



Your Employee and Family Assistance Program is a support service that can help you take the first step toward change.

## The dos and don'ts of an office romance



Stolen glances at the coffee machine, knowing smiles during meetings, flirty email exchanges, and sneaking out to share a lunch break – these are some of the many small pleasures of a budding office crush. When people work together, day in day out in close proximity, it's natural for feelings of affection and attraction to develop. Beyond that, it's incredibly common; in fact approximately [56% of business professionals have had office romances](#). With the rise of social media and texting, it becomes that much easier to begin an office romance, as sending an emoticon or a cute message is as simple as the click of a button. Whether you're participating in innocent office flirtation, or moving towards an ongoing serious relationship, it can be dangerous territory to navigate. Here are some office romance dos and don'ts for you to keep in mind as you dip your toe into the waters of mixing love and work.

### **Do: Seek and understand your organization's policies**

Do your homework; seek out and understand the policy on workplace romance at your organization. Are romantic relationships permitted in your workplace? Are employees obligated to tell their manager(s) about the relationship? If you're unclear about the rules at your company or need advice, speak in confidence to Human Resources.

### **Do: Be up front about your expectations**

Is this just a casual fling or are you hoping for something more serious? Being honest about what you are looking for can prevent suffering and misunderstandings down the road.

### **Don't: Engage in public displays of affection**

It can be hard to keep your feelings and desires under wraps, but when you're working together it's very important to do so. Seeing people touching or kissing can make your colleagues uncomfortable, and can definitely lead to gossip.

### **Do: Think about the implications of a break-up**

It's no fun to imagine something ending during all the fluttery feelings of excitement that mark the beginning of a relationship. When you work together though, you need to think about this. Will you be able to continue working with your ex? How will bad blood impact your coworkers or your clients? If it ends: remain professional. It will be much harder to go through the painful breakup when you need to see the other person daily, so when you enter into this type of situation, ask yourself if that's something you can handle.

**Don't: Talk about it with your colleagues**

Even if they're some of your closest friends, especially at the beginning, it is in your best interest not to seek counsel from your coworkers. They may have your best interests at heart and yet still have trouble containing the news when talk over drinks turns to workplace gossip.

**Do: Stay focused on your work**

Office romances can make the workplace a much more fun and stimulating place to be – you'll definitely look forward to going to work in a whole new way. As much as possible though, try to avoid yielding to the distraction that an office romance provides: focus on your work, and let the relationship happen outside the office as much as possible. This can be good to discuss with your partner, and mutually agree upon a way to keep things under wraps at work.

Work can indeed be a great place to meet people – you already have a lot in common and can likely support each other with your career goals, and the pressure cooker environment of an office can be useful for seeing all the positive and negative character traits in a person. It's a little bit more delicate than other romances of course, so keep your wits about you as you enter into a relationship with a colleague – and have fun!

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