HPN EAP Newsletter for Employees

Encouraging Honest Feedback

How open are you to hearing feedback from others? More importantly, how open to feedback do others perceive you to be? There may be times when you don't really want to hear what a certain person thinks, but if you are consistently giving even an unintentional message that you are not open to suggestions or other feedback, then you may be costing yourself opportunities for professional advancement or personal connection with friends, family and co-workers. A few tips for encouraging honest feedback from others:

➢ Say thank you. Remember that it can feel risky to offer criticism. Before you do anything else, tell the other person you acknowledge that it is not easy to offer feedback and that you want their open honest communication.

➢ Assume you're hearing the truth. You may not have intended or seen your actions the same way someone else did, but don't dismiss the other person's experience. You can state that your intentions were different, but then it is important to also talk about what you can do to better align your intentions with how you are being perceived.

➢ Assume that those giving feedback want to help. People who just want to complain will rarely tell you directly. When your response assumes good intentions, it tends to draw people in and help them to be more constructive. It is likely that those offering criticism are open to improving their relationship and communication with you.

➢ Sleep on it. When someone offers criticism, it is natural and healthy for us to evaluate it and debate its merit. Because this is natural, it is a good idea not to immediately defend yourself if someone points out a shortcoming. Think about it, look for the truth in it, think about the person offering the criticism – and then decide on the best way to acknowledge the useful aspects of the feedback. You may be able to do this in 20 minutes, or you might want to sleep on it.

Call Health Promotion Northwest at 360-788-6565 for more information and services.