



BRAIN POTENTIAL

Leadership powered by Neuroscience

CASE STUDY

The spiral down from the Stress Loop

Judith, a hard-working employee had been with her organisation for almost 10 years. She was well-liked by her colleagues and clients gave positive feedback in relation to her work. She mostly worked off-site spending a couple of days in the office when required.

It was Friday afternoon, and she was preparing to go home for the weekend when her manager called her into the office and handed her a letter. Her manager asked that she read it at home and further explained that she was unable to give more information on the situation referenced in the letter. Judith was not to return to work until further notice while an enquiry was to be undertaken and during this time, she would receive full pay.

Judith was in a state of shock while her manager apologised for her inability to be more informative. Judith was also told not to contact her colleagues and that she would be contacted shortly. She was also given the EAP number to call.

Ten days passed before Judith called the EAP, as she was endeavouring to self-manage her emotions. During this time, she visited her GP. There had been no word from the workplace, and she still had no idea of the complaint referenced in the letter. Judith lived alone and had a small, close network of friends which included some work colleagues.

During her time off work Judith's sleep patterns had been interrupted and the medication prescribed by her GP was not working. She had lost her appetite and when she did eat, found it difficult to keep the food down. With too much time on her hands and difficulty focusing she found herself ruminating about the many possible workplace scenarios.

Her symptoms and behaviour were normal reactions to the stress her body and brain were experiencing and the feelings of abandonment by her workplace had contributed to suicidal thoughts. Her plan was to take all the prescription pills and hopefully not wake up. Luckily it was a phone call from a friend (in that moment of contemplation) that save her from carrying out her plan.

During her phone conversation to the EAP, the counsellor talked her through strategies and helped establish forward plans, suggesting calling her manager for an update and to hopefully speed-up the process and/or give further clarity.

This example represents the difficulties employees are faced with while leaders adhere to company policies and procedures. It also demonstrates how vulnerable employees could feel while waiting for process to occur.

Workplace formal complaints are serious and need to be addressed in accordance with workplace law and company policies and procedures. Remember that there are humans having experiences and your intervention as a leader is key.

[Learn more about effectively managing these situations by engaging in BRAIN POTENTIAL leadership training and coaching.](#)

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