﻿Avoiding Cliques:

A Guide for Managers

﻿Cliques are a common aspect of interpersonal relationships at work. Small sub-groups may form for a variety of reasons, such as similar positions, common interests, or closeness in age or background. A clique may become problematic when:

* A small group has gained an oversized amount of sway within the larger team
* Other team members are being isolated or ostracized

If you are concerned that a clique is undermining team dynamics, these steps may help:

1. Consult with Human Resources. HR can help you review relevant policies and provide suggestions for how to address your concerns. LifeMatters can also offer consultation and guidance.
2. Schedule separate, private meetings with each member of the clique. Outline your concerns and explain what behaviors are considered inappropriate. If there are allegations of bullying or harassment, follow company policy. Sample language: “It is important that everyone feel welcome and respected within our team.”
3. Listen. Ask each person to provide their observations on what is happening. Sample language: “Please share your perspective on these events.”
4. Outline your expectations. Clearly explain what changes you would like to see. If there are issues with workflow, or if some members of the group are not following procedure, outline expectations. Sample language: “I understand that personal friendships sometimes spill over into the workplace. However, they can’t get in the way of team goals. Here is what I expect in the future.”
5. Make a personal or performance referral to LifeMatters. A LifeMatters Consultation Specialist can help you determine if a performance referral is warranted based on each individual’s behavior. Sample language: “LifeMatters will work with you to improve your on-the-job performance, as well as assist with any personal concerns. Please give them a call.”
6. Follow up. Meet privately with each person at a later date. Note any improvements in work performance and behavior. Outline any changes that may still be needed. Sample language: “Let’s meet again next week. In the meantime, I’m available to answer any questions you may have.”

The LifeMatters Management Consultation Service can help you address any team or management-related issue. Call 24/7/365.

LifeMatters by Empathia

1-800-367-7474

Assistance with Life, Work, Family, and Wellbeing

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Call collect to 262-574-2509 if outside of North America

Language assistance services in your preferred spoken and written languages are available at no cost by calling 1-800-367-7474.

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