



Q2
2026

EMPLOYEE ADVISORY SERVICE SUPERVISOR/MANAGER NEWSLETTER

The New Jersey Civil Service Commission's Employee Advisory Service (EAS) Supervisor/Manager Newsletter contains useful articles and information for leaders around various well-being and work-life topics. All articles are intended for supervisors, managers, and any other title that has responsibility for the unit. EAS is committed to improving the quality of life for all New Jersey Civil Service employees by encouraging a good work-life balance, and a healthier, happier, and more productive workplace.



UPCOMING WEBINARS

Supervisor/Manager Orientation

Date: 4/12/2026, 11AM - 12PM

Recognition That Works: Practical Strategies to Drive Team Performance

Date: 4/23/2026, 11AM - 12PM

Mental Health Symposium: The Power of Pause

Date: 5/28/2026, 12PM - 2PM

Supervisor/Manager Orientation

Date: 6/9/2026, 11AM - 12PM

How to Give Difficult Feedback to Your Employees

Date: 6/25/2026, 11AM - 12PM



REGISTER NOW

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Employee Advisory Service

Support - Empowerment - Growth



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Q2 Financial Wellness Webinar

Protecting Your Financial Identity

A financial wellness webinar designed to address current digital security concerns.

Topics include:

- Identity theft and
- AI understanding as strategies to protect yourself.

**Tuesday,
April 21, 2026**

- **Session A:**
 - 11am - 12noon
- **Session B:**
 - 1pm - 2pm

WEBINAR



2

SCAN TO REGISTER



EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT: A KEY TO WORKFORCE ENGAGEMENT



Is engagement low? Disempowered employees may be at the root. Employee empowerment boosts individual performance, reshapes company culture, and fuels innovation. Research shows that empowered employees are more satisfied, productive, and loyal—qualities that drive creativity and pave the way for breakthroughs. So, what is employee empowerment and how do you get more of it?

What is employee empowerment?

Employee empowerment provides team members the autonomy and tools to make decisions and take ownership of work. Unlike micromanaging, which can stifle creativity and growth, employee empowerment supports confidence and innovation.

Benefits of employee empowerment

Empowering employees benefits everyone. Imagine a customer service team empowered to resolve complaints and a sales team able to negotiate deals without approval, leading to faster issue resolution, quicker deal closures, and stronger customer relationships.

Benefits of employee empowerment include:

- Stronger motivation - Empowered workers are more motivated because they see their work directly impacting the organization.
- Higher job satisfaction - Employees are more satisfied when they're trusted to handle important tasks and contribute to company goals.
- Deeper engagement - Workers who feel like valuable contributors are more engaged and likely to go above and beyond.
- Greater trust - When employees are empowered with more responsibility they trust company leaders to have their best interests at heart.
- More innovation - With the freedom and psychological safety to explore new ideas, innovation flourishes.
- Increased efficiency - Without the need for constant approval, processes can move forward more quickly.
- Better problem-solving - Empowered workers tend to develop stronger problem-solving skills since they're given the autonomy to address challenges.
- Lower turnover - High autonomy often leads to greater job satisfaction, which can reduce turnover and the associated costs of rehiring and retraining.

The right (and wrong) times for employee empowerment

Some situations lend themselves better to staff empowerment than others. Here are some instances when empowering your employees can be effective as well as times when more guidance is ideal:

Employee empowerment is effective when:

- Creativity and innovation are a priority
- Employees desire more ownership
- Trust between leaders and teams is strong
- Employees are eager to grow and learn

Employee empowerment is less effective when:

- Tasks require clear guidance or high consistency
- Employees feel stressed with workloads, increasing pressure and overwhelm
- Employees are uncertain about their roles and lack clarity to make informed decisions on their own
- There's a lack of trust or when empowering employees could be misinterpreted as avoiding leadership responsibility
- Employees are in senior positions and may not need additional autonomy

