

EMPLOYEE DEFENSE STRATEGIES

DO NOT CONFRONT. CARE-FRONT!



When care-fronting employees about behavior and/or performance problems, the employee may feel threatened, and could use various defense strategies. Some of these defenses and recommended counter-moves are listed below.

DEFENSE	DESCRIPTION	COUNTER-MOVE
Excuses and Sympathy	“You’d have the same trouble I do if you had a wife like mine.”	“I understand you are having personal problems. My concern involves your performance, and my data here says you’re not doing your job”
Apology and Promise	“I’m really sorry. You know that! I’ll never do it again.”	“I appreciate your apology, but what you did is serious, and this was your last chance. I’m filing a deficiency report.”
Switching	“I know about that, but look what a good job I’ve done on that ____ job”	“You did well on ____, but I want you to do well on all your jobs. You have had more problem jobs than successful ones lately.”
Anger	“One mistake and this happens. After 20 years of killing myself for this place.”	“Getting angry won’t help anyone, especially you. I’m concerned about your performance. And I’m not talking about one mistake. Look at the record here.”
Tears and Helplessness	“I don’t know what to do. I’ll never get out of his mess.” (crying)	“I appreciate your sadness. Please know that I want to help, which is why I set up this meeting. You have been a valuable part of our organization. I want to tell you about our Employee Assistance Program.”
Self-Pity	“I knew this would happen. I’ve never been able to do anything right.”	“I’ve looked over this in detail (point to records), and you’ve got to start looking at your part in what happens. Maybe that’s where the problem lies.”
Innocence and Blaming	“It’s not my fault. Joe let me down. I don’t get any help around here.”	“ I wouldn’t be taking the time out to speak to you if I didn’t have faith in you. So let’s move along to talk about what can be done to help you.”
Hopelessness	“I may as well quit right now.”	“That sounds irrational. You have done excellent work. I want more of that from your department.”
Friendliness/Seduction	“Let’s get together after work and figure something out...where we can be more comfortable.”	“I’ve done all I can do to work this out on the job. I think something else is bothering you and I want you to see an EAP counselor.”