

The Successful SUPERVISOR

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Tips from  LifeSolutions

In addition to working very closely with supervisors, the EAP works with Human Resources (HR) when there is a concern regarding an employee. Sometimes this concern is related to a personal situation the employee has shared with HR. Other times the supervisor involves HR and as a result the EAP is likely to be consulting with both people. Thirdly the EAP works with HR on how to successfully refer an employee with job performance issues. The EAP plays an important role in providing support and direction to achieve stated goals in all these situations. In this issue we will look at the first two examples in some detail. We are interested in your feedback to the Successful Supervisor. Email your questions and comments to the EAP ask@lifesolutionsforyou.com

"I've received a call from a supervisor regarding an employee. This individual has a sick elderly parent and is starting to come in late and is distracted at work. As the HR professional, I've gone over policies and procedures to address this. However, I think both the supervisor and employee could use support and information. Should I direct them both to the EAP?"

Human Resources professionals call the EAP to consult on situations like this one. There are a number of concerns to address.

- ◆ **Support for the HR Professional:** HR's primary role is to provide direction on policy and procedures. This is essential to meet the needs of the employee, supervisor and company. When a desire for ongoing supervisor support is identified, the HR professional can call the EAP to consult regarding how best to proceed.

A key variable is the relationship the supervisor has with the HR professional. With an established relationship, the EAP's goal is to work with HR in providing what is needed to the supervisor. That can involve a single meeting by phone or in person or meeting as often as desired by the HR professional.

The EAP works as a partner with both Human Resources and other leaders including supervisors/managers. In that role, EAP consultants use their expertise in human behavior to support the supervisor and others in meeting their performance management goals.

- ◆ **Support for the Supervisor:** When the HR professional determines that the EAP is in a better position to help the supervisor, the discussion focuses on how to make that connection. Key elements include:
 - Differentiating EAP consultation from counseling and emphasizing the opportunity to expand management skill development.
 - Highlighting that the EAP is a workplace based, confidential resource to supervisors and others as they both lead and manage their areas.
 - Reinforcing the goal of supervisor success in managing a challenging employee situation.

- The final step is the HR professional notifying the supervisor that confidential consultation with the EAP is a resource to consider.

"I'm consulting with HR and they suggested that I also call the EAP. I have an employee who is coping with a lot . . . marital trouble and a special needs child. I know that I have to be consistent with my staff but I also want to get this employee in touch with the appropriate resources that can help."

- ◆ **EAP is Separate from HR:** The EAP does not have expertise in HR roles & functions. The EAP expertise is in human behavior. That knowledge is used to provide additional information, strategies and resources for the supervisor to use in developing a plan of action with the employee which meets policy and procedure requirements.
- ◆ **EAP Works with Both the Supervisor and HR:** The EAP consultant could speak with both HR and the supervisor at the same time or separately. The goals are: a) to test potential strategies and ensure the plan of action meets HR requirements and b) to support success. It's likely the EAP will work more closely with the supervisor and will touch base with HR as needed. The supervisor could be part of joint meetings or could sign off on what will be shared to ensure the supervisor's perspective is presented.

Whatever the employee concern, the EAP is available to both HR and supervisors. Give us a call.