How to empower employees

A thriving and engaged workforce starts with empowering employees to take ownership, make decisions, and grow in their roles. Ways to empower employees include:

- **#1 Provide clear goals and expectations**
 - Employees need clear guidelines to understand the boundaries of their autonomy—for example, outlining objectives but letting your team decide how to achieve them.
- **#2 Promote cross-functional collaboration**
 - Working with other teams exposes employees to different perspectives and allows them to contribute beyond their usual responsibilities.
- **#3 Offer flexibility and ownership over projects**
 - Give employees the flexibility to work in a way that suits their skills and preferences—for example, offering remote work or letting employees decide how to allocate resources.
- **#4 Involve employees in decision-making**
 - Let employees have a say in decisions that impact their roles or the company. This could be as simple as asking for feedback in meetings or as complex as involving them in strategic planning.
- **#5 Recognize employees**
 - When employees are recognized for their contributions, they're more likely to feel empowered to take on additional responsibility.
- **#6 Request employee feedback**
 - When employees know their opinions are valued, they feel more engaged. For example, you might hold quarterly feedback sessions where they can offer suggestions on how to improve workflows or company policies.
- **#7 Allow room for mistakes**
 - When employees are afraid of failure or punitive action, they're less likely to take initiative. Frame mistakes as learning opportunities. For instance, if a project doesn't go as planned, discuss what went wrong and how to improve next time.
- **#8 Provide professional development**
 - Empowering employees with opportunities to grow their skills helps them and the organization. For example, offer manager training or funds for conferences and online courses.

Build a culture of empowerment :Empowering your employees is an ongoing process of listening, adapting, and trusting in their potential to succeed. By building a culture of empowerment in the workplace, you're not just helping your employees thrive—you're investing in the success of your organization.

HOW TO GIVE FEEDBACK EFFECTIVELY



If you find giving feedback uncomfortable, you're not alone: 44 percent of managers agreed in a recent survey that delivering negative feedback is stressful, while 21 percent admitted to avoiding the act altogether.

By shying away from sharing feedback, you miss out on important learning opportunities—both for you and your colleagues. It's been shown that employees prefer to receive criticism over no feedback at all, because at least then they know how to improve.

In order to deliver feedback effectively, you also need to practice. Avoiding a potentially awkward situation now will only make future conversations more difficult, which is why it's important to coach colleagues in the moment.

If you're nervous or don't know where to start, here's how you can provide feedback more effectively.

How to Give Feedback Effectively

1. Exercise Empathy

Receiving feedback can be just as uncomfortable as giving it. Put yourself in your colleagues' shoes and try to understand where they're coming from and what they might be experiencing.

Your message will resonate more if you exercise empathy, because your employees will know the critiques are coming from a good place. Make it known that you're providing feedback because you want to see them succeed. That will put them at ease, and in a better position to internalize what you're saying and turn your advice into action.

2. Take Time to Prepare

Before offering feedback, strategize what it is that you actually want to say and how you want to say it. If your employee is underperforming, but works hard and has the right intentions, you might take on a warmer tone in the meeting. If you've cautioned your colleague before, but they've been unresponsive, then you should be more direct. From there, rehearse your advice and prepare for different scenarios. Consider how the feedback recipient might react and formulate a response. The more prepared you are, the less likely it is you'll rush through the feedback.

3. Speak in Specifics

It's important to be specific when delivering feedback. In the online course Leadership Principles, Harvard Business School Professors Joshua Margolis and Anthony Mayo outline a process for how you can deliver feedback that gets to the root cause of an issue.

When delivering feedback to employees, they advise:

- Be direct and speak to the issue you want to coach them on
- Identify a specific behavior, rather than speak in generalities
- State the impact of that problematic behavior and connect it to the consequences
- Share specifics around who was affected and the impact the recipient's actions had not just on the organization but on their own career

The more clear and specific you are, the less room there is for the feedback recipient to misinterpret your advice.

