



Volume 23, Issue 4

# Solutions

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



*The following questions and answers are designed to help provide assistance related to issues that supervisors may be facing. Kepro, your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provides confidential consultation to managers seeking guidance related to a variety of workplace challenges.*

**Documenting an employee's performance issues is sometimes difficult for me because I am a supervisor who quickly addresses problems when I see them, gets a situation fixed, and then moves on. So, documentation seems unnecessary. What am I missing?**

While not every minor performance issue has to be documented necessarily, if there is a pattern of behaviors or performance problems, it is important to record these incidents as they occur. As a manager, part of your job is to develop an aptitude for knowing when something is important enough to be documented and to produce quality documentation. A serious matter to which some supervisors fall victim is suddenly discovering the need for documentation that does not exist, prompting them to quickly attempt to produce it from memory. The best practice is to document when inci-

dents occur, state the facts of what transpired, the outcome, and the consequence that was discussed with the employee regarding future incidents. Consult with your human resources department to be sure that these measures are in line with your organization's policy. Need help brushing up on documentation skills or determining next steps related to an employee's performance? Contact the EAP—the professionals there can help you.

**Can supervisors consult with the EAP about other issues related to our role as a supervisor, even if the subject has nothing to do with managing a troubled employee?**

Like any employee, the EAP is available to discuss and resolve professional and personal challenges you may be experiencing. This includes helping you develop specific management skills, address difficulties you may have completing certain tasks, handling difficult personalities at work, helping your team function more effectively, and much more. Counselors are equipped to confidentially help you with any issues that could be preventing you from being the best version of yourself.



**I struggle with annual reviews because I get really uncomfortable providing negative feedback. I find myself avoiding them, but this isn't fair to my employees and I know it's part of my job. Any tips for this problem?**

Try to remind yourself that your role as a manager is to provide constructive, impartial feedback, whether negative or positive, and to effectively communicate this information. Avoiding this task will not only prolong your discomfort but deprives the employee of the chance to receive important information about their performance and take action to improve, which will benefit the organization, you as the manager, and the employee. Follow these steps when providing feedback. 1) Be sure your employees know the goals and objectives of their position. A complaint commonly heard by EAPs is "I don't know what my boss expects from me." 2) Make corrective feedback tangible and measurable so employees can gauge their progress. 3) Don't lecture or criticize employees personally. 4) Give feedback soon and often so your employees never "wonder" what you are thinking about their performance. 5) Always mention the positive aspects of an employee's performance. Doing so will not undermine the corrective feedback, but just the opposite. It will increase your employee's receptivity to the negative feedback. 6) Discuss what change and success will

look like if the feedback is acted on. This gives the employee a specific goal to work toward. It may help to start and end the meeting with positive feedback or a compliment.

**I supervise a diverse group of workers. Many, I think, would not visit the EAP for counseling help. How can I better motivate these employees, whose culture may discourage sharing personal problems with others, to consider using the EAP?**

If you're a new first-time supervisor, you'll discover an endless stream of advice, including do's, don'ts, how-to's, websites, and lots of other resources. Supervising others and developing leadership skills to get the work done will be your most measured job function. With experience, you'll develop your instincts, but there is no rushing becoming a great supervisor. You can avoid novice mistakes by doing the following: 1) instead of taking on more work, focus on managing the completion of work; 2) communicate above, below, and around you; 3) avoid becoming overwhelmed with to-dos that rob you of your work-life balance; 4) don't count on others to act quickly and blindly on your say-so; 5) model the type of employee you want others to be; and 6) get to know those you supervise one-on-one.

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## 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:**

*SOLUTIONS is a newsletter for managers, supervisors and human resource staff eligible for Kepro services. Kepro EAP services provide assistance and guidance to supervisors dealing with workplace performance issues. This newsletter is intended for general information purposes only and is not intended to replace the counsel or advice of a qualified health professional. Individuals should follow the policies and procedures laid out by their human resource management department concerning use of the EAP. Some articles reprinted with permission from DFA Publishing and Consulting, LLC. Kepro, Harrisburg, PA. All rights reserved.*

**I have two very smart employees who are constantly in conflict with each other. I hesitate to refer them to the EAP to resolve their issues because I think they will manipulate the EAP counselor, who may not be a match for their ability to manipulate. Should I refer anyway?**

Yes, you did the right thing, by basing your referral on the disruption everyone witnessed. This is a domestic violence incident spilling into the workplace. Your employee could be a domestic violence victim, or conceivably, the perpetrator of domestic violence. We don't really know. However, the EAP will assess the situation and make a determination regarding how to proceed. This will include an assessment of the risk to the employee and the organization, and if need be, communication with a signed release so you can feel assured that any issues regarding this situation are being properly handled. Remember, a formal referral to the EAP is not a punitive measure and helping her participate in the program by making a formal referral was a smart move. Domestic violence cases can spill into the workplace, and you want to avoid this escalating into something more serious.