**Effective Workplace Series**

**Work-Family Information on: Single Workers**

**Suggested Readings**

**Why are the needs of single workers an important workplace issue?**

"Changing demographics are causing employers to reevaluate benefits plans and work-life programs so they are fair to an ever diversifying workforce. In order to attract and retain qualified employees, and increase profit, smart employers develop personnel policies that do not discriminate on the basis of the marital status or the family structure of their employees."  

_Thomas Coleman, Executive Director, Unmarried America_

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**Defining Single Workers**

A single worker is an employed individual without a current spouse, who has never married or may have been married in the past and is now separated, divorced, or widowed. Single workers can be single parents; in fact, nearly 12 million single workers have children living at home (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008).

**Issues faced by Single Workers** (Casper & Swanberg, 2009, p. 98-100)

- “…62% of participants [single workers] provided examples of ways in which they felt that they were treated differently from their co-workers with families.”
- “30% of participants described some kind of double standard regarding work expectations for single and married workers.”
- “19% of participants reported feeling stigmatized because of their single identity, and 16% reported that married workers were perceived to be more stable and mature than singles.”

Single workers without children were perceived as not having important responsibilities outside of work.

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**How can workplaces support single workers?**

- Create equity-based rules for promotions, assignments, and schedules.
- Maintain equal performance expectations for single childless employees and married employees with children.
- Develop organizational support systems that consider employees’ needs regardless of family status.
- Offer social events that are appropriate for single childless employees and employees with families.

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**Reports With More Information**


Want more OVERVIEWS AND BRIEFS or the full references for the above reports?  
http://wfnetwork.bc.edu/topic_extended.php?id=45&type=7&linktype=overview

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**Suggested Readings**


Want more READINGS?  
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