



# STATE OF NEW JERSEY CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

SPRING  
2025

## 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

#### **EAS Supervisor-Manager Orientation**

Date: 4/1/2025, 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

#### **From Reactive to Resilient:**

#### **Emotional Intelligence Strategies for Supervisors**

Date: 4/24/2025, 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

#### **EAS Mental Health Symposium**

Date: 5/24/2025, 12:00 PM - 2:00 PM

#### **EAS Supervisor-Manager Orientation**

Date: 6/10/2025, 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

#### **Navigating Workplace Tension: How to Have Productive Employee Conversations**

Date: 6/26/2025, 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

### WHAT'S INSIDE

- Page 2: Building Strong Work Relationships
- Page 3: Let's Normalize Conflict and Tension to Build Stronger Workplaces
- Page 5: How Team Development Helps Reduce Workplace Stress and Anxiety
- Page 7: Ask EAS!
- Page 8: Q1 Webinars - Register Today
- Page 9: **2025 EAS Mental Health Symposium**
- Page 10: EAS Outreach Program



**REGISTER NOW**

# BUILDING STRONG WORK RELATIONSHIPS

By Jill Hinrichs, MSM, ICF Coach, Sr. Consultant and Strategy Lead



In today's fast-paced and diverse workplaces, building strong relationships is essential. The success of any team hinges on trust, respect, and effective communication. However, fostering these elements requires intentional effort and a strategic approach.

**Here are three steps to cultivate a workplace culture where relationships thrive:**

## **Step 1: Establish Values-Based Working Agreements**

Encourage self-awareness within the team by discussing shared values and goals. Collaboratively establish working agreements that guide behavior and interactions. These agreements should reflect the organization's values while respecting diverse perspectives.

*Example:* A department hired a new leader who wanted to make an immediate impact. The leader's fast-paced approach caused tension in the team. EAS helped the team create collective working agreements like "go slow to go fast." The leader agreed to slow down to ensure everyone was on board, leading to a more cohesive team.

## **Step 2: Foster Pro-Social Behavior**

Integrate the working agreements into daily routines. Review them at every team meeting and hold each other accountable. Emphasize the importance of everyday interactions in building understanding, collaboration, and respect among team members.

*Example:* EAS provided a manager with teambuilding activities to use at the start of every meeting. One activity involved team members sharing one strength they see in their teammates, reinforcing pro-social behaviors and mutual appreciation.

## **Step 3: Proactively Address Tension**

Equip team members with the skills to navigate challenging discussions effectively. Focus on finding common ground and steer conversations towards work-related topics. By proactively addressing tension, teams can resolve conflicts constructively and move forward.

*Example:* EAS helped a team address a pattern of perceived unfairness. Team members candidly discussed the impact of breaking workstreams to help others. They agreed to maintain work boundaries, leveraging individual strengths and mitigating weaknesses. This open communication improved team dynamics during a tense period.

As a leader, your role is pivotal in fostering a workplace culture where diverse perspectives are respected and embraced. If you're seeking support in guiding your team, EAS is here to help.



# LET'S NORMALIZE CONFLICT AND TENSION TO BUILD STRONGER WORKPLACES

By Jill Hinrichs, Leadership and Team Development Coach, AllOne Health



Conflict is often seen as something to avoid, but what if we shifted our perspective? What if, instead of dodging tension, we embraced it as a powerful tool for growth, innovation, and stronger relationships?

I recently found myself in the middle of a conflict, and I'll admit—I didn't handle it well. I got caught up in the moment, reacting defensively, raising my voice, and walking away emotionally drained. Afterward, I couldn't stop replaying the interaction in my head. Who was that? Why did I react that way? I know better!

Then it hit me: I don't get enough practice handling conflict. Like many people, I've spent years avoiding it. But here's the reality—**conflict is normal, and it can actually be a good thing.**

## From Conflict Avoider to Proactive Problem-Solver

Since that uncomfortable moment, I've committed to addressing tension head-on. Instead of avoiding difficult conversations, I now recognize them as opportunities to strengthen trust, improve decision-making, and foster collaboration. And the results? Transformational.

- My team is more open and trusting.
- We make better decisions because we actively seek out different perspectives.
- Creativity and innovation are flourishing because people feel heard.

## How to Create a Conflict-Resilient Culture

If you want to normalize conflict—whether for yourself or within your organization—here are three tips for getting started:

### 1. Acknowledge That Conflict is Normal

Say it out loud: Conflict is a natural and necessary part of teamwork. When we recognize that tension is not a failure but an opportunity, we shift from avoidance to engagement.

## 2. Establish a Framework for Addressing Tension

Having a clear process helps teams navigate conflict constructively. Here's a simple framework:

- **Identify the tension – What is really causing the conflict? Take time to reflect before reacting.**
- **Understand different perspectives –** What are others experiencing? Journaling or perspective-taking exercises can help.
- **Define your goal –** Are you trying to complete a project, improve a relationship, or gain alignment? A clear goal leads to a productive conversation.
- **Address the tension –** Engage in open, honest dialogue with a focus on solutions.

## 3. Use Practical Conflict-Resolution Exercises

Here are three techniques to help teams navigate conflict effectively:

- **Root Cause Analysis –** Dig deeper into the issue by asking “Why?” five times to uncover the true source of tension.
- **Continue/Start/Stop Exercise –** Ask team members: What should I continue doing? What should I start doing? What should I stop doing?
- **Nonviolent Communication –** Use a structured approach: “I feel [emotion] when [specific action] happens. My request is [solution].”

## The Payoff: Less Stress, Better Results

Our natural instinct is to avoid conflict because it feels uncomfortable. But when we lean into it, we reduce stress, find solutions faster, and prevent escalation.





# HOW TEAM DEVELOPMENT HELPS REDUCE WORKPLACE STRESS AND ANXIETY



Team development is a service that helps organizations boost team performance by fostering “collective excellence.”

Collective excellence is an organizational strategy that emphasizes the importance of teamwork—and how the team can be more productive and effective when it focuses on collaboration, cooperation, communication, trust, and shared responsibility rather than focusing on the contributions of individual team members.

This strategy recognizes the importance of leveraging each other’s strengths, perspectives, and expertise. By focusing on shared goals and values, team development helps reduce the individual team member’s stress and anxiety. This, in turn, enables everyone to perform at their best, even when facing challenges.

## **Team development and some of its many benefits:**

- It enhances team cohesion and morale, leading to a more positive work environment where individual team members feel valued and supported.
- It improves communication and interpersonal relationships among team members, reducing conflicts and misunderstandings while promoting effective collaboration. This promotes smoother workflows and better outcomes.
- It enhances problem-solving and innovation as teams become more adept at leveraging each other’s strengths. A more cohesive team helps foster a sense of belonging and fulfillment, which helps strengthen each team member’s overall mental health and wellness.

### Here are some ways organizations can nurture team development:

- Ask individuals to reflect on their team engagement, rank it on a scale from 1 to 10, and discuss ways they can improve it.
- Encourage more “watercooler chats” by sharing recent organizational updates. These casual conversations promote open communication and active listening.
- Get started by promoting proactive planning and mutual support among team members when approaching upcoming tasks and projects.



For additional support, AllOne Health has expanded its services to include a Designing Teamwork Program, which runs for about two to three months. It begins with a kickoff session that explores the organization’s purpose, values, and structure. This is followed by assessments and discussions to recognize and address each team member’s gifts and frustrations. Micro-sessions then provide the necessary follow-up learning and development. The program also includes one-on-one coaching to provide personalized support.

This program is provided through AllOne Consulting, a dynamic team of professionals with extensive experience in creating collaborative and cohesive teams and a healthier and happier workplace culture where individuals, leaders, and the organization itself are more likely to achieve their full potential.





**Q. What is the “Great Detachment”? I saw this referenced in a news article recently and how only 18% of employees love their jobs and the rest are unmotivated, looking to quit, or simply feeling stuck and “going through the motions.” What can supervisors do, and how can the EAP help?**

A. The “Great Detachment” is a workplace trend where employees are emotionally disconnecting from their jobs (Gallup 2024). Only about 18% of employees are engaged, which means feeling committed to the job and employer; being enthusiastic and often doing more than expected; finding the job meaningful and fulfilling; and feeling loyal to the employer’s mission, consistently acting and speaking positively about the company. Consult with EAS about the unique aspects of your work unit and what more you can do individually and collectively to connect with staff. Realize that young workers, frontline staff, and remote staff are more at risk for disengagement. Check in with your employees one on one and have mini five-minute meetings to discuss needs, goals, and how work can be more enjoyable. The relationship with their supervisor reportedly is one of the most often cited reasons employees find more meaning in their jobs, thereby increasing their loyalty to the employer, according to Marcus Buckingham, author of *Love and Work: How to Find What You Love*. Source: <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/653711/great-detachment-why-employees-feel-stuck.aspx>

**Q. What are the main ways that supervisors can use the EAP for themselves personally as a confidential source of support?**

A. Supervisors can use EAS in several ways—some highly effective yet often overlooked. Consider these ways of leveraging EAS for yourself: 1) seek confidential counseling for one’s own personal needs; 2) consult on improving communication with upper management; 3) learn stress management tips; 4) seek guidance on approaching employees prior to conducting corrective interviews and participating in constructive confrontation; 5) consult on handling specific situations involving difficult employees and reducing risk in managing problematic employee behaviors; 6) consult on and gain expert advice on handling difficult employee situations, performance issues, and workplace conflicts; and 7) get help with pre-referral planning, post-referral communication, and post-discharge follow-up of formally referred employees.





# Employee Advisory Service

## UPCOMING WEBINARS SUPERVISORS/MANAGERS

### Supervisors / Managers

**REGISTER NOW**



### From Reactive to Resilient: Emotional Intelligence Strategies for Supervisors

**Date / Time**

- April 24th
- 11 AM – 12PM

**About this webinar:**

Our emotions can bring joy and happiness, but if not managed well, they can also cause pain and frustration. This important presentation discusses the steps necessary for supervisors to build and maintain a balanced emotional life at work, strengthen relationships with employees, and achieve greater success as leaders.

### Navigating Workplace Tension: How to Have Productive Employee Conversations

**Date / Time**

- June 26th
- 11 AM – 12PM

**About this webinar:**

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

### EAS Mental Health Symposium

**Date / Time**

- May 22nd
- 12noon – 2PM

### Building Resilience Across Generations



**About this webinar:**

This vital symposium will focus on building individual and group resilience in the workplace and increasing the awareness of generational differences. Participants will learn strategies to transform pressures and setbacks into opportunities for growth and empowerment.

Employee Advisory Service (EAS)

*Support – Empowerment – Growth*

Your privacy is important to us. Your confidentiality is protected by state and federal law and regulations. All of the services offered are guided by professional and ethical standards. Contact us to learn more.



EAS\_Help@csc.gov



1-866- 327-9133



<https://nj.gov/csc/employees/advisory/>

How Can We  
Help You?



# Employee Advisory Service

Support - Empowerment - Growth

Save  
The  
Date

## 2025 MENTAL WELLNESS SYMPOSIUM

# Building Resilience Across Generations

This vital symposium will focus on building individual and group resilience in the workplace and increasing the awareness of generational differences. Participants will learn strategies to transform pressures and setbacks into opportunities for growth and empowerment.



**Date: Thursday, 5/22/2025**

**Time: 12pm to 2pm**



Contact EAS Today for Confidential 24-hour Support

Helpline: (866) 327-9133

Email: [EAS\\_Help@csc.nj.gov](mailto:EAS_Help@csc.nj.gov)



# 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:**

1-866-327-9133

**EMAIL:**

EAS\_HELP@CSC.NJ.GOV

**24 HOURS A DAY 7 DAYS A WEEK**  
(EMERGENCY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES)

10

