

# THE CONTINUUM **EDGE**

## INFORMATION FOR LEADERS

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**Employee engagement has been a problem in the world of work for a while, but I hear it has reached a crisis level of concern for employers. What can supervisors do and what can the EAP do to make an impact?**

The employee engagement crisis reflects the growing problem of workers becoming disengaged at their jobs. Disengaged employees are less emotionally invested, may do only the minimum, and often do not see their work as meaningful. This can lead to lower productivity, higher turnover, more absenteeism, poorer customer service, reduced work quality, morale issues and less innovation.

Supervisors play a critical role in addressing employee disengagement. Key actions include:

- Clarifying expectations so employees know what success looks like.
- Recognizing effort and achievements both formally and informally.
- Providing consistent, fair feedback.
- Enforcing rules equally.
- Discussing career goals and offering development opportunities.
- Being open, approachable and honest about priorities and changes.
- Checking in on workload and well-being.
- Removing obstacles that prevent employees from performing at their best.

Continuum EAP can assist by consulting with supervisors on strategies to work effectively with individuals or teams, offering guidance for implementing engagement solutions, and providing resources that support motivation, performance and overall workplace satisfaction.



**Want to learn more about all the free and confidential services available to you through Continuum EAP?**

In addition to supervisory support and online tools, you — and even your family members — have access to a variety of resources designed to support emotional, physical, financial and legal well-being. For more info, scan the QR code, visit [4continuum.com](https://4continuum.com) or call 402.476.0186 / 800.755.7636.





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**I hesitate to confront employees out of fear of retaliation. Once you know staff well, they may know personal details about you and could spread rumors or gossip. How can I manage this fear more effectively?**

**A:** Seek coaching or support from Continuum EAP to build confidence, and practice a few difficult conversations so you feel more prepared. Role-playing scenarios can reduce anxiety and help you respond calmly, even if emotions run high. You can also discuss communication styles and how they can affect employees.

No doubt, certain supervisor behaviors can unintentionally escalate tension and increase the risk of retaliation. Here are a few common communication missteps that may lead to trouble:

- Using a harsh or condescending tone.
- Giving public criticism or reprimanding employees in front of peers.
- Enacting an inconsistent enforcement of the rules. For example, you decide to confront an employee for being late, but you've ignored similar lateness in others.
- Making it personal. For example, you focus on personality traits (e.g., saying someone is lazy).
- Ignoring positive contributions. For example, only pointing out what's wrong, never what's right.

Ultimately, you can't eliminate every risk of retaliation, but you can reduce it by being fair, consistent and respectful.

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**I have an employee whose productivity swings from excellent to minimal. This irregularity is frustrating. I've been overlooking it due to past success, but should I put more focus on this problem?**

**A:** It appears your employee has what is known as a spasmodic work pace. Many factors can cause this pattern. You are generally satisfied with the employee's performance, but the complaint about inconsistency is legitimate and should be addressed. Both the employee's well-being and the company's bottom line may be at stake. Inconsistency also affects co-workers and carries hidden costs. Address the problem by observing and documenting specific patterns

— missed deadlines, fluctuating quality or unpredictable output — and then have a private, fact-based conversation with the employee. Clarify expectations for steady, reliable work. Performance patterns can vary greatly, whether they stem from depression, personal issues, or simply poor time management. Set clear goals, hold regular check-ins, and offer constructive feedback. If problems persist, contact Continuum EAP to discuss making a formal referral to the EAP.

