

# The Successful SUPERVISOR

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Tips from  LifeSolutions

**This is the second of two issues on 'Supervising an Employee with Suicidal Concerns'. Information is referenced from "A Manager's Handbook: Handling Traumatic Events". U.S. Office of Personnel Management. June 3, 2009.**

**[http://www.opm.gov/employmentand\\_benefits/worklife/officialdocuments/handbooksguides/Trauma/Ch4.asp](http://www.opm.gov/employmentand_benefits/worklife/officialdocuments/handbooksguides/Trauma/Ch4.asp).**

**Last issue presented parts of this article providing an overview of the situation and specific tasks for the supervisor. This month The Successful Supervisor will focus on how the EAP can assist the supervisor and the employee.**

**We are interested in your feedback. Email your questions and comments to LifeSolutions at [ask@lifesolutionsforyou.com](mailto:ask@lifesolutionsforyou.com)**

"As a general rule, anyone feeling enough pain to be considered suicidal should be referred to a mental health professional, at least for evaluation." Making these referrals is one role for the EAP.

## **EAP Supervisor Support**

The EAP is available 24/7 to support a supervisor dealing with this situation. During daytime business hours the supervisor should first contact Human Resources (HR) to ensure knowledge of relevant policy, procedures and information on leaves. Together with HR or alone, the supervisor can then call the EAP at 1-800-647-3327.

The supervisor will be connected to an EAP professional who will:

- Obtain relevant information regarding the situation, the employee and supervisor concerns.
  - Especially important: provide all phone numbers and other contact information should the employee leave work before EAP contact is made.
- Explore any relevant previous work history as well as actions taken so far by the supervisor and their outcome.
- Outline the EAP process going forward which includes:
  - Arranging with the supervisor and/or HR to have an office available for a *private* telephone meeting with the EAP and the employee. Setting up a time for that meeting.
  - Creating a script with the supervisor and/or HR to get the employee to the telephone meeting.
- EAP professional who will speak with the employee calls the employee at the appointed time to:
  - evaluate the situation
  - develop a plan of action to keep the employee safe and
  - connect the employee to needed professional help.

From 5:00 pm – 8:00 am and holidays and weekends, the supervisor calls 1-800-647-3327 and chooses option #1 for emergencies. A care manager will answer the call and will

contact the EAP on-call professional who will address the situation with the supervisor.

- The plan for speaking with the employee will depend on employee location.
- The goals and outcomes remain the same as the daytime procedure.
- Supervisor should contact HR next day to update.

The EAP continues to be available to the supervisor who may have questions or concerns about how best to support and manage the employee after this incident.

## **EAP Employee Support**

The EAP stays confidentially involved with the employee from the initial phone call through treatment and return to work if treatment requires a leave of absence.

- An essential element of the EAP's involvement is to maintain confidentiality once the issue of safety has been resolved. Information is only shared with the employee's consent.
- EAP support happens at many levels:
  - assuring the employee he/she is not alone
  - getting the employee to the most appropriate type of treatment
  - following up with the employee and with signed employee consent, the treatment provider
  - assisting in managing work life issues like child or elder care, legal or financial issues and/or other challenges of daily living
- The EAP is also available to assist the employee in dealing with the workplace:
  - deciding what, if anything, to share with the supervisor and co-workers
  - developing/modifying workplace strategies to manage stress and the workload
  - redefining work life balance.

The EAP supports both supervisor and employee. Give us a call.