



Employee Assistance of the Pacific

Summer 2012

EAP Newsletter

Raise your hand if you are biased !!

If you were slow to raise your hand, you are not alone. Here in Hawaii—the Land of Aloha—many of us are reluctant to admit we harbor some bias. We have been taught that to be biased means that we are bad. Or worse, that we are bigots and discriminators. But bias is a normal part of human behavior and resides inside all of us, whether we like it or not. It helps us make snap decisions that can save us from danger or protect our families and livelihoods. But it can also interfere with our desire to appreciate others and be fair to all.

New research reveals that most of the bias we may feel or exhibit exists in our unconscious. Much of that bias is cultural and is learned from our families of origin. We assume our own beliefs and norms are well... normal. We assume others share our perspective. It takes practice to question your gut instincts.

When we accept that we have normal biases, it becomes much easier to observe how they may be impacting our decisions or reactions. The following are five “conscious” steps to help an employee or manager deal with unconscious bias:



Tell the truth to yourself and notice what influences your decisions. Be willing to honestly admit your biases. Also, keep in mind that unconscious preference and biases can influence decision-making in both negative as well as positive ways.

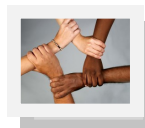


Stretch your comfort zone If you discover that you view a particular group with discomfort, make a conscious effort to learn more about that group. Expose yourself to positive images and other information related to that group

Stimulate your curiosity about others When you interact with a person who is part of a group with which you have had little interaction, be aware that you may be especially susceptible to stereotyping, which can lead to false assumptions about that person. Make a conscious effort to learn more about that person as well as his/her group.

Expand your constellation of input Get input from people representing other groups or points of view during your decision-making process. One of the best ways to bring concealed beliefs and how they affect behavior out into the open is to request peer feedback regarding potential preference patterns. Most of us are nervous to do this because we are inherently afraid of what we might hear. But are we better off with people *thinking* it and not *telling* us?

If you mess it up, clean it up! Don't be afraid to go to somebody and apologize if you feel that they have been treated unfairly, excluded because of who they are, or not recognized for what they contribute. Make the situation right and explore ways you can improve the process for the future.



...is a short term confidential counseling service, provided to you by your employer, that can assist in identifying and resolving issues that may be interfering with your job or personal life. Our experienced counselors are available across the Islands and can be contacted by phoning or emailing our Honolulu office.

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With football season gearing up again many people will enjoy a friendly wager on their favorite team. And as the weather turns cooler a trip to Las Vegas might be on the agenda for some Hawaii residents.

Gambling can be an enjoyable activity but we also know that it can be a disastrous problem for some individuals. People who gamble responsibly do so for fun, not to make money or escape from problems. They limit the time and money spent gambling and understand that the odds are always with the house.

Here are a few important points about what mental health professionals call “pathological gambling” :

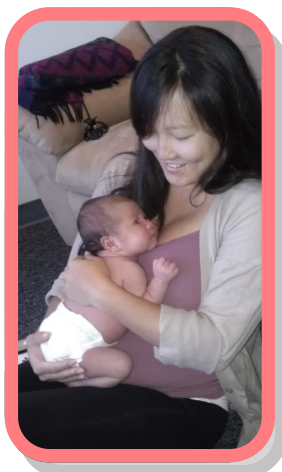
- * Pathological gambling is not a sign of weakness, moral failing or lack of willpower. It is a treatable mental health disorder.
- * No one gambling activity is more risky than others. People can get into trouble with all types of games, even seemingly harmless ones like bingo and the lottery.
- * People with gambling disorders experience a range of problems including financial debt, professional and personal problems, withdrawal symptoms when attempting to stop or reduce gambling, guilt and shame.
- * Remember the 3 Cs of addiction: People with gambling problems **crave** gambling, **continue** to gamble in spite of negative consequences and lose **control** over their gambling.

Problem Gambling



- * Roads to recovery can include treatment with a professional therapist, Gamblers Anonymous meetings, medication, and self-help resources such as workbooks and websites.
- * **Your First Step to Change** is a confidential, interactive website that will help you decide if you have a problem and how to change your behavior. Visit <http://www.gamblingselfchange.org/?step=welcome>

If your gambling is causing problems, an EAP counselor can guide you in deciding what the next steps might be in getting appropriate help. All visits are confidential and there is no charge to employees or their family members.



EAP Welcomes Baby PJ

We are very pleased to announce the arrival of Persyphani “PJ” Jones Conley on July 14, 2012. She weighed in at 7 lb 4 oz and as you can see, mom and baby are both doing beautifully. Her mom, Clara, has been the Office Coordinator in our Honolulu office and we are all hoping to see a lot more of PJ when Clara returns from leave.