



ISSUE: Anger may be a common barrier to employment for some persons.

THINGS TO CONSIDER: An employee may have personal problems that are not yet resolved and may bring these to the workplace. That employee will show anger and may be angry and irritable and take out these feelings with co-workers. In addition, an employee may have an issue with another employee. Signs of anger may include:

- **Yelling and Swearing:** The employee may intimidate others around them by being loud and inconsiderate. This behaviour may be the only way they know how to express what they are feeling. It may also be their way to keep others at a safe distance. It is important to remember that this employee will not likely have the skills necessary to work out problems. In addition, there may be layers of unresolved issues in their personal lives that leave them short tempered.
- **Talking Tough:** One of the ways an employee handles conflict is be the tough guy/woman. Their attitude may be one of "I don't care what you think or say" or "I don't need this job" which increases the feeling of anger in the workplace.
- **Aggressive Behavior:** Another way this employee may communicate inappropriately is to be intimidating with aggressive or pushy movements. Again this is probably their way of saying, "I'm pissed off!"

THINGS TO DO:

- Always speak in a calm, low voice. Matching the employee's tone or level will only escalate things.
- Move to a private location. Calmly tell the employee that you would like to understand what is going on with them and ask if you can see them in another room where you won't be disturbed. Never put yourself in a situation that feels dangerous and only do this if you can see that they are calming down.
- Offer them a glass of water and a place to sit down and then ask if they would like to tell you what it is that has made them angry. This will be an uncomfortable moment, but pause and wait for a response. Most people want to say what it is that is bothering them. If you don't get a response, probe again. Chances are this employee is not used to dealing with issues and this can be an opportunity for a new life lesson.
- Listen and show interest. When the time is right, acknowledge and validate their feelings and ask what they are going to do about what is bothering them and how they can handle things differently next time. At this point, they may be ready to allow you to coach them or offer other alternatives to how they handle issues that make them angry. Show them your support to work through issues rather than discipline.

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