

March 7, 2008

Quick Links

[CAP Home](#)

[Risk E-Notes Archive](#)

[CAPsules Archive](#)

[CAP Risk Management &
Patient Safety](#)

[Contact Us](#)



Workplace Conflict Can Lead to Turnover and Loss of Patients

Even the best managers cannot prevent the occasional employee conflict. However, employee conflict spills over to your patients. Patients overhear staff bickering or sense a bad mood from staff and assume that the staff is more interested in undermining each other than taking care of the patient.



Unfortunately, the tendency to gossip is an established human behavior. When that gossip or bickering turns to mean-spirited behavior or is disruptive to the practice, it must be dealt with by the physician or the office manager. Troublemakers tend to stay on the job, while victims may leave. These departing employees may be some of your most knowledgeable and efficient workers.

What can you do?

- Promptly investigate any malicious or deliberate gossip and hurtful behavior.
- Discuss the behavior with the employee and explain that it will not be tolerated.
- Document employee behavior expectations in your employee manual performance reviews.
- Use pinpointed examples to document your progressive discipline actions and how the employee responds to the expectations.
- Identify job and interpersonal skills when interviewing potential employees.
- If there is no improvement in behavior following warnings, you may find it necessary to terminate the employee.

The above information was taken from the following: How to Stop Staff Infighting (October 5, 2007, pp. 64-73 at www.memag.com).

If you have any further questions, please use the "Contact Us" button to the left.

This information is not intended to be inclusive nor is it intended as legal advice.

- Amy McLain, RN & Ann Whitehead, RN
CAP Risk Management & Patient Safety