

FRONTLINE SUPERVISOR

Fall 2014

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Employee Assistance Program

800.451.1834

Available 24/7

Management Consultation Services

- Employee Performance
- Change Management
- Workplace Trauma
- Conflict Resolution
- Layoff Support
- Lunch & Learn Seminars
- Management Trainings
- Organizational Stress

Employee Services

Confidential Counseling

- Addiction
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Family Issues
- Stress Management
- Work Concerns

Resources & Referrals

- Legal
- Financial
- Child Care
- Elder Care

Employee Financial Problems

Q. None of my employees has indicated that they are having financial problems. Still, I know some of them must struggle with finances. How are money problems among employees different than other personal problems?

A. Typically, money is equated with power and status. Thus, for a person with financial problems, particularly overwhelming credit card debt, a terrible feeling of dread can drive a belief in personal failure. This can easily transfer into fear that one's job or reputation at work would be seriously affected if the extent of one's financial problems were known. Remarkably, research reported by the Personal Finance Employee Education Foundation shows that overall stress of the average employee could be reduced by 50% simply by resolving issues associated with financial stress. When you talk about the EAP to your employees, mention financial help. Specifically, mention the EAP's ability to identify financial help resources. You may not see much of a reaction, but ears will certainly perk up.



Source: www.personalfinancefoundation.org.

Does My Employee's Behavior Reflect Mental Illness?

Q. How do I know whether an employee's behavior reflects mental illness to the point of needing a psychiatrist or professional counselor? And should I refer to the EAP first, or seek a fitness-for-duty certification?

A. You will not be able to make a determination of mental illness in your official capacity as a supervisor. Getting too focused on whether your employee is mentally ill will lead to a delay in taking appropriate action. In an extreme situation, this could create a hazard for others. If you witness unsafe behavior that interferes with the workplace or jeopardizes a safe work environment, or if you see behavior that in your judgment indicates the employee is unable to perform essential duties safely, then follow your organization's fitness-for-duty policy or the guidance provided by your human resources representative. An EAP referral may also be appropriate in tandem with this step, but safety issues take priority over the success of an EAP referral, which can come later.

Measuring Up to Performance Standards



Q. I have an employee who does not measure up to the performance standards of others on our team.

Can you suggest ways to facilitate improvements that I may not have considered, before I recommend the EAP? Note that we are very stressed and under-resourced.

A. Your team gives you an advantage for helping your employee improve performance. First, review the workload. Some employees in resource-stressed organizations fool themselves into thinking that they can manage heavy workloads and take whatever is thrown their way without asking for help. Make sure the workload is balanced among team members. Are you rotating assignments among them? If not, cross-train, and then swap duties and gauge what happens. Some employees excel at one type of work more than another. Rotate job assignments; this employee may surprise you by demonstrating a range of skills. Don't pigeonhole the employee because you assume he or she has just one narrow area of expertise. Also, try pairing up teammates. Ask an outstanding team member to mentor a poor performer for a few weeks. This is a practical way to evaluate skill deficits and problems. Even if you are not ready to refer, you can still consult with the EAP during this evaluation period. You'll gain insight and be better prepared to refer the employee to the EAP when that becomes necessary.

Concern for Older Workers

Q. I support an inclusive workforce, but I worry that my older workers are more likely to burn out, struggle, resist new technologies, possibly have more illnesses, or get along poorly with younger supervisors. Should I be concerned?



A. Plenty of research demonstrates that these are stereotypes that have been blown out of the water. In fact, older workers frequently get high marks for loyalty, reliability, and having a deeper network of contacts than younger workers, who often must attend to and balance many more work-life demands. Older workers, because of their experience, may also understand much more about leadership, the doctrine of completed staff work, proper delegation of assignments, communication and relationship development, teamwork, listening, and the problem-solving process; in addition, they often have better writing skills. These days, workers of all ages have been exposed to technology. Workers currently in their sixties have used computers for decades. Understanding old technology makes it easier to understand newer technology. Developmental psychology tells us that the older we get, the more we are motivated by giving back; causes that support the community and passing on knowledge to others are key values for older workers. You can learn more from the 2010 book *Managing the Older Worker*, by Peter Cappelli, which is available at most online bookstores.

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