



UR Medicine EAP

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Q. There is tension between me and one of my best workers. I don't think she's about to quit, but I know a decision to leave can come out of the blue. How do I intervene early, and can the EAP guide me in improving this relationship?

A. Managers expect employees to come to them if they are having problems with work or communication, but you can't count on it. Your decision to be proactive is a good one. Ask your employee to meet with you in uninterrupted time. Be honest and state that you feel the tension, and ask whether she feels the same. If so, ask what she thinks is creating this tension. Be sure to approach the conversation with an attitude of wanting the employee to succeed so the company will succeed with the skills she brings to it. It is likely your employee will share what's impeding her job satisfaction and what work habits or communication issues play a role. Be prepared to hear complaints that catch you off guard. Still, avoid defensiveness, and show how open-minded you can actually be to feedback. Thank your employee, and consider changes. Be sure to consider the EAP as a source of help in your effort to make any personal changes you feel the need to make.

Q. I recently read that depression is one of the most costly problems and one of the most common issues affecting the workplace, but honestly, I don't think I have ever had a depressed employee. At least I have never seen classic symptoms. What am I missing?

A. Employees who are depressed may not appear with readily identifiable symptoms or match the stereotype of a sad and slow-moving person. Depression can exist for years, go unnoticed by others, and surprise even close friends when a person finally seeks treatment. Still, depression can be life-threatening if severe enough. Employees with depression may be easily irritated, struggle with anger management, have gastrointestinal complaints, be easily distracted, have intermittent aches and pains, be accident prone, appear to have low motivation, or demonstrate a lack of enthusiasm. However, some symptoms of depression are not visible. Many employees may not view themselves as depressed because they explain away their mood and experiences as caused by other things like stress or personal problems. They may suffer for years without seeking help. Focus on quality of work and attendance problems. Refer to the EAP based these or other productivity issues. If you do so, it's likely you will refer depressed employees to the EAP and never know it. Learn more about depression in the workplace here.
<http://www.mhanational.org/depression-workplace>

Q. We are conducting companywide training in resolving conflicts, creating a positive workplace, and improving office communication. One of my employees is close to being terminated because of serious issues in these areas. Should I refer to the EAP now or later if changes aren't forthcoming after training?

A. The key principle regarding referral to the EAP is to do so when your efforts fail to correct the employee's performance issues. So, the training you have planned is a reasonable approach and a good place to start if no serious behavioral risk issues or safety concerns exist. In fact, the training topics suggest that there will be plenty of employee interaction and feedback among learners. This may contribute to significant awareness and insight, and if changes aren't forthcoming, will make an EAP referral more effective with a more motivated employee.

