

**Q. If I phone the EAP to provide information concerning a rumor I heard about an employee who was recently discharged from treatment and may be using again, will the EAP keep my phone call confidential? How will this information be used?**



A. A key principle in working with addictive disease employees is to avoid giving enabling and codependent-like responses to their behaviors. In this instance, seeking to verify such a rumor would be chasing something likely to be nearly undiscoverable. The EAP, understanding this dynamic, will avoid engaging in such controlling behaviors, but instead use the information as a backdrop to have a more effective follow-up discussion regarding the individual's progress in treatment and follow-through with a recovery program. EAPs don't provide treatment, so follow-up with the treatment provider will be important and allow clinical staff working with the employee to better manage or intervene if necessary. You would be doing the right thing in passing along this information, but your goal should be to help promote the satisfactory performance of an employee.

**Q. I don't believe I am a bullying supervisor, but several employees recently complained about my supervision style as being such. I think the whole idea of bullying is nearly "fad-like" and an opportunity for employees to escape responsibility for having subpar performance. Am I correct?**

A. In the past, the same argument was used to minimize the impact of sexual harassment in the workplace. Today, sexual harassment is illegal. Research has now documented its true cost. Bullying in the workplace is rapidly receiving the same level of recognition, also supported by research. See the citation on abusive supervision at [psycnet.apa.org/record/2006-11397-011](http://psycnet.apa.org/record/2006-11397-011). Do you ridicule employees? Have you put employees down in front of others? Have you accused them of incompetence, kept them away from "the good assignments," not given them credit for their work, yelled at them, or invaded their privacy by asking probing personal questions? Many of these behaviors were once considered natural elements of the traditional workplace, but not today. Talk to the EAP about making changes. Most employees who complain to supervisors about bullying say they do not see substantive changes from their tormentors. This implies that changing these behaviors can be tough. Still, you could remain at risk for employment or legal claims if your tactics don't shift.

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