

Q. I am a new supervisor, and I would like to start developing leadership skills. Is there a way to explain to me how I can “think like a leader” now?

A. You can study leadership, but learning on the job is key to success. Begin by having a vision for your role. It is easier to apply leadership skills when you have goals and imagined outcomes. Be aware that employees naturally observe and analyze your behavior. Be an example for them. Encourage employees to be proactive and take the initiative and support them with resources where possible. Empower your employees using their strengths. Communicate and foster open and honest communication with each employee, not just the group. Discover what each one aspires to be and achieve in their career. Offer mentorship, coaching, and training opportunities. Create a supportive and inclusive work environment. Strive for continuous development of yourself.



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Q. What type of drug causes the most problems with attendance?

A. Alcohol is the number one drug that causes the most attendance problems. Those with alcohol use issues may exhibit effects which interfere with their ability to be productive. Most importantly as a supervisor it is your responsibility not to assume or judge however, if you suspect alcohol use is a factor in work performance you may consider meeting with the employee to discuss performance. From there you may consider a referral to EAP if necessary, from the results of your meeting.

Q. Is it okay for supervisors to discuss techniques to help the employee feel better when they are having a bad day? Can a supervisor offer an employee some suggestions on coping with stress?

A. You can offer practical tips for coping with stress and demonstrate empathy. You may suggest that they take a break or suggest how to look at things a different way. You may suggest how the EAP may help and give them the information on what the EAP offers to employees. It is important not to advise directly on an issue that is not related to their job function. Contact the EAP with a question about your role and what's appropriate, and for guidance on what to say or do next with an employee's concern.

Q. What is the value of performance reviews in assisting an employee to develop their unique skills? What can help supervisors feel excited or feel more urgency about completing the reviews in a timely way?

A. All employees have unique skills. Supervisors are in a unique position to spot these abilities and encourage the employee to explore and develop them. Performance reviews open opportunities for the supervisor and employee to discuss how the persons unique skills can enhance their growth and performance. Many employees will not recognize how much they have learned, be able to articulate their skills, or grow in confidence without supervisor feedback. The result for the company is having employees who desire to take more initiative and are excited about their job. Your employee may show increased willingness to take risks, including bringing forth their own great ideas to solve problems. A performance review will be a benefit to the employee as well as the organization and strengthen the employee – supervisor relationship.