

MARCH

WORKPLACE
SOLUTIONS, LLC

1-800-327-5071

www.wseap.com

Frontline Supervisor

EMPLOYEES - YOUR MOST VALUABLE RESOURCE

TOPICS COVERED THIS MONTH:

- Promoting the EAP
- Workplace Stress
- Release of Information
- EAP Referrals— Why don't employees self-refer
- Employee Satisfaction

Q: I have several employees in my office struggling with eldercare issues that sometimes get in the way of work. Everyone knows about the EAP, but I don't think any have called. Maybe they don't know everything that the EAP can do for them. Can you elaborate?

In order for your employees to understand how EAP benefits employees and dependents with personal problems, promotion of the program should occur on an on-going basis. Communication with employees may include distribution of brochures, newsletters and other announcements; the display of posters and other visibility activities throughout the year. Workplace Solutions offers employee training on variety of topics, from stress and communication to family and wellness issues, providing relevant information, and reminding employees of their EAP benefit. Baby Boomers in the workforce may have eldercare and child care responsibilities that could impact the ability to be productive. Work with your HR department and your Workplace Solutions account manager to

discuss EAP promotion and training. You can also provide a friendly reminder to individual employees when personal problems are brought up.



Q: Is all the talk we hear about workplace stress overblown, or is there something to it? After all, the workplace has always been stressful. Things should be better with all the technology options, right? What does the research say? Is there anything new to report?

According to a recent study by Watson Wyatt Worldwide, an international consulting firm, workplace stress is the most frequently cited reason U.S. employees consider leaving their jobs. By not intervening with stress, employers may experience an increase in unscheduled time off, productivity and morale issues, and health care costs — all of which hurt a company's bottom line. (Feb. 14, 2008; Press Release, www.watsonwyatt.com)

Fluctuations in the overall economy, global competition, increased technology and the rapid rate of change impact workers at all levels. Serious

personal and/or family problems may contribute to the perception of being out of control, leading to medical, behavioral and personal stress.

Organizations that offer EAP benefits demonstrate a commitment to employee well being. In addition to confidential, free counseling, EAP can help find resources for individual situations. Training programs on stress management, time management and wellness topics offer useful information and remind employees that EAP can assist with a wide range of topics. Contact your Workplace Solutions account manager to discuss ways to support your employees and the organization.



Did You Know?

Supervisors, managers, HR professionals can contact Workplace Solutions® for consultation on difficult workplace situations.

Call 800.327.5071 today!

Q:

I referred my employee to the EAP, but at the time I wasn't concerned whether the appointment was kept. I saw it as the employee's business. The employee did go, but is still not showing for work half the time. Can I still get a release signed, or is it too late?

Use of the EAP is voluntary even when managers formally refer employees to the program. The counseling should be seen as a benefit to help employees with problems that impact job performance. Confidentiality of personal information, in accordance with state and federal laws, is a critical aspect for employees to trust the program with their personal information. The employee who is an EAP client decides whether or not to sign a release of information for the

counselor to speak to anyone else.

As supervisor, your focus should be on attendance, performance and behavior on the job. Accountability for performance is established by your coaching and follow through with discipline if the work-related problems continue. Working with the EAP does not shield the employee from consequences for performance issues. If the employee wants the EAP to consult with HR or management, a release is required.

"Intelligence does not prevent a person from having medical, behavioral or personal problems."

Q:

Please explain why an employee making a six-figure income who is an Ivy League graduate, with multiple books, inventions, and reportedly a high IQ, can't decide that they should phone the EAP as a self-referral to resolve a personal problem?

There may be many reasons a person may not seek assistance. Intelligence does not prevent a person from having medical, behavioral or personal problems. Shame, denial or a perception that they are handling the problem may cause a person to continue struggling with a problem alone. If the personal problem is not impacting work, frustrating

and sad as it may be, there is not much the organization can do to force counseling. Make sure that the employee knows of the availability of the benefit and how to contact the EAP.

Q:

I'm a concerned manager and want my employees to come to work every day enjoying what they do, and feel like I am measuring up to their expectations as a great supervisor. How do the most successful managers accomplish this?

The most critical aspect of employee satisfaction is the relationship with the supervisor. MBWA—managing by walking around—is a good strategy for being available, especially during difficult times. Frequent communication regarding the organization, upcoming changes and information about your department enhances that relationship. Seek out opportunities to acknowledge employees, both individually and publicly in their work group.

Be consistent and fair with discipline. Express interest when employees offer suggestions, and explain the reasons you may not be able to act on them. You should maintain an appropriate boundary regarding personal information. When difficulties arise, consult with your EAP and HR to determine how best to manage.



FRONTLINE SUPERVISOR