4. Save Time for Inquiry

Whether you use it to start or end the conversation, you should always incorporate inquiry. At the beginning of the conversation, it can be helpful to ask feedback recipients how things are going and their perspective on the situation. Through that process, they might identify behavior themselves, which makes it easier to kick off the conversation. If they don't, it might mean that they have a particular blindspot or are defensive about certain aspects of their performance.

At the end of the conversation, return to inquiry. Ask if they understand the feedback and how it makes them feel. You want to ensure they didn't misread your message or only internalize certain parts of the feedback. If it's clear they recognize what the problem is, you can start brainstorming solutions and leaving the meeting with a greater sense of resolution.

5. Focus on the Future

Once the feedback has been delivered, shift the focus of the conversation from what's happened to what's next. Rather than rehash the past, describe how the recipient can change their behavior moving forward and how the two of you, together, can use this experience as a way of overcoming future issues.

Creating Opportunities for Growth

Although the conversation might be uncomfortable, you shouldn't try to avoid it. Not only will the process make you a more effective leader, but it will help your employees grow in their own career. If you truly want to see them succeed, they'll recognize that and know your feedback is coming from the right place.

Source: <https://online.hbs.edu/blog/post/how-to-give-feedback-effectively>





Employee Advisory Service

UPCOMING WEBINARS SUPERVISORS/MANAGERS

REGISTER NOW



Supervisors / Managers

Recognition That Works: Practical Strategies to Drive Team Performance

Date / Time

- April 23, 2026
- 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM

About this webinar:

Most managers recognize their employees inconsistently—or not at all. This session cuts through the feel-good rhetoric to show you what actually works. You'll learn the recognition methods proven to increase productivity, how to implement them without adding hours to your week, and why recognition is one of the highest-ROI management tools at your disposal.

2026 MENTAL WELLNESS SYMPOSIUM

Date / Time

- May 28, 2026
- 12:00 – 2:00 PM

The Power of Pause: Harnessing Mindfulness for Workplace Success

How to Give Difficult Feedback to Your Employees

Date / Time

- April 23, 2026
- 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM

About this webinar:

Successful leaders have the ability to skillfully discuss difficult or stressful topics with their employees. This important presentation will provide several practical strategies for having these challenging conversations more effectively including building connections with employees, being more collaborative in our approach, and handling disagreement respectfully.

Employee Advisory Service (EAS)
Support - Empowerment - Growth

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2026

MENTAL WELLNESS SYMPOSIUM

THE POWER OF PAUSE: HARNESSING MINDFULNESS FOR WORKPLACE SUCCESS

DATE: THURSDAY, 5/28/2026

TIME: 12PM TO 2PM

During these demanding times, this important session provides practical strategies for harnessing the power of pause to improve your workplace success. This workshop will enhance your ability to respond thoughtfully to difficult circumstances, manage emotions more effectively, and strengthen both your workplace relationships and your personal and professional support system.

AGENDA

- ~ **Power of Pause**
Greg Brannan
- ~ **How to use Yoga in the Workplace**
Takeema McCaskill
- ~ **Interactive Presentation**
Lynette Sheard and NJ Mental Health Players
- ~ **Reflection and Guided Meditation**
Djenaba Figueroa

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2026 MENTAL WELLNESS SYMPOSIUM

PRESENTERS

THE POWER OF PAUSE: HARNESSING MINDFULNESS FOR WORKPLACE SUCCESS

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www.mhanj.org/nj-mental-health-players



Our Mission is to increase
awareness and education,
decrease stigma and
break the silence

ART AND MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCACY



Djenaba Figueroa

Speaker | Facilitator | Community Educator

Djenaba Figueroa is a speaker and facilitator who designs transformative learning experiences that strengthen voice, identity, well being and communication for youth, adults, and multigenerational audiences. Her work integrates public speaking, inclusive communication, mindfulness and reflective practice to support confidence, presence and personal growth. She is the former Director of Communications for University Equity and Inclusion at Rutgers University and the host of *Freestyle with Djenaba*, a storytelling platform and live podcast that explores life, purpose and authentic expression.

CORE TOPIC AREAS:

Voice, Identity and Storytelling

- Public speaking and self expression
- Confidence building
- Storytelling as a leadership practice
- Honoring lived experience

Resilience, Wellness, and Mindfulness

- Navigating change and uncertainty
- Sustainable resilience without burnout
- Mindfulness and stress reduction
- Grounding and reflection practices

Inclusive Communication and Connection

- Communicating across difference
- Respectful and inclusive language
- Listening as a leadership skill
- Building trust and belonging

Youth Confidence and Self Expression

- Voice development & public speaking
- Self confidence and self trust
- Emotional awareness
- Positive identity formation

Journaling and Reflective Practice

- Guided journaling for clarity
- Writing for resilience and processing
- Reflection during transitions
- Individual and group journaling experiences



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Q. I met with my team and could tell some tension existed between two employees. I ignored it because no one was complaining, but something felt off. I view issues like this as normal, and it's up to employees to work things out on their own. Did I handle this correctly?

A. You can't assume that silence means the issues will ultimately be resolved. Team morale often erodes not because of overt problems but because of unspoken conflicts, resentments, and lingering tension. Employees will cope with these sorts of stressors on their own, but not necessarily to the benefit of the work unit. It's more likely that passive-aggressive behaviors will appear, and not the small stuff like refusing to say "good morning." More likely it's reduced collaboration, poor cooperation with deadlines, or withdrawal from the team. This affects team productivity. A better approach is to note the clues that indicate a problem, meet with employees, and ask what's going on. Literally say, "Let's have an honest conversation about what's going on between you two." Creating this space will help resolve the problem, but ask that employees use EAS if issues continue after your attempt to get them resolved.

Q. I learned a hard lesson the other day about giving timely feedback when I gave negative (constructive) feedback to my employee about using a sarcastic tone with a customer a week after it happened. When I finally mentioned it, the employee got very irate.

A. More should be written about giving feedback to employees after too much time has passed. Whether it's waffling on the decision to give feedback, mulling over the right words, or suddenly feeling obligated to give feedback, delay is a huge problem. Without timely feedback, employees will usually assume everything is fine (or worse, feel as though they have done the right thing). It's likely your employee felt ambushed under such circumstances. Here's the key takeaway: Feedback does not have to be perfect when you give it, but give it anyway. This is the only time that details and emotions are fresh. As time passes, feedback becomes less useful or suspect. If you feel the need to give feedback that is delayed, role-play it with a colleague or consider meeting with EAS. You'll gain even more insights about communicating with employees.



Employee Advisory Service

Support - Empowerment - Growth

EAS OUTREACH PROGRAM

Employee Advisory Service (EAS) is a program designed to assist employees and their dependents with personal, family, or work-related issues that may adversely impact their work performance. EAS provides confidential assessment, counseling, and referral services to help restore the health and productivity of employees and the workplace as a whole.

Here are some key points about EAS:

- **Purpose and Scope:**

- EAS supports both employees and their household members.
- It addresses a wide range of issues, including personal, family, and work-related challenges.
- The goal is to provide timely and effective assistance while maintaining confidentiality.

- **Services Offered:**

- *Assessment:* Employees can self-refer or be referred by their Appointing Authority for an intake/assessment session with a counselor.
- *Counseling:* Professional counselors collaborate with regional providers to offer services throughout New Jersey.
- *Referral:* EAS helps connect individuals with appropriate resources based on their needs.

- **Benefits for Employers:**

- Employers can benefit from EAS services by promoting employee well-being, effectiveness, and efficiency.
- EAS offers webinars and events focused on various topics relevant to employees and supervisors/managers.

If you have any concerns or need support, consider taking advantage of the resources provided by EAS. Our Outreach Team will visit your agency to inform employees about the free benefits that we provide, and how they can request our services. Ask your Human Resources Department to schedule an information session for your team today.



NUMBER:

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