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# 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.*

### **How can I be a better supervisor to my team?**

An Interact/Harris poll of 1,000 U.S. workers in 2015 showed consistency with virtually all similar research, that communication issues topped the #1 complaint of employees. Below are nine areas where communication issues appear most often and how you can improve them:

1. Recognize an employee's achievements;
2. Give clear directions;
3. Have time to meet with employees;
4. Talk with subordinates;
5. Give credit to others' for their ideas;
6. Offer constructive criticism;
7. Know employees' names;
8. Talk with people on the phone or in person;
9. Ask about employees' lives.

You might start by rating yourself in these areas to identify any improvements you could make to your management style.

*[Top Complaints from Employees About Their Leaders](#), Harvard Business Review, June 24, 2015*

### **Can you offer tips for engaging with an employee whom we suspect is under the influence on the job?**

Start by observing the employee and document details such as slurred speech, unsteady gait, or difficulty concentrating. If your organization requires a second supervisor's observation, or involvement of a union or business representative, make these arrangements. Organizational policies vary widely regarding these issues. Find a private location to have a confidential conversation with the employee. Express your concerns about the behavior but be direct. Do not make assumptions or accusations. State what you have observed. For example, ask the employee, "You look a little 'off.' Are you okay?" And then allow the employee to respond. Or ask, "Have you been drinking today?" Be calm. Show empathy. Avoid casting judgment. If the employee admits to drinking or shows signs of impairment, address the issue immediately and follow your organization's policies. Consult with HR if you are unclear of what to do in this situation.



## **How do I confront an employee who suddenly is performing unsatisfactorily? They have typically been a strong performer.**

An employee who has been an excellent performer but is now showing a pattern of reduced effort and quality or quantity of work must be confronted, but the right approach is crucial. Schedule a meeting with the employee to discuss their recent performance. Acknowledge their past performance and highlight the value they bring to the organization. Both aspects are powerful in motivating change. Let your employee know you appreciate their work and its positive impact. Be specific about the problem you are discussing, with examples of where they have fallen short. Include how the current performance issues are affecting the team, if applicable. Ask for the employee's perspective and what they think about the issues you have just shared. The employee may share personal issues that could be appropriately assisted by suggesting the EAP as a resource. Overall, take the "we" approach to help get the problem resolved. For example, say, "Bill, let's work to get you back on track." Set expectations, a timeline for change, and a schedule for reviewing the employee's progress.

## **I have been hearing the word "belonging" quite often as it pertains to employee well-being. Is this a new concept, and what should it mean to me as supervisor?**

The word "belonging" has come to mean helping ensure that all employees feel welcomed, included, and connected in the

workplace. It also means that employees feel valued and respected for who they are, along with having their contributions recognized and appreciated. Belonging is important because it can lead to increased job satisfaction, engagement, and motivation. This can dramatically improve performance and productivity. Supervisors can value belonging by embracing employee differences, encouraging open and honest communication between workers, and finding opportunities for employees to grow and develop. Don't forget to celebrate achievements and contributions. Engage your employees one-on-one with effective conversations to identify feelings of lack of belonging. Do this by regularly asking them how they are doing and how the job is working out for them and ask if there is anything else they need to feel supported.

## **I am certain that my employee's performance issues are related to untreated ADHD, although as a supervisor I can't make this determination. However, I found an article online that absolutely defined his problems perfectly. Should I at least give it to him?**

You'll want to document the performance issues of your employee and suggest the employee contact the EAP for support in managing the current performance issues. It is not recommended that you give your employee material that is meant to help him self-diagnose. You'll want to keep the focus on work performance and away from personal issues, similar to how you would handle any chronic condition with overt symptoms.



## How can managers best support employees who are on the autism spectrum?

Your job as a supervisor is supporting employees in general, but with neurodiverse employees, the goal is to create a workplace that is inclusive and where they feel comfortable. Here's how to foster an inclusive environment:

1. Be clear and direct in your communication. Explain your expectations and give feedback.
2. Anticipate that employees will take more time to process information or respond to questions. So, allow them to take that extra time.
3. Incorporate structure, predictability, and routines in the work environment. This will allow those on the autism spectrum to feel more comfortable and confident on the job.
4. Use visual aids when explaining routines and procedures.
5. Give constructive and specific feedback and acknowledge when they are doing a good job.
6. If possible, create a quiet workspace, or offer noise-canceling headphones.
7. Consider education and awareness programs, perhaps through the EAP, that can help coworkers foster understanding and acceptance of neurodiverse workers and differences in their communication styles and behaviors.

Don't forget, the EAP can be a resource for managers looking for ways to support all employees.

## Kepro 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: 1.800.833.3031**

 **Website: [www.EAPHelplink.com](http://www.EAPHelplink.com)**

 **Company Code: IOWA**

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