

FrontLine Leader

Employees — Your most valuable asset

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This information is
provided by
Continuum EAP. If
you would like more
information on these
or other topics,
please don't hesitate
to contact us.



My employee complained to me that his supervisor was harassing and bullying him. I didn't take action, because I felt the first step was to have him confront his supervisor. I am ready to step in, but isn't this inappropriate until he has tried to resolve the issue with his supervisor first?

A

In years gone by, your approach may have been commonly recommended. However, in today's world of work, not taking action after being informed of offensive and hostile behavior is usually viewed by courts as a failure to act and negligence. Likewise, procrastination or putting off investigating the matter can be seen as apathy. Your good intentions are not given much weight. This is why sexual harassment policies support employees going to the next level of management when lodging complaints. It's better to ask, "How do I act now in order to get a fast, fair resolution regarding this incident?" Listen to the employee and get details of his concerns. Utilize your Human Resources Dept. or upper management to determine the best next steps.

Is there a role for Continuum EAP? Yes. The employee should be offered support. Do not think that suggesting the EAP is tantamount to accusing the employee of being the one at fault. EAPs reduce risk in business organizations, and helping employees manage any sort of emotionally upsetting incident is one way they do it.

Q.

I intended to give my employee disciplinary action for chronic absenteeism. He's been gone several days. When he showed up, he said he had just come from Continuum. I feel a bit manipulated. Should I hold off on the discipline or follow through?

A.

It is a positive development that your employee decided to participate in the EAP, but whether to dispense a disciplinary action is a decision to be considered in consultation with your management advisors. The planned disciplinary action may have motivated the worker to act. Do you feel the disciplinary action is no longer fitting? This situation is not uncommon, and it illustrates both the success and the influence of the EAP dynamic in organizations to attract, perhaps at the last moment, the most troubled workers. It would be appropriate to let the employee know that you appreciate his acknowledgment of the performance concern and for taking a positive first step to address the concern. Moving ahead with disciplinary action acknowledges the problem and could include a referral to Continuum to coordinate the behavioral changes needed. You could then contact Continuum related to the disciplinary action and request that a release of information be signed.

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Q: I think I've been good at praising my employees. But what else is there to know about praise as a way to motivate workers?

A form of praise less often used, yet highly effective is praise in advance. Call it "pre-praise." When handing off or delegating assignments to employees, praise them at start. Example: "Sherrie, with your past success at handling design crews, I'd like you to organize staff and manage the Jones account. I know we'll be proud of whatever you decide to do." This pre-praise, when sincere and heartfelt not only inspires employees, but motivates them to do their best work. You will improve your relationships with them, boost performance, and have them feeling more engaged. Be sincere, however. The positive effect from praising employees can be underestimated, but it can wear thin if it is not sincere. Just going through the motions, and not appearing genuine, will cause the approach to fall flat.

Q: My employee is quick to anger. It includes getting red in the face and shaking. Some co-workers think this is funny. Frankly, I am a little nervous. If he had a personal crisis, could he "go off"? Should I be concerned?

You have enough information to document this situation and be rightfully concerned about it. Consult with your Human Resources Dept., as well as Continuum, to discuss an approach that will constructively address the concerns. This could include an EAP referral. You don't have to wait until the next incident, but it will be helpful to have clear examples of the concerning behavior, its impact on others and work productivity, and what you would like changed.

Co-workers should be discouraged from finding this behavior as a source of entertainment, including taunting the worker. Employees with explosive rage can act with violence while feeling detached from their ability to control their behavior.

Qualities of great LEADERS

Check back next month for another featured quality.

#1 vision

Being able to turn big ideas into executable plans while keeping your team on track are crucial parts of leadership.



Mapping out your journey is the first step.



Be able to clearly describe your vision to other people.



Always stay one step ahead by anticipating and embracing change.

Source: Eliv8