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# Solutions

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



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

**What is a key method to keep an employee from becoming defensive when confronted with ongoing work quality, conduct, or attendance problems?**

The supervisor should review prior documentation of past efforts to address the performance problems with the employee. Referring to prior documentation that was reviewed and acknowledged with a signature by the employee, is one of the most certain ways to gain cooperation and display the pattern of continued concerning performance issues. Without it, the supervisor is forced to rehash past discussions from memory, and these stories may be less accurate when recalled than the notes and documentation that have been previously accepted and agreed to.

**If an employee comes to the EAP with general complaints indicating they are depressed, I imagine such employees are referred to a medical doctor like a psychiatrist for further assessment. What else does the EAP do beyond determining the need to refer?**

When an employee contacts the EAP because of symptoms of depression, much more happens than a routine depression screening. Typically, the EA professional will assess psychosocial or environmental/lifestyle issues that are either symptoms of the depression or exacerbating the primary condition. These issues must be addressed, or they risk undermining the work of the psychiatrist to whom the employee is referred. Many psychiatrists manage medications extremely well, but they often are unable to address other factors. Treatment of depression or other mental health issues typically will involve a combination of therapy conducted by the EA professional and medication management by a psychiatrist.

**I made my employee an assistant supervisor, but I see him struggling in the leadership role. He isn't very proactive, doesn't speak with authority, and is undecisive. Can the EAP help? Or would it be better to suggest workshops or other supervisor training where skills can be taught?**

The EAP can help! Have you discussed your observations with the employee? Once you've discussed this with your employee and provided examples of how to demonstrate stronger leadership skills, you'll know if there is an opportunity for additional training or support you can provide as a manager. Remember to document what you reviewed and the employee's response or plan. If the employee continues to struggle, an EAP referral is a good starting point. The EAP will discuss the difficulties he is experiencing in the position, the work climate, and the employee's understanding of the problem. There are many issues that can interfere with performance beyond the educational piece and the EAP can help sort those out.

**How can I be less stressed out as a supervisor? Yes, I know about work-life balance, finding a mentor, and even relaxation exercises, but there must be more generally helpful ways to cope. Perhaps other supervisors who are less stressed than I have some tips they can share? How can the EAP help?**

Unfortunately, many supervisors are currently feeling stressed. A Gallup survey last year found that 35% of supervisors report being extremely stressed out. Stress and burnout grew after 2020 and became worse in 2021. The EAP can help examine your stressors and develop a plan around ways to lower your stress. A discussion with the EAP can help you see the bigger picture so that you can employ proper strategies that are more likely to be effective.

*Source: [www.gallup.com/workplace/357404/manager-burnout-getting-worse.aspx](http://www.gallup.com/workplace/357404/manager-burnout-getting-worse.aspx)*



**I am now supervising remote staff. How can I improve communication, trust, and engagement among my employees?**

Communication is the key issue that affects remote workers and your relationship with them. Trust and engagement amongst employees come from the effectiveness of your communication strategy. It is crucial to create communication protocols and systems so those you supervise do not feel left out or unsure of their expectations. Remote staff still want to be recognized and have opportunity to connect with their coworkers despite being off-site. Over time, if the same opportunities are not provided, remote staff could lead to cynicism, coworker conflicts, loss of engagement, and diminished loyalty and eventually turnover. Employees may compensate for their feelings of disconnection by reducing productivity or splitting their work time between work and personal needs. If you would like to improve your remote management skills, consider contacting your EAP.

**Can the EAP help me stop worrying about whether others are judging me as a new supervisor? I want to stop being so self-conscious so I can engage with my peers, be more relaxed, and stop worrying about whether others are judging me.**

Discuss your goals with the EAP. The EAP can help by giving you a plan to practice, monitor, and gauge progress in overcoming these habits of thinking, so you feel more confident. Your struggle is a common one many people are hesitant to admit, but you can learn social and engagement skills that will help. You will discover positive self-talk affirmations, how to avoid becoming preoccupied with these thoughts, how to focus on others rather than yourself, and how to overcome false beliefs about what people are thinking in social settings. You will learn to stop thinking about making an impression and instead concentrate on engaging effectively. The EAP can help develop some concrete strategies that align with your goals.

## **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:** 1.800.833.3031

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

 **Company Code:** IOWA

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