



Solutions

A newsletter for managers, supervisors and human resource staff eligible for Kepro services



The following questions and answers are designed to help provide guidance related to challenges that supervisors may be facing. If any of these scenarios resonates with you, consider contacting Kepro for guidance.

All of my employees have shifted to working remotely. I can go long stretches without any interaction with them. Should I be doing something to check in?

Just as you would when in person, maintaining a good relationship with your employees is important. Many employees may be feeling isolated and disconnected and wonder if they are still valued. You no longer have the option to run into an employee in the lunchroom or hallway or pop in to ask about their weekend. Instead, send an instant message or email to ask how they're doing. Set reminders on your calendar for informal check-ins. Take a few minutes at the beginning of a meeting for some casual chit-chat and ask about employees' families, kids, or their hobbies.

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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 almost "fad-like" and an opportunity for employees to escape the responsibility of their subpar performance. Am I correct?

Anytime employees bring up concerns, even if in a casual or joking manner, or if you believe they are unjustified, you still want to take the time to conduct some self-analysis. Do you make comments that 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 are not today. Talk to the EAP about making changes. Most employees who complain to supervisors about bullying say they do not see substantive changes ultimately. This implies that changing these behaviors can be difficult. Still, you could remain at risk for employment or legal claims if your tactics don't shift.

I have a new employee with whom I don't get along. The chemistry or temperament between us isn't right, and I'm afraid down the road that we are going to have conflicts. Can the EAP help?

Yes, your description of "bad chemistry" is one to explore further with one of Kepro's Workplace Specialists. As you might guess, bad chemistry is not a mysterious occurrence. You are describing characteristics of personality differences that influence communication, both verbal and nonverbal. The important aspect of this problem is any resistance to trusting your employee. Trust is crucial to your achievement or to your work unit goals. You may be inclined to micromanage this employee's work. You may give less positive feedback about their work. You may be more naturally resistant to giving them attention, tending to ignore their contributions. Would you be inclined to avoid inviting this person to important meetings, have less empathy for their request for a raise, or criticize this person more? All of these issues can lead to turnover, along with the other problems this sort of schism you are describing naturally creates. The EAP will help you examine the situation and arrive at a personal coping and change strategy that can guide you toward greater understanding and compatibility.

My employee, an extremely bright individual, is facing administrative actions related to a poor decision regarding ethical behavior. How can the EAP help, or can it?

The general guidance when it comes to almost any consideration of whether to use the EAP to help an employee is to simply make the referral. The EAP will then make the proper determination about what role it should play in helping your employee. Even if the EAP decides to refer your employee to another resource, follow-up is nearly always important, and therefore the EAP would play a part in this task. Employees with personal problems, especially those who over-use defense mechanisms like denial and rationalization, can be more prone to ethical lapses of judgment



(lapses in their common sense). Your employee is smart, but is he or she level-headed and unaffected by personal problems that would make it more difficult to understand and assess a situation requiring a judgment-based decision? The EAP will likely discover the underlying issue and know the next step to take.

Why are EAPs considered a means to help supervisors manage stress? Does this refer to our self-referral to the program to help ourselves or does this refer to the mechanics of EAPs and how they remove the burden of managing difficult or troubling employee behavior?

It is both. EAPs help managers with personal stress, and the EAP process helps remove the stress of managing the problematic behaviors of employees that may be linked to their personal problems. There is one part of the process that many managers forget, however. Any performance issue that is not improving is a potential referral to the EAP. This step is a de-stressor because the EAP can share the burden of helping an employee correct a performance problem. When supervisors refer employees to the EAP, they are, in fact, referring them to correct performance issues, not mental health issues or other personal problems. Frequently, it is determined that some personal issue impedes performance (but not always). In those cases, EAPs have been known to then refer employees to every sort of help imaginable, even language classes, pet sitters, retirement planners, public speaking courses, reading improvement programs, and local colleges to finish degrees or acquire courses to improve skills and abilities.

How is the EAP handling counseling appointments right now? If I refer an employee, do they have to go in-person or are there virtual counseling options?

Kepro's EAP counselors are currently offering video-based counseling (or tele-therapy sessions). Virtual counseling is a way for individuals to access solution-focused counseling in a convenient, safe, confidential and secure format. When the employee calls to set up counseling, Kepro will explain the virtual counseling option. Our number one priority right now is safety. For those employees who are unable to attend virtually, Kepro can arrange for telephonic sessions or in certain situations, in-person counseling may be available. Counselors are adhering to all local requirements related to safety protocols.

Kepro's Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

The Employee Assistance Program through Kepro assists organizations and their workforce in managing the personal challenges that impact employee well-being, performance and effectiveness. Kepro's life management consultants employ a comprehensive approach that identifies issues impacting the employee and assists them in developing meaningful solutions.

The Employee Assistance Program can be accessed anytime, for free, confidential support from a professional consultant or online resource. Call or log on today.

Phone:

Website:

Company Code:

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