

Solutions

Volume 18, Issue 1



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



 **KEPRO**[®]
INTELLIGENT VALUE

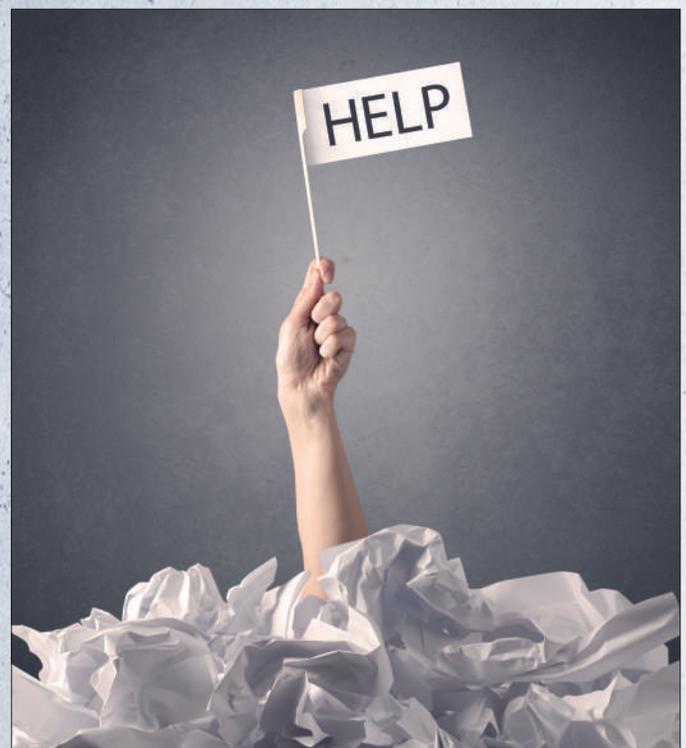
Q: The EAP notified me that an employee I referred is not following through with EAP recommendations. The employee signed a release, but there are no disciplinary issues. Is there any reason to meet with the employee, even though I can't discuss the personal problem?

A: 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 reconsider participation in the EAP along with the 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.

Q: I don't want to be the cause of my employees burning out, but there is no way I can distribute less work to them. Can you offer tips for how to balance these issues? Is there any hard data to back up those tips?

A: When discussing burnout, it is important to describe what the term means, given the context of the work situation.

A report from the National Institute of Health in 2017 reminds us that burnout is not an official mental health diagnosis, that the definitions are drastically non-uniform across research studies, and that many symptoms included in these definitions are also associated with depression. So, who is burned out and who is not is not easy to determine. A recent Gallup survey of German workers may have discovered an answer that will help you in considering how to engage with your workers. Those who received regular praise and recognition for good work, had proper materials

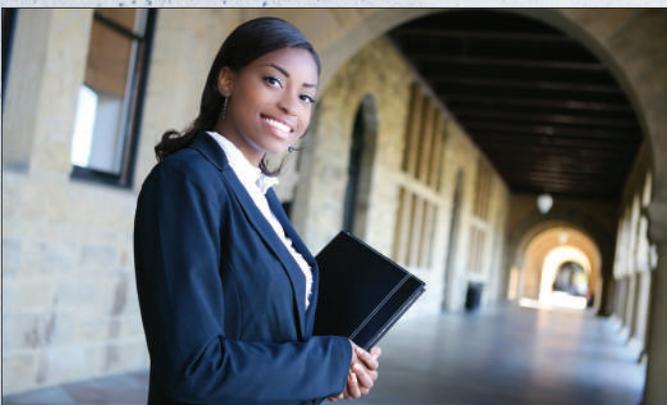


and equipment to deliver quality work, and felt their opinion counted reported lower feelings of burnout. How much control do you have over these factors? It appears that most supervisors have quite a bit. Source: www.gallup.com [search: "German Workforce Stress"].



Q: I have an employee who behaves as if he “knows” everything. Other employees suppress their opinions around him, so I miss their input on issues that need to be resolved. The tricky part is that he really is smart, but how do I address a problem like this?

A: It is difficult for some supervisors to imagine that a very smart employee with significant skills and major contributions could also be a problem employee. This is an example of the “halo effect.” This can make it a challenge to confront an employee about conduct issues. Obviously, it takes more than intelligence to be effective in the workplace. It also takes teamwork, soft skills, and emotional intelligence — the ability to recognize others’ needs and feelings and use this information effectively. These skills appear lacking or unapplied in this instance. You can quantify the effect that your employee’s behavior, conduct, and attitude have on others. You also can observe behaviors that lead to these effects. This is all you need in order to compose the effective documentation necessary to discuss and counsel your employee. Meet with the EAP, however, for consultative help on pulling these pieces together in a way that will be effective when you sit down to discuss the issues and make changes.



Q: I am new to my leadership role. Can I learn leadership skills from a book, or is leadership too complex? Is it an art form or the product of some creative process? What role can the EAP play?



A: Much of leadership is learned from the school of “hard knocks,” but it is also an art and a science, as many books attest. Literature may increase desire and excitement for your new role, but it won’t shorten the learning curve of practical experience. Some principles that can help you shape your own style are worth hearing:

- Be clear with employees about what you want from them — don’t let them wonder about it.
- Offer a vision about what success looks like that they can grasp. Doing so will cause employees to establish standards of performance modeled after your examples.
- Never allow employees to think they aren’t accountable, and be liberal with praise and celebrate successes.
- Be consistent with your employees by not confusing them with different or muted reactions to problems and concerns. Employees will march to the rhythm you set and this will influence the work culture.
- Don’t let your leadership style develop accidentally. Make this a conscious process.



Q: I referred an employee to the EAP two years ago. A lot of problems with absenteeism occurred at the time. Things have gone great since then, but suddenly, he is not coming to work. He is missing some days and is late on others. What is my next step—call EAP?

A: Speak with your employee in a corrective interview and find out why he is missing work. Refer to your documentation. Note that asking why your employee is coming late to work is not an intrusion or diagnostic query. The employee may disclose something personal, but do not attempt to engage in solutions. Leave that to the EAP. Regardless, it is your decision about how you wish to proceed. A formal referral back to the EAP may return another two or more years of great work, or based on the history, your organization may have a disciplinary action in mind.



Conduct a cost-benefit analysis that weighs returning your employee to a satisfactory level of performance versus an action that would include dismissal. Sometimes the understandable frustration management feels toward relapses leads to decisions not fully in management's own interest.

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.

Please call the phone number below for information about your Employee Assistance Program and the services available to you.

Phone:

Website:

Company Code:

SOLUTIONS is a newsletter for managers, supervisors and human resource staff eligible for KEPRO services. KEPRO 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. KEPRO, Harrisburg, PA. All rights reserved.

