

3 THINGS A MANAGER MUST KNOW

About Managing People Who Live With Chronic Illness

1. SHOW YOUR RESPECT

- a. **Promote confidentiality** - Your employee thinks you need to know but that doesn't mean this is "water cooler" gossip. Decide together who needs to know, what needs to be said and who will tell them.
- b. **Respect boundaries** - It is not open season for anyone to give unasked for advice. Model this behavior for others.
- c. **Clamp gossip** - You are aware when people are talking and it hurts performance. Condemn harmful gossip when it occurs and act on it before it blows into a storm.

2. GET THE INFORMATION YOU NEED

- a. **Don't rely on myths** - When an employee tells you about a chronic illness, learn the facts. Get enough information so you can discuss the situation credibly. The web is a good resource.
- b. **Ask, don't assume, how you can help your employee perform successfully** - Ask what he wants or needs from you to get the job done. And be sure you put these steps into place.
- c. **Review company policies together** - Look at your company policy concerning vacation, sick time, FMLA to ensure there is common understanding. Decide jointly how missed time and other related issues will be recorded and followed up.

3. SET PERFORMANCE GOALS

- a. **Encourage realistic goals** - Goals are meant to be something one stretches to achieve but they must be achievable. Encourage employees not to set themselves up for failure.
- b. **Create opportunity for flexibility** - This is valuable for all employees in the current workforce regardless of the reason. It is critical for people who live with unpredictable illness.
- c. **Provide feedback** - Chronic illness is not a reason to avoid giving employees feedback about how they are doing. It's a necessary tool for success.

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