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# Solutions

A newsletter designed to support leadership and human resource staff





**Acentra**  
HEALTH

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

**I'm a new supervisor. What's the greatest challenge I'll face as I take on this role?**

One of the greatest challenges you'll face as a new supervisor is cultivating a leadership mindset. This mindset encompasses the attitudes and beliefs that shape how you behave and interact with your team. A leadership mindset means being adaptable and open to new ideas. It views change not as a threat, but as an opportunity for growth. With a leadership mindset, you'll often need to make quick decisions and take responsibility for outcomes, even when you don't have the luxury of consulting others. You'll also learn to share credit for successes while taking ownership when things go wrong. As a leader, you'll need to develop a clear vision for your team and inspire them to work toward it. Good leaders also prioritize fostering a healthy, inclusive work environment—one where everyone feels valued, and creativity and collaboration are encouraged. While leadership can be rewarding, it also comes with

emotional and interpersonal challenges. Don't hesitate to reach out to the EAP for support if you encounter any hurdles along the way. Embrace the journey, knowing that your leadership growth will benefit both you and your team!

**I was discussing performance issues with an employee, but there seemed to be a clear mismatch between his verbal responses and nonverbal cues—he appeared defiant. Should I focus only on what I can quantify, or should I address these nonverbal signals as well?**

It's important not to overlook nonverbal cues such as crossed arms, lack of eye contact, or a dismissive tone, as they can reveal underlying emotions or attitudes that words alone may not express. These behaviors may signal disengagement, frustration, or dissatisfaction—issues that could indicate deeper concerns with both performance and workplace morale. Ignoring nonverbal signals could allow unaddressed behavioral issues to fester, potentially leading to bigger problems like undermined authority or lowered team morale. In fact, unchecked nonverbal behaviors can become habitual, and over time, these patterns may negatively impact productivity and employee relationships. Consider



involving the EAP for guidance on how to address both performance and attitude issues. The EAP can help you interpret and respond to nonverbal cues effectively, ensuring that underlying concerns are identified and resolved before they escalate. While “attitude performance” (such as tone of voice and body language) can be difficult to document, the EAP can provide strategies to help you approach these challenges with more confidence and clarity. The EAP may suggest you have a conversation with the employee where you mention: “I’ve noticed your body language seems closed off, by your lack of eye contact and the way you have your arms crossed, and I’m sensing there may be something more behind that, are you comfortable telling me more about what I’m noticing?”

**I met with my employee to confront him about performance and attendance issues, but I was taken aback when he confronted me about my own behaviors— coming in late and communicating poorly. He isn’t wrong, but this undermined my ability to feel in control and take charge. What should I do now?**

It’s natural to feel thrown off when an employee turns the tables and addresses your own behaviors, especially if those concerns are valid. Consider

reaching out to the EAP for guidance on how to manage difficult conversations and improve your communication skills. They can help you navigate the conversation more effectively. In this situation, it’s important to remain professional and self-reflective. Don’t dismiss your employee’s comments. Do the opposite, thank him for his feedback and commit to addressing his concerns. It’s helpful to realize that sometimes people do this to take the focus off themselves. After acknowledging his points, steer the discussion back to his performance and attendance issues. Schedule another meeting focused solely on his performance and attendance. Remember to document, follow up, and implement accountability. Self-awareness and consistency in leadership are important. Make sure to address your own conduct and make improvements where needed, as this will help you build credibility and maintain authority. Many supervisors do not realize that their actions set the tone for their team or department. Their behavior directly influences whether the workplace becomes positive and productive or heads in the opposite direction. Their behavior also shapes employee expectations accordingly. While addressing performance issues is necessary, self-awareness and consistency are equally important.





**One of my employees sees a psychiatrist every few months for medication checks and possibly therapy. She's been doing this for about three years. Recently, she's started coming to work late, and it's becoming chronic. I'm concerned. Should I encourage her to speak with her doctor or refer her to the EAP?**

It's best to recommend the EAP to your employee or consider a formal referral (if your company allows for those) if you've already addressed the tardiness without seeing improvement. While you may have concerns about her health or medication, it's important not to make assumptions or try to diagnose the issue yourself. Her attendance problems may have little or nothing to do with her treatment, therapy, or medication. To better understand the root cause of her lateness, it's important to have a direct conversation with her. Ask her why she's been late recently. By listening closely, you may uncover work-related factors—like workload, team dynamics, or unclear expectations—that could be contributing to her tardiness. These issues may need to be addressed separately from her health concerns. Approach the situation with a non-judgmental, open conversation to explore all potential causes of the tardiness. This will allow you to support her effectively, without making assumptions about her health.

## Employees Assistance Program

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provides counseling sessions at no cost, as well as a wide variety of services to enhance overall wellbeing and support healthy work/life balance. In addition, the EAP is available to provide meaningful solutions to address the many challenging situations facing those in management roles. Leaders can take advantage of unlimited management consultations and receive guidance and assistance related to employee and team functioning concerns.

The EAP can be accessed anytime. For free, confidential support from a licensed, experienced counselor, call today. You can also access helpful management tips and resources on the website.

 **Phone: 1.800.833.3031**

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

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*Solutions is a newsletter for managers, supervisors and human resource staff eligible for Acentra Health services. Acentra Health 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. Acentra Health, McLean, VA. All rights reserved.*