

# Handling sensitive HR issues

## Overview

This is a highly participative workshop aimed at giving line managers additional strategies, skills and confidence to handle the myriad of sensitive and challenging issues that may arise in the workplace. It will provide practical tools and tips for dealing with these issues appropriately, in accordance both with the client's internal policies and procedures and with any relevant employment legislation. The programme will encourage group discussion and will allow participants time to raise any specific issues they find the most challenging to handle.

## Learning objectives

This is a skills- and confidence-building programme which will help participants to:

- Recognise when an issue is sensitive
- Know how to handle it, whether through informal action or formal procedures
- Ensure that they act in accordance with your organisation's policies and procedures
- Improve their feedback skills
- Deal effectively with challenging responses
- Manage one-to-one meetings appropriately

The programme will also reinforce internal policies and procedures in this area.

## Audience

All line managers, in any type of organisation – large or small; public, voluntary or private sector.

## Format

This workshop is highly participative and uses a range of activities such as group discussion of scenarios, individual and small group exercises, and a quiz to ensure learning and the transfer of this learning back into the workplace. Participants will be sent a welcome pack in advance of the course which will include some pre-course work as well as asking them to reflect upon their own experiences and challenges in this area. They will also be asked to familiarise themselves with any internal policies and procedures relating to the topics under discussion and to bring copies on the day for reference throughout.

## Special feature

This programme is always tailored to meet client's specific requirements, not least by incorporating references throughout to any of the client's own policies and procedures which might be relevant to the topics under discussion.

## Workshop outline

*Note: this is a purely indicative outline, subject to change in the light of (a) developments in employment law and (b) your organisation's policies and procedures.*

### 1 Introduction

- Course objectives and benefits from attending this course
- Participants' experience and confidence in this area
- Personal objectives

### 2 Handling sensitive issues well

- Types of sensitive issue
- What makes an issue sensitive?
- Why are these situations difficult to manage?
- Participants' experiences and challenges

### 3 The organisational context

- Quiz to refresh participants' understanding of relevant legislation such as discrimination and dismissal law
- Relevant policies and procedures
- Roles, responsibilities and sources of support

### 4 Personal issues

- What personal issues may affect work?
- Dealing with health issues, eg, disability, stress and mental illness, terminal illness, etc
- Alcohol and drug addiction
- Changes to circumstances, eg, divorce, bereavement, etc
- Group exercise on strategies for handling personal issues

### 5 Dealing with sensitive issues

- Checklist of 'managerial' skills
- A conversational approach: preparing for and holding the meeting
- Group exercise: understanding and managing emotional reactions in others
- Managing your own emotions

### 6 Other sensitive issues

- Group exercise focused on other sensitive issues relevant to the group such as personal hygiene, personality clashes, appearance at work, capability and performance issues, etc
- Practical tips and strategies including how to give effective, constructive feedback

### 7 Skills practice

- Preparing for, and conducting, a meeting around a sensitive situation and / or managing challenging responses

### 8 And finally...

- Open forum – remaining challenges and 'what if' scenarios
- Action planning – identifying how participants will transfer this learning into the workplace and what else they may need which will help them to do this effectively
- Review and close

**For a no-obligation discussion about running this programme for your organisation on an in-house basis, just give us a call on [01582 463462](tel:01582463462).**