



Employees—  
Your Most  
Valuable  
Resource

# Frontline Supervisor

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Kentucky Employee Assistance Program

(502) 564-5788 or (800) 445-5327

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■ **I referred an employee to the EAP but I don't think they are following through with its recommendations because there are still major job performance problems. Is there any reason to meet with the employee, even though I can't discuss the personal problem?**

**Yes. Sit down with** your employee. Explain that you are in this meeting not to discuss any personal business related to the EAP referral, but to address the performance or conduct matter that led to the referral in the first place. Your expectation is the resolution of that problem or concern regardless of follow-through at the EAP. Let your employee know what the consequences are for a continuation of the problem, and encourage him or her to continue participation in the EAP program along with its recommendations. Follow up and meet with your employee in the weeks ahead to reinforce any successful work performance or address any return to the performance issue. Whether you refer to the EAP again (if problems return) would be up to you, but talk with the EAP if that happens.

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■ **We hired an employee who was recently paroled from prison after being incarcerated for a few years. Can I refer the employee to the EAP to be interviewed and assessed for any risk issues?**

**You should not** refer an employee for this purpose. The employee could always self-refer to the EAP for any reason, of course, and you could refer the employee (like any other employee) for performance issues, but meeting with the EAP to help management better gauge the employment decision would be impermissible. Your new employee has a parole officer, and the court has a discharge plan. The court takes responsibility for a parolee's assessment, release, and suitability for work.

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■ **I am feeling burned out. I am exhausted, apathetic, and frustrated. Should I go to my boss first or visit the EAP for answers on how to get out of this state of mind?**

**Whether you approach** your boss or the EAP is your decision, but here is how the EAP can help: 1) Assess the degree to which burnout is affecting your physical health (a medical referral may follow). 2) Identify the ways in which burnout has affected your work-life balance, with the goal of

planning a return-to-wellness strategy, particularly with regard to depression. 3) Offer suggestions for intervention strategies outside of work that can help you return to a more fully functioning state of engagement with your organization. 4) Help you examine on-the-job interventions, some of which may require discussion with your boss in order to implement them. 5) Follow up with you to facilitate, monitor, and help you implement your return-to-wellness plan.

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■ **The spouse of an employee phoned me on Sunday night to say his wife would not be at work the next day because of a car problem. It all seemed rather odd. I recommended this employee visit the EAP in the past for being absent on Mondays. What's my next step to intervene? I think I am done with excuses.**

**Many employees will** visit the EAP based on a supervisor's recommendation. This usually happens for two reasons: They really have a personal problem and the prompt by the supervisor does the trick to motivate them to get help, or they don't have a problem at all, but they go to the EAP to explore the possibility of such or to alleviate the supervisor's concern. Employees with personal problems they would really rather control but not give up, like alcoholism, seek help because of a different set of dynamics. This last possibility may describe your employee and why your earlier recommendation was ignored. Employees with personal problems that affect job performance but offer significant "desirable benefits," like addiction, must be motivated to accept help by the goal of avoiding something they fear. Typically, this is an effective disciplinary action in response to performance issues. The question for the supervisor is always how long to tolerate repeated performance problems before deciding upon an action that can leverage an employee's desire to seek help.

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## NOTES