Our team training budget has been cut this year, so are there any strategies or techniques my employees can regularly practice that have an ongoing “team building” effect to keep us cohesive and less prone to conflict with each other?

Team members with regular habits of communicating in positive ways with each other have fewer conflicts and better group cooperation. Here's a technique that may help your group. Its essential purpose is to help employees practice appreciation and gratitude with each other. See if you can make it a tradition. At the end of meetings, ask whether any team member has positive feedback for any other team member. Model what you are asking. For example, say, “I would like thank Mary for coming in last Thursday to work on the mailing project. I felt relieved of pressure and really appreciative of her for doing that.” Members take turns sharing feedback. The exercise may be a bit awkward if these are new behaviors, but because they are inherently positive, group members should catch on. This strategy builds resilience to stress and allows conflicts to be resolved more quickly. Consider activities you can do as a group, such as volunteering as a team to participate in a local charity race or walk. Log on to www.MyIMPACTSolution.com and have your team complete the ‘Being an Effective Team Member’ Skill Builder together and engage in meaningful discussion about what it means for them to be an effective team.

When I correct my employee's performance, I frequently notice body language that appears resistant (e.g., folding of arms, looking up or away, remaining quiet, staring). Can I document this behavior as refusing feedback? It feels like it.

Start by asking your employee about the meaning of these behaviors. You are having a negative reaction to them as they strike you as insubordinate, so you need to state that you are noticing these nonverbal behaviors and are concerned that they are not reflecting what he or she may be communicating verbally. You have a right to ask for something different and to ask your employee to appear more cooperative. Your employee may say he or she is not resistant to feedback or having their work corrected, but when behaviors do not support or reinforce this message, it is reasonable to assume differently and document it as such with appropriate detail. Support your employee’s development and reception of feedback by coaching them on how it may be more appropriate to act. Read ‘Coaching for Improved Work Performance’ at www.MyIMPACTSolution.com under the Management Tools section when you log in using your manager username and password. Call IMPACT Solutions at 800-227-6007 for assistance logging in.
Beyond a checklist, the one thing supervisors could do to improve their ability to identify the signs and symptoms of drug or alcohol use on the job is to get to know their employees better. Knowing your employees and having frequent face time with them is your best intervention strategy. Over time you will develop an awareness of your employees' appearance, attitude, and demeanor, and how these things change from day to day. An employee with a substance abuse problem will exhibit behaviors that are inconsistent with what you have grown accustomed to experiencing. So, initiate friendly conversations and make eye contact with employees on a regular basis. You will then be more likely to notice uncharacteristically slurred speech, a glazed facial expression, an unsteady gait, glassy or bloodshot eyes, and dilated pupils. These things can be easy to miss or dismiss if you are not frequently close to your employees. If you suspect an employee may be abusing drugs or alcohol, call your IMPACT Representative for support on how to appropriately address the situation.

Presenteeism is a relatively new term, but it is essentially a modernized version of what in the past has been referred to as “on the job absenteeism.” Although presenteeism is an interesting topic for discussion, attempting to identify who is affected by it is more difficult. It is better to avoid the technical aspects of this syndrome and instead focus on what you can document in your pursuit of helping your employees maximize their productivity and job satisfaction. Presenteeism typically refers to employees being at work while sick, but it also has been used to describe almost any nonproductive activity of employees on the job, no matter what the underlying reason might be. If you stay aware of behaviors that demonstrate an employee is either not performing competently or is without motivation for the tasks they are supposed to perform, presenteeism may exist. Read the article ‘Managing Performance’ online at www.MyIMPACTSolution.com or contact your IMPACT Representative to consult with you about presenteeism and intervention.