HRP of CPA
Human Resource Professionals of Central PA

NEWSLETTER
ISSUE 8 | AUGUST 2026

Being C.L.E.A.R in Workplace Investigations

Dale Redmond, Communications Director, HRPCPA

Workplace investigations can range from concerns about respect and communication to serious allegations involving harassment, discrimination, retaliation, or workplace violence. The severity may change the urgency and depth of the investigation, but one thing should remain consistent: HR needs a structured process for gathering, evaluating, and documenting the facts.

One suggested approach is the **C.L.E.A.R** Investigation Framework: Clarify, Listen, Examine, Assess, and Record.

C — Clarify the complaint. Start by determining exactly what was reported and defining the specific allegations being investigated. If the complainant initially reported the concern to a manager or another leader, speak with that person first. Document what they were told, when the report occurred, who was involved, and any witnesses or evidence identified. This establishes the original scope before additional interviews potentially expand the narrative.

L — Listen to each account. Develop initial questions before interviewing the complainant, while allowing them to explain what occurred in their own words. Gather dates, times, locations, witnesses, emails, texts, photographs, and other supporting information. When interviewing witnesses, distinguish between firsthand knowledge and information they heard from others. When speaking with the implicated employee, allow them to provide their version before addressing gaps or inconsistencies.

E — Examine the evidence. Compare accounts against documentation and other available evidence. Look for information that both supports and contradicts the allegations. New facts may require follow-up interviews, but preparation helps reduce unnecessary repeat interviews that can create opportunities for recollections to change, new information to be added, and the facts to become increasingly muddied.

A — Assess the facts. Evaluate each allegation separately. Consider consistency, firsthand knowledge, corroboration, documentation, plausibility, and relevant credibility factors. A denial does not automatically make an allegation unsubstantiated, just as an allegation should not automatically be accepted without analysis.

R — Record the investigation. Maintain a complete and organized case file. Case-management applications are excellent tools, but technology cannot replace investigative structure. Without a consistent process, HR risks missing information, duplicating work, and making it more difficult to reach or defend a clear resolution.

Organizations without case-management software can create structure using an Excel investigation workbook to track intake information, individuals involved, interview notes, evidence, timelines, written statements, credibility considerations, and findings.

Why does this matter? An investigation file may eventually be reviewed by senior leadership, legal counsel, regulators, or during litigation. A well-documented, consistent process can help mitigate organizational risk and demonstrate how HR reached its conclusions.

The C.L.E.A.R Framework is simply one suggested approach. Whatever framework your organization uses, the objective remains the same:

Clarify the concern. Listen carefully. Examine the evidence. Assess objectively. Record thoroughly.

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Upcoming Events

August 25 | 8:00 - 9:30 AM (Virtual Chapter Meeting)
Topic: From Experimentation to Implementation: ARM Group's Practical AI Journey and Lessons for HR Leaders

September 9 | 11:45 AM - 1:00 PM (Virtual Panel)
Topic: SELLing Yourself: HR 101 - Career Pathing

September 15 | 12:00 - 1:30 PM (HR & Legal Risk Mitigation Series - Virtual)
Topic: What You Don't Know Can Organize You: Unions 101

September 22 | 7:30 - 9:30 AM (In-Person Chapter Meeting)
Topic: *Curiosity Before Conclusions: Building Trust Through Better HR Conversations*

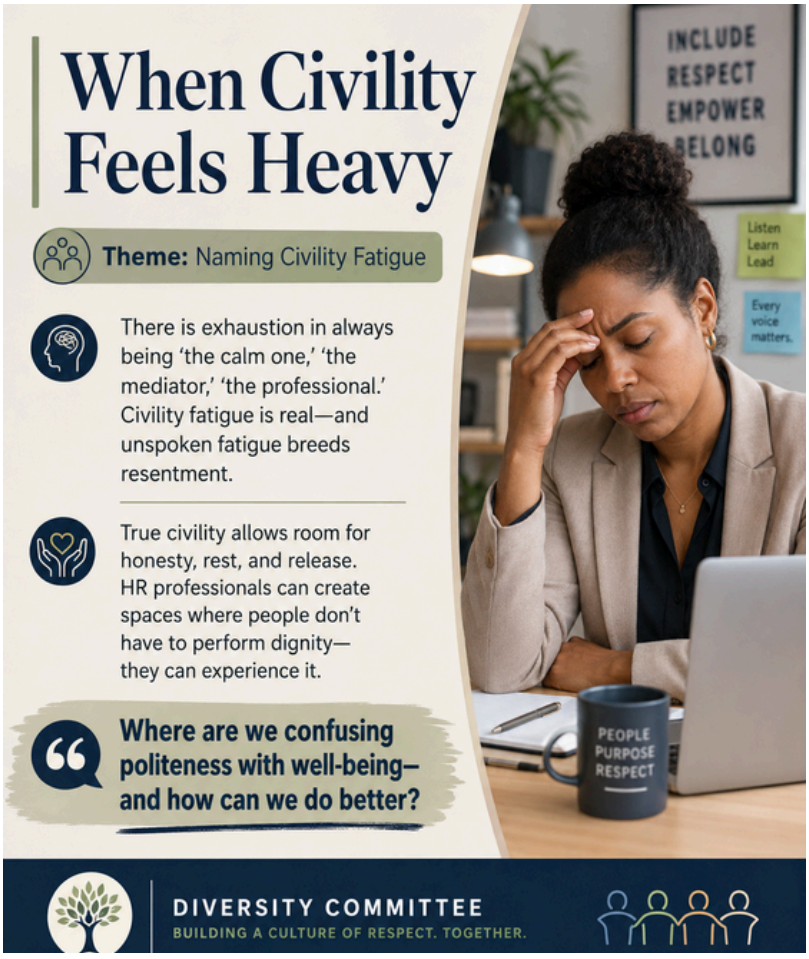
October 7 | 11:45 AM - 1:00 PM (Virtual)
Topic: SELLing Yourself: Branding Yourself Authentically

October 8 | Fall Networking & Volunteerism Event
5:00 PM - 8:00 PM (IN-PERSON)

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