

Q. Can you provide a checklist of points for meeting with an employee to confront them about performance, motivate them to correct it, and encourage them to use the EAP?



A. Talk with the EAP or recall the process of recommended steps for your organization, but the following should be helpful: 1) focus on job performance; 2) be specific; 3) ask the employee if he/she understands the situation clearly; 4) ask the employee to paraphrase what the supervisor has said; 5) ask the employee for a commitment to change; 6) set a specific time for follow-up and review; 7) explain that the employee must decide whether he/she should seek help for any personal issue that may be contributing to the performance issue; 8) explain clearly the EAP and how it works, and discuss confidentiality; 9) fully assure the worker that use of the EAP does not affect job security or promotional opportunities, and is not punitive in any way.

Q. If an employee approaches a supervisor about a personal problem, should he or she always be referred to the EAP no matter what the problem might be? For example, my employee complained that he hadn't seen a dentist in three years. I recommended mine.

A. If your employee asks for a recommendation for a dentist, there certainly isn't harm in sharing the name of the one you use. However, if the discussion includes reasons as to why this delay has occurred, a recommendation to talk to the EAP about those issues is appropriate. Every day, employees share personal problems with coworkers and supervisors at work. There is nothing unusual about it. However, some issues that at first appear benign are associated with severe problems that are suitable for bringing to the EAP. It is important for you as a supervisor to have a sense of curiosity about your employees and their well-being. The rationale is that your employees represent your most valuable resource. This curiosity does not mean involving yourself in employees' personal matters or diagnosing problems. But it does mean going a step further when an employee approaches you with something personal, and considering whether an EAP issue exists in the situation he or she presents. Curiosity means asking why. In your case, a delay in seeing a dentist could be associated with fear or financial hardship, among other reasons.

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