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# Solutions

A newsletter for managers, supervisors and human resource staff eligible for Kepto 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.*

**My employee says he is being treated for depression by a psychiatrist. He is still coming to work late, however. This is my key concern. The EAP is not involved yet, but how do I involve the EAP if my employee is already seeing a medical doctor and a therapist? Won't the employee resist?**

You can consider involving the EAP by making a referral based upon the performance, conduct, or attendance issues demonstrated by this employee. Check with your HR department first to determine whether your organization supports requiring the use of the EAP or suggesting it as part of a larger performance conversation. In this case, coming repeatedly late to work is the problem. It's a good thing your employee is seeking help, and it may help resolve the depression problem, but attendance problems remain. If your employee meets with the EAP and your organization supports formal EAP referrals, a release of information will be signed, an assessment will be conducted to consider the type of treatment being received, and a decision will be made to either consult with the physician (with the employee's permission) or make additional recommendations based on the EAP's findings. Could there be a problem that the psychiatrist is not treating? Could there be a misdiagnosis? Could the EAP discover the real problem that contributes to attendance issues? The answer to these questions is yes.

**Can I refer an employee to the EAP for acting "immature"? By immature I mean demonstrating behaviors that are more like those of a teenager, acting out of personal desires rather than putting the needs of the team first, and displaying jealousy and envy of others. This employee must change.**

Since "immaturity" is difficult to measure, it becomes important to be descriptive regarding the objectionable behavior so it can be presented in a corrective interview. You can then ask that it stop and later measure whether change happens. This is not as easy as it sounds, but it is crucial to motivate change and refer the employee to the EAP if it becomes necessary.

You may need to witness the behavior you describe again, and document it contemporaneously so it is clear. You have witnessed the employee being selfish and "not putting the needs of the group first." How is this demonstrated by words or behavior, and what substantiates the attitude and misdirection you see? Rely on the EAP or your human resources advisor for help regarding how to develop useful documentation. You are more likely to see the changes you want, possibly without ever needing to make a referral.

**We have employees returning to on-site work, and many have not been together for quite a while. Is there something I should do as a supervisor to facilitate the renewed team environment, or will this naturally take care of itself?**

"Reboarding" (re-onboarding) describes the process of reuniting employees and facilitating their renewed role in the workplace. The process recognizes that previously quality teams and effective coworker relationships will not necessarily pick up where they left off. Many surveys report dramatically increased anxiety among employees returning to work. Change causes stress; this alone is enough to make the transition back to work more difficult. Managing this anxiety falls on supervisors. Along with many employees perceiving remote work as more desirable, changes in family routines add to employees' stress. A key objective for managers is helping to prevent attrition by facilitating an equally happy on-site job experience. This requires understanding, patience, reassurance, and good communication. Being present and holding meaningful conversations with employees and allowing them to share their viewpoints and opinions about what they are experiencing being back on the job are crucial. Pay attention to signs or symptoms of troubled workers, particularly those who appear unable to reengage. Suggest the EAP, or refer employees as needed.





**Most of the employees in our office, including me, wander into work late by 10–15 minutes every day. One employee has started coming to work 45–60 minutes late. All of this has to stop, so how do I “push the reset button”? Should I have a meeting and lay down the law?**

The near-universal problem of tardiness coming to work that you describe has its origins in the permissibility you have shown by your own example.

So, the starting point is changing your behavior first, both to model a new standard and to set the stage for something new. You then can have a meeting, but going forward, deal with your employees individually rather than as a group regarding this issue, because it is personal responsibility, not a team effort, that will be required to make the changes needed. One employee is coming in extraordinarily late. Anticipate this person coming in on time when the new standard is set, but beyond that, it would not be unusual for the pattern to continue if a personal problem of some sort exists. Consider suggesting use of the EAP if this pattern persists.

**I have been a manager for 20 years. Although I have given advice to other supervisors on confronting difficult employees, it still seems more like an art than a science to get changes from an employee. What are the best tips for confronting difficult employees to keep and pass along?**

Although each of the following could be divided into additional steps, they represent some of the best tips in correcting behavior or performance.

- 1) Don't delay in dealing with a problem. As time passes, it generally becomes more difficult to correct.
- 2) Prepare to be surprised by an employee's explanation for the behavior or issue. Be open-minded about what to do next.
- 3) Don't be long-winded, lecturing, or parental. It triggers resistance.
- 4) Employees are your most valuable resource. Keep this in mind and you will use the right tone.
- 5) Don't be angry with employees to the degree that you omit reminding them what they do well. Doing so generates motivation to cooperate with you.
- 6) Bring notes or an outline. It helps you and helps the employees take you seriously.
- 7) Meet in a nonsocial, business setting to convey importance.
- 8) Mention the EAP as a resource for employees to use if they experience difficulty making the changes requested.

## 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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