

MAY
2021

FrontLine Leader

Employees — Your most valuable asset

When I make a formal referral to the EAP, should I try to reduce the tension by having the meeting outside of my office? Would a quiet spot in a more neutral area be better?



A: It is important to recognize that having one's work praised and/or one's lack of satisfactory performance corrected is a normal, healthy and essential part of managing worker productivity. Try to not view these activities as regrettable or disadvantageous. Referring employees to the EAP is

likewise a complementary step in this process, periodically, and one designed to help workers address what may be preventing change. None of this is to say that meetings to correct performance can't be successfully held in other locations. Be aware that your concern about having the most accommodating

location, and that this element is essential to the meeting's success, may be motivated by your fear of conflict along with your desire for acceptance. It's great that you are willing to be accommodating, but remember it is the employee's responsibility to change, no matter where the meeting is held.



I have a superstar employee. He earns outstanding performance evaluations yearly. My concern is his gambling. After hours, he reportedly plays poker. I've heard that there is a lot of domestic conflict as well. Is it improper for me to inquire, intervene or involve myself in this situation?

A: Employees who perform well certainly can have serious personal problems, and symptoms may never be visible or demonstrated at work. A rumor or secondhand information does not justify making an inquiry into your employee's personal life unless the issue appears to be life threatening. So, you are not behaving irresponsibly by remaining focused only on performance. Remember, you know about this employee's problems only because of hearsay.

Other employees could have personal problems that are even worse. Frequently remind employees about the EAP. Remind employees about it during staff meetings, review periods, after a crisis, and by regularly sharing EAP educational and promotional materials. Remember also that this employee's personal problems may not have been accurately portrayed by the source, which is not unusual for secondhand information.



During supervisor training for drug and alcohol awareness, I came to the realization that I am probably an alcoholic. (Actually, I have suspected it for some time.) I have worked closely with the EAP over the years, so I feel too embarrassed to bring my own problem to them. Should I seek help elsewhere?

A: You should seek help from a credible resource that can provide you with a proper assessment and recommendation for appropriate treatment. Feeling embarrassed is associated with shame, which is driven by stigma for the disease of alcoholism. This is not uncommon for those who seek treatment.

You have likely spent many years in denial while also seeking to prevent others from noticing your excessive drinking. The motivation you feel now to make a move toward treatment is positive, but not likely to last very long, so don't delay. The EAP is confidential, but you should be aware that you are

not the only one at a supervisory or management level who has sought help. It takes a lot of courage to admit that you are an alcoholic. You are halfway to your goal of a healthier and longer life. You will discover surprising relief and acceptance if you contact Continuum EAP to seek help.



I documented my employee's performance issues and came back the next day to look at what I had written. I have to admit that the emotions really came through in the wording. I am glad I let it "cool down" overnight. Is it recommended to let documentation sit for a day or two?

A: If you are not in a rush, it is an excellent idea. The relationship with your employee can be stressful, so your emotions can come through in your documentation. It is easier to spot problems with your documentation the next day. Remove your documentation's emotional content so it does not undermine your goal. For example, eliminate diagnostic judgments like, "He is passive aggressive." or "She acts depressed." and remove character labels like "lazy," "inconsiderate," "immature," etc.

These phrases undermine documentation. You are documenting for the employee's benefit, but be clear with details and facts so if management needs to act on the documentation, they clearly can follow it. Do not include why you think your employee behaves the way he or she does. Focus on when, who, where, how, why, etc. Your HR advisor and/or Continuum EAP workplace consultant can also help work with you on appropriate documentation.