



UR Medicine EAP

179 Sully's Trail
Suite 200
Pittsford, NY
14534

(585)-276-9110

Website:

urmc.rochester.edu/EAP

Email:

EAP@urmc.rochester.edu

Q. I provided elder care support to my mother for years. It was very stressful. Two of my employees are now in the same situation, and I can see their productivity slipping. I can refer them to the EAP, of course, but can I also give them advice? I am a “pro” at this whole issue.

A. If your employees’ performance is affected, it is appropriate to speak with each of them separately to address the decline and get it corrected. During these discussions, it’s likely they will share information about the difficult situation of taking care of an elderly parent. Your experience and any tips you can offer may prove invaluable, but you should also mention the EAP because of the abundance of resources the program may be able to offer. Caregiving stress may appear straightforward, but may also involve highly complex issues that benefit from outside support, such as that available through the EAP.

Q. There was a fire purposely set in our warehouse, but thankfully no one was injured. A few employees visited the EAP afterward because it was traumatic, and we think one of them might be the arsonist. Can we insist the EAP give us information to verify whether this is true?

A. Confidential laws and policy agreements that govern EAPs would preclude investigating or probing the program about its discussions with clients. Of course, your EAP would be required to properly disclose information to someone who was threatened in order to protect their life, stop child or elder abuse, or meet the requirements of other provisions specified by state law. The confidential nature of EAPs is damaged beyond repair when or if its confidential nature is ignored. These policy provisions were constructed prior to program inception. You want employees, particularly the riskiest and most troubled workers, to readily seek help from the EAP to reduce risk and intervene in volatile problems. You do not want to undermine this dynamic and risk serious behavioral risk issues that would never be addressed otherwise. Confidentiality is a critical element of the program’s sustainability and value.

Q. I am certain my employee can succeed, but he lacks confidence. What can I do as a supervisor to help him become more confident? The EAP would be completely unfamiliar with his job, so is a referral still appropriate if his uncertainty about how to perform his essential functions remains?

A. Although your employee's confidence can be undermined by many factors, some of which you may be unable to identify or manage, there are a few steps you can take to help him acquire a better attitude and the performance to match. Be sure you have provided clear expectations about the job and the outcomes you expect. This is a key issue seen by EAPs when employees are referred for underperformance. Offer feedback on achievements because positive reinforcement increases confidence. Help the employee identify small, achievable goals. Confidence grows with each success. Also, consider training, independent problem-solving, and mentoring. One powerful confidence builder often overlooked by supervisors is recognizing the effort employees expend in attempting to achieve goals. So, even when immediate successes are not visible, effort expended will reinforce confidence for another try. Let your employee know that building confidence is a process, a journey of sorts, and results are not instantaneous. EAP can also help employees with confidence-building strategies to improve performance.

Q. My employee was once highly motivated—a real go-getter—but recently his energy seems to be gone. Should I explore this problem with him, or is it something I should not dive into and instead refer him to the EAP?

A. Inquire with your employee regarding the changes you observe. See if there are practical reasons for a change in motivation related to the job. Listen carefully for clues that point to potential solutions. For example, what goals is this employee working toward? Consider exciting new work goals to see if that rekindles his motivation. One common reason for demotivation is boredom. If this is it, come to an agreement on some challenging and interesting tasks that align with the employee's skills and interests. Does your employee work with a team? Isolation is a frequent motivation killer. If not, finding a way to assemble a team experience can help your employees discover motivation that results from workers who synergize. Because low motivation can also be associated with mental and physical health concerns, you can encourage your employee to contact EAP for more support.

EAP

Employee Assistance Program