Q. My employee has had serious attendance problems and I referred the worker to the EAP. Everything is going well I hear. Should I expect attendance problems to stop immediately or should I give it some time?

A. Absenteeism can drastically impact organization and team effectiveness. Attendance problems are symptoms that stem from the problems that create them, whether it be a family concerns, physical illness, or a substance abuse issue. When the employee meets with an EAP counselor, they will assess the concerns contributing to absenteeism, and help the employee create a plan to address frequent absences. Successful resolution of the concern can include use of FLMA, seeking a reasonable accommodation, engaging in medical treatment, and more. Lasting and sustained behavioral change can take time, and with EAP's support, you can feel reassured that your employee is addressing the cause of the concern, not just the symptom.

Q. I have referred many employees to the EAP over the years. I often notice that as the personal problem gets resolved, work performance also improves. Is this expected? What explains this level of performance improvement after employees visit the EAP?

A. When employees participate in the EAP, they are not only assisted in resolving a personal problem, but may also participate in ongoing activities or personal efforts to maintain and improve mental and physical wellness. This can include focusing on improving one's diet, attention to health needs, stress management, chronic disease education, psychotherapy, goal setting, work-life balance, and attending to relationship problems at home. These wellness strategies can help employees be more effective and productive in their many life roles, including their roles as employees.

Q. What is the underlying reason some supervisors bully employees? Is it insecurity or psychological problems? And what are the most common types of bullying behaviors exhibited by supervisors?

A. Most supervisors do not bully employees because they are insecure or have psychological problems. Instead, research appears to show motivation to bully is predominantly driven by the fear that they won't be able to successfully manage their teams. Research also shows that some supervisors feel better and get a temporary energy boost from dogmatic behavior toward employees, but the penalties arrive shortly in the form of poor productivity, morale problems, and turnover – everything a supervisor doesn't want! The most common types of bullying include 1) yelling at employees or speaking to them in a way that causes them to feel intimidated; 2) making inappropriate personal criticisms; 3) giving unreasonable deadlines and work; 4) showing favoritism toward only certain workers; 5) constantly criticizing; 6) threatening employees with disciplinary action or termination (e.g., "I'm going to write you up!"); and 7) micromanaging (nitpicking and controlling the details after delegating work). Learn more here. https://msutoday.msu.edu/news/2017/abusive-bosses-experience-short-lived-benefits