

You Can Pick Your Friends, But You Can't Pick Your Coworkers

A Mental Health Message from Your Member Assistance Program (MAP)

Navigating Workplace Relationships with Care

Let's face it—work would be a lot easier if we could choose every person we worked with. But unlike our social circles, we don't get to pick our coworkers. We come from different backgrounds, have different personalities, and sometimes, we just don't click. That's normal. But when tensions rise or personalities clash, it can take a toll on your mental health.

As your Member Assistance Program (MAP), we understand the unique challenges union members face on the job. Long shifts, high-stakes environments, and tight-knit crews can amplify interpersonal stress. That's why learning how to manage workplace relationships is just as important as knowing your tools or safety protocols.

Common Workplace Relationship Challenges

- Clashing communication styles or work habits
- Gossip, passive-aggressive behavior, or exclusion
- Power struggles or perceived favoritism
- Cultural or generational misunderstandings
- Difficulty setting boundaries with coworkers

These issues don't make you weak or unprofessional—they make you human. And they're more common than you think. The good news? There are healthy ways to cope, communicate, and protect your peace.

Protecting Your Mental Health on the Job

When workplace relationships become strained, it can lead to stress, anxiety, and even burnout. You might find yourself dreading your shift, avoiding certain people, or carrying work tension home with you. That's when it's time to take a step back and check in with yourself.

You don't have to be best friends with your coworkers—but you do deserve to feel safe, respected, and supported at work.

Strategies for Managing Difficult Coworker Dynamics

- **Set boundaries:** Be clear about what's okay and what's not—especially around gossip, personal space, or workload.
- **Don't take it personally:** Sometimes people's behavior reflects their own stress, not your worth.
- **Use "I" statements:** Express how you feel without blaming. For example, "I feel frustrated when deadlines aren't met."
- **Take breaks:** Step away when emotions run high. A short walk or deep breath can reset your mindset.
- **Document serious issues:** If behavior crosses a line, keep notes and talk to your steward or supervisor.

And remember—your MAP is here to help. We offer confidential support to help you process workplace stress, build communication skills, and navigate tough dynamics with clarity and confidence.

MAP Can Support You With:

- Conflict-resolution coaching
- Stress and anger management
- Communication and boundary-setting tools
- Mediation referrals if needed
- Emotional support when things feel overwhelming

You don't have to go it alone. We're in your corner.

Building a Healthier Workplace Culture

While you can't choose your coworkers, you can help shape the culture around you. When union members lead with respect, empathy, and accountability, it creates a ripple effect. A healthier workplace starts with small, intentional actions—checking in on a colleague, speaking up when something's off, or simply modeling kindness under pressure.

This isn't about being perfect—it's about being human together.

Ways to Foster a Positive Work Environment

- Greet coworkers by name and show appreciation
- Address issues directly and respectfully, not through gossip
- Offer help when someone's struggling
- Celebrate wins—big or small—as a team
- Encourage others to use MAP when they need support

Work is hard enough. Let's make it a place where we lift each other up, even when we don't always see eye to eye.

If you're dealing with a tough coworker situation or just need someone to talk to, your MAP is here—confidential, judgment-free, and ready to support you.

**For more information, tools, resources, or app information, call your
Life Advisor Member Assistance Program!**



**Ulliance provides no cost, confidential, short-term counseling
for you & your family.**

Call us- we're here to help **800.448.8326**