

THE CONTINUUM **EDGE**

INFORMATION FOR LEADERS



I learned the hard way that I must follow up after referring an employee to the EAP. I assumed all was well because the employee's attitude was positive. Problems later worsened, until a crisis eventually occurred. What makes follow-up so important?

A: Your experience is not uncommon for supervisors who see referral to Continuum EAP as “one and done.” Checking in with your employee helps reinforce accountability and helps ensure workplace expectations are still being met. A critical part of Continuum EAP’s helping process is supervisors following up after the initial referral. Talk to the EAP professional working with your employee about their performance, and develop a plan for how to monitor and support your employee after treatment or referral.

Employee assistance programs often lead to tremendous success, but that success depends on a supervisor’s “paired managerial oversight.” This means the manager remains visibly engaged after the referral, reinforcing expectations, tracking improvement, and signaling to the worker that performance change still matters. Without this ongoing presence, urgency fades, follow-through weakens and employees may drift from both EAP recommendations and employer expectations.

I am frequently accused of being a micromanager. I might check in frequently with a team to which I have delegated work, but I don't see this as micromanaging. What am I not understanding?

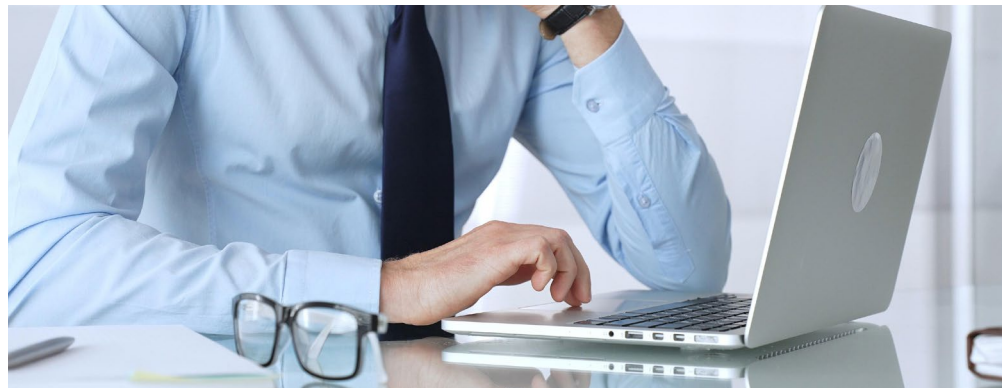


A: Micromanaging comes in many forms. A common perception of this practice is continually inserting oneself into a work project and not understanding how the authority of a supervisor influences group dynamics and productivity. Delegation is more difficult than it first appears. The goal is to allow a work team, as in your case, to be completely independent of your influence and direction, with the quality of the work product (whatever it

might be) speaking for itself. If the final product is not acceptable, the team learns from the experience. This can create a lot of anxiety for supervisors, and constant checking is a compensatory behavior to relieve fear that mistakes will reflect poorly on their leadership or result in loss of control. Keep practicing delegation, and rely on Continuum EAP to help you overcome the missteps in your supervision. Higher levels of workplace productivity await!



Can the employee assistance program (EAP) draft corrective letters and referral letters for supervisors so they can be more effective in motivating employees to visit Continuum EAP when performance problems indicate a formal referral is needed?



A: Continuum EAP cannot draft disciplinary or corrective documentation on a supervisor’s behalf. Writing performance documentation is a core supervisory responsibility, sometimes completed in consultation with human resources. However, the EAP can still play a valuable consultative role. It can offer general tips for effective documentation — such as clarity, structure, behavioral specificity and completeness — that may strengthen your writing to make it more understandable and helpful to employees. By limiting its role to consultation rather than authorship, the EAP preserves its credibility with employees and avoids being viewed as adversarial. This balanced approach increases the likelihood that employees will accept referrals, engage with Continuum EAP, and make meaningful use of the support it offers.



I don’t want my employees to be overly stressed, but I don’t have much control over current workplace demands. I know workplace stress is not new, but is there something new about the nature of stress and the risk of complaints against employers these days?

A: Workplace literature shows that stress is no longer just a personal concern but a serious organizational problem with legal risks. According to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) these types of cases are on the rise. (Source: embroker.com/blog/workplace-harassment-claims-data) Much discussion focuses on workplace cultures failing to adapt to massive changes in the world of work. Obviously, the roles of the supervisor and

Continuum EAP have never been more important. Early, subtle signs of increasing stress can be identified long before complaints start — including yawning, irritability, skipping breaks, eating at one’s desk, working late or on weekends, headache complaints and tardiness. Be proactive with individual workers. Encourage five-minute breaks and model them yourself. Huddle your team regularly in 10-to-15-minute meetings to share wins,

pass on information, and bond. This strategy has proven value in reducing stress. Try “stress temperature checks” by asking employees as a group how they are doing and what would help. Encourage use of the EAP, and underscore its confidentiality.

ABOVE ALL: Don’t be a supervisor who fails to provide reasonable support, ignores warning signs, allows excessive workloads, or engages in high-pressure tactics.

