letter! Specify the date and time you were at the restaurant, include information such as what you ordered, who your server was etc. Explain what you said in complaining about the food and your server's reaction. Of course, be sure to describe the experience calmly and very matter-of-fact.

State that you had considered simply not dining there again and sharing your experience with friends, but that you felt letting management know about your dissatisfaction was really more of a service to them because that would offer an opportunity to correct the situation. And who knows, there may be other customers who have had a similar experience that didn't bother to tell them, but just never came back.

Spell out what you would like. If you're willing to give the restaurant another chance, enclose a copy of your receipt and ask for a complimentary check in that amount the next time you dine there, or for a gift certificate in that amount.

Send a copy of the letter to the restaurant manager, a district manager or even corporate office. Most likely, you will get a quick response and what you've asked for!

More than just doing your job

You can demonstrate professionalism no matter what job you are doing, or what level you are at within an organization. Ask yourself how many of the questions below you can answer "True" to... a "False" answer or a "Sometimes" signifies a potential area to improve upon.

- I do the job to my best ability.
- I take pride in my work.
- I make a difference; People are better off because of the way I do my job.
- I start my workday neat and clean.
- I report for work on time and stay for my entire shift or workday.
- I honestly earn my pay.
- I treat customers, clients and co-workers with respect and dignity.
- I use good manners in my interactions with others.
- I keep my mind on the job I'm doing.
- I have respect for my work and myself.
- I take care of my tools and supplies.



E-mail etiquette tips

Most people recall the rules for writing a formal business letter, but in the age of quick correspondence via email, it's easy to forget that rules of etiquette apply to those business communications also. **Before you hit send the next time, be sure you've applied the basic rules below:**

- **Manners**—Say "Please" and "Thank you" and don't forget to address people using Mr., Mrs. or Dr., unless they've given you permission to use their first name.
- **Watch your tone**—While it is difficult to express tone in writing, you want your e-mail to sound friendly and respectful. You don't want to sound curt or demanding.
- **Be concise**—Get to the point of your e-mail as soon as possible, but don't leave out important details.

- **Be professional**—This means don't use abbreviations or emoticons—smiley faces! Don't use a suggestive e-mail address for business communications.
- **Use correct spelling and proper grammar**—Use a dictionary or spell check, but don't rely on spell check to catch improper word usage. It's OK to write in a conversational tone, but stick with the basic rules of grammar.
- **Ask before you send an attachment**—Some people will not open attachments for fear of allowing a virus into their computer system. Before sending an attachment to someone you have not communicated with before, ask if it's OK.
- **Wait to fill in the "To" e-mail address**—Never fill in the "To" address until you have completely re-read and proofed your e-mail. This ensures that your correspondence is exactly how you want it before sending.

FitTips @Work

practice deep breathing

deep breathing {noun.}

Inhaling and exhaling with long breaths, especially for relaxation *[from dictionary.com]*

Practice deep breathing at your desk or in an area where you are seated.

Sit comfortably, and begin by taking slow breaths in for four counts, feeling the chest and rib cage expand on the in breath, and out for four counts, feeling the chest collapse as you breathe out.

On the next in breath, just when you think your lungs are fully filled, take another “sip” of air. Also concentrate on the emptiness between breathing out and in...the period of stillness.

Learn more breathing exercises and relaxation techniques by contacting a FitIn@Work fitness coach or counselor through EASE!

Walk or bike to work?

Etiquette for friendlier walkways & bikeways

Too often, I've taken a lunch hour to enjoy a brisk walk, only to be halted by a group of people strung side-by-side, restricting my path. Has this happened to you? If so, you may have thought more about exercise etiquette.

There are several things to consider when you take advantage of a public walkway, bikeway or path. How can you make your route most comfortable for yourself and those around you?

1. Stay off your cell phone. A distracted exerciser is more likely to bump or crash into someone around them, or veer into traffic.
2. Walkers stay right. Runners pass left. Following this simple rule of etiquette, just like operating a car, will ensure everyone a smooth "drive."
3. Keep a steady pace when in groups. Those who drastically and sporadically slow down and/or speed up can trample up others.
4. Don't smoke. Keeping paths clean means considering the ground and the air. Smoke also clouds the air, making it difficult for other people to breathe.
5. When cycling in the city, be sure to follow traffic laws and yield to pedestrians. A careless cyclist is an accident waiting to happen.
6. Walk facing traffic and bike in the direction of traffic. These are basic ground rules for safety.
7. Dress appropriately. Shorts that creep up, shirts cut too low, or clothing that clings to the wrong areas can be a distraction to others. Practice modesty and appropriateness when choosing your workout gear.

Information contributed by Stephanie Patek, Ease@Work Account Representative and Certified Fitness Coach. For more information and tips, visit www.livestrong.com or www.walking.about.com

Wrap it up!

Packing a wrap for lunch or a portable on-the-go meal can be a healthy alternative to a sandwich...if you know what to put in it! Nutrition-packed wraps are easy to make and can incorporate ingredients selected specifically with a wrap in mind, or they can make use of leftovers.

Wraps don't require a recipe. Consider fresh, seasonal ingredients, such as tomato, basil and mozzarella with an olive oil vinaigrette. Or incorporate those leftovers such as grilled, chilled fish with salsa, dill and thinly sliced cucumber. Get creative!

Start with a whole wheat wrap—about 150 calories—and go from there, selecting ingredients carefully and avoiding unhealthy oils and sugars. Load them up with fresh or grilled vegetables in addition to a protein source for a satisfying meal.

Wrap suggestion: Turkey—about the size of a deck of cards ■ Handful of fresh spinach ■ ½ of an avocado—sliced or mashed (sprinkle with lemon juice for flavor and to retain color) ■ Thinly sliced cucumber and/or tomato ■ Salt, pepper, vinaigrette dressing (optional)

