

**Q. How can the EAP help me as a supervisor cope with significant organizational change that is causing great stress among employees right now? We may be losing staff, and the change we are experiencing is taking everyone by surprise.**



A. Change isn't easy, especially if it takes you by surprise, but the EAP can help you take change in stride, stay positive, see the benefits of change, and preserve a sense of teamwork among your staff. Change typically involves stages of resolution similar to those of grief. These include denial, resistance,

acceptance, and finally, commitment. Anticipate the EAP helping you answer the question "How do I keep a positive outlook in the face of change?" This can be tough, but your organization relies on you to accomplish this. In this regard, never condemn organizational change outright to your staff. Avoid being labeled a malcontent. Do solicit your staff's input and feelings, and make time for venting. Most organizational change is about cost savings and efficiency. This comes with pain for some, but the upside is security in the long run for the organization and positives that flow to employees generally.

**Q. If my employee exhibits persistent attendance and conduct issues at work, should I document my observations and then attempt a formal referral, or is it better to speak with the EAP to prep myself a little better?**

A. Although employee assistance programs educate supervisors to make formal referrals, phoning the EAP to consult prior to the constructive confrontation is a good idea. EAPs welcome phone calls or meetings to discuss management and referral of troubled employees. This can help ensure a more successful outcome. The EAP can consult with you on effective language for your documentation, role-play the meeting with your employee, help you avoid overlooking less-obvious but important performance issues, and assist the EAP in preparing for a more effective motivational interview when the employee arrives at the EAP. Remember, such meetings with you are confidential, just as they are with employees. Effective communication is always the key to EAP success and the increased likelihood of helping employees and reestablishing the value they original held in their position prior to their performance difficulties.

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