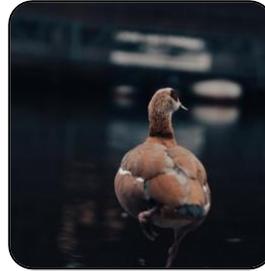


Q. What is the “Lone Ranger Syndrome” that is sometimes used to describe supervisors and how they conduct themselves in their role?

A. The Lone Ranger Syndrome is a construct originated 50 years ago by Arthur Purvis, an EAP author and federal employee personnel specialist. It describes supervisors who take on so much responsibility for managing workers' performance as well as their personal problems that they begin to burn out. They may feel anger, confusion, frustration, and helplessness, and their state of overwork may lead them to ineffective management practices. When EAPs first originated in the mid-1970s, it was important to recognize this construct in order to motivate supervisors to come forward and take advantage of what the EAP could offer them in the way of relief. It's considered a classic in EAP education and training.



UR Medicine EAP
315 Science Pkwy
Entrance C
Rochester, NY 14620

(585) 276-9110
1-888-764-3456

Email:
EAP@urmc.rochester.edu

Website:
urmc.rochester.edu/EAP

Q. My employee apologizes constantly for her inadequate performance. I know she is sincere, but I feel a bit guilty putting pressure on her and taking some action that could cause her to lose her job. She won't go to the EAP. I feel torn. I am more frustrated with myself than with her!

A. Your employee may indeed be sincere, but she is not a satisfactory performer. When she apologizes without correcting her performance, she effectively avoids disciplinary action you are unwilling to take. Until now, you have been manipulated to avoid taking stronger measures to correct her performance. But remember, discipline is not punishment; it is a tool for correcting performance. Your own performance is suffering because you are not managing this situation properly. What's more, if her problems are chronic, eventually the current performance issue will get worse. This could lead to a crisis you want to avoid. Consider this: By not acting more decisively, you have enabled her problems to grow worse. Not all employees are defensive when confronted. Some simply agree with you and but not feel motivated enough to change. Consult with the EAP about your indecisiveness. The EAP won't tell you to take disciplinary action or suggest what that action should be, but it will help you with personal issues that keep you avoidant and indecisive.

Q. The EAP has been a wonderful service for our organization. Many employees have been helped, and it is a great resource for our supervisors. I've noticed not all supervisors use the EAP equally. Other than simply lack of training, why might some be resistant?

A. Although EAPs help both employees and supervisors, and protect the organization by reducing behavioral risk, some supervisors may feel that the EAP takes away something that has given their job meaning: counseling or at least advising employees about personal problems, in addition to using persuasion to inspire changes. Some supervisors possess a style that includes being a confidant, a friend, and a wise advice giver. Some supervisors are more empathetic than others and are more interested in the human experience. This is positive, but their identity may be too closely connected to how others look up to them beyond pure performance and leadership matters. The desire to play a larger role in employees' lives can conflict with the role of supervisor and the critical link needed in facilitating referral to the EAP for troubled workers with severe problems that the supervisor is unable to resolve or possibly even identify.