

THE *Front-line Supervisor*

Presented by *dor and associates, inc.*

Helping you to manage your company's most valuable resource -- your employees.

January 2002

CASE 1

➤ **Q. It's been several months since the attacks of September 11th but some of my employees still spend work time talking about it. How can I require employees to get back to their routines without being insensitive?**

➤ **A.** Although many weeks have passed since the September 11th attacks, employees may remain upset, particularly with the possibility of additional incidents in the future. Openly acknowledge the legitimacy of employees' emotions in response to these events. Consider hosting special times, such as lunch hour, for employees to talk and share.

It's important to draw a balance between being patient and supportive as you ask your employees to work toward returning to their routines. Although a horrific event has taken place, maintaining job standards can help employees return to a feeling of normalcy. Supervisors should encourage employees who are upset to call the EAP. **dor and associates, inc.** has tip sheets available that specifically focus on coping with the events of September 11th. To request these tip sheets, simply call our office at 800-367-3271, or access our website at www.doreap.com. If performance problems