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A quarterly newsletter of INVEST EAP

# M E S S E N G E R A INVEST EAP P

## Supporting a Healthy Organization

November 2018

### SPECIAL EDITION

The incidence of mass killings and hate crimes has become so frequent that we no longer publish a Special Edition newsletter after each such event. So, we questioned whether we should publish one now, in the aftermath of the recent events in Pittsburgh. Further consideration led us to the conclusion that we cannot allow ourselves to become complacent at this time of rising hate crimes in America.

Previous "Special Edition" newsletters have focused on practical advice on how to talk with your children and take care of yourself in the aftermath of such events. What more is there to say?

Action after the fact is not the only action that is important for us to consider. Acts of violence rarely begin with the violent acts themselves. The "Never Again" declaration adopted at the International Legal Symposium in Poland on the 70th anniversary of the Nuremberg trials<sup>1</sup> stated:



*The Holocaust did not begin in the gas chambers – it began with words. It is this... demonizing of the other, where it all begins. We have a responsibility to recognize and combat such demonizing whenever and wherever it occurs.*

The declaration goes on to explain that indifference and inaction are synonymous with the approval of these violent acts, if not complicity in the crimes themselves. It concludes with this powerful pledge:

#### **WE REMEMBER, AND PLEDGE:**

*Never again will we be indifferent to incitement and hate;  
Never again will we be silent in the face of evil;  
Never again will we indulge racism and antisemitism;  
Never again will we ignore the plight of the vulnerable; and  
Never again will we be indifferent in the face of mass atrocity and impunity.*

**WE WILL SPEAK UP AND ACT** *against indifference, against racism, against hate, against antisemitism, against mass atrocity, and against injustice.*

(Continued on back...)

<sup>1</sup> The Nuremberg trials were military tribunals held by the Allied forces under international law after World War II to prosecute those responsible for the Holocaust.

(Continued from front...)

There is wisdom in these words that is pertinent to our lives in the United States today. How do we react and what do we say when we hear words of bigotry or hatred? Such words may be directed at us or at others. They may be directed toward African Americans, Jews, Muslims, people with disabilities or anyone who is in any way different. We may hear them at work, at home or elsewhere. When safe and appropriate, do we politely interrupt such speech and correct it? It's best to avoid a political discussion and instead simply focus on stating the facts. For example, if someone says to us, "all foreigners are lazy," we might respond, "It's possible that some foreigners are lazy just like some Americans, but your statement about 'all foreigners' is not accurate." If we don't have a well formulated response, it's also fine to simply state that we disagree or don't like hearing hateful or unkind things being said about others.



When we hear hateful words in the workplace, if it does not seem safe or appropriate to say something, we may bring the issue to our supervisor, manager, HR department or CEO. HR staff, managers, and leadership may want to proactively address these issues by establishing clear policies of what is acceptable and what is not acceptable speech and clearly communicate these policies to employees. Communication of such policies should include clear instructions for what employees should do if they hear violations of the policy.

It has been said that bigotry and hate in our society is not the biggest problem that we face. The biggest problem is silence in the face of bigotry and hate. Speaking up when we hear hateful statements is an antidote to that silence. Speech in our workplace and at home may at times seem a far cry from the events in Pittsburgh, but we would do well to keep in mind, as the International Legal Symposium in Poland declared, "The Holocaust... began with words."

First they came for the socialists,  
and I did not speak out—

Because I was not a socialist.

Then they came for the trade  
unionists, and I did not speak out—

Because I was not a trade unionist.

Then they came for the Jews, and I  
did not speak out—

Because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for me—and there  
was no one left to speak for me.

*"First they came ..."* is a poem written by the  
German Lutheran pastor Martin Niemöller  
(1892–1984)

As we go to press, yet another mass shooting has been reported in California. We don't yet know the motives behind it. Regardless, in the face of these events, the lesson is not to cower or become discouraged, but to recognize our collective strength to respond positively and work in our own ways to remedy that which we see as broken around us.

## EAP SERVICES

EAP can be a source of help. Managers and supervisors can benefit from consultation on what to include in workplace policies and how to approach issues of this nature. Employees can obtain individual support.

**Managers: 1-888-392-0050 | Employees: 1-866-660-9533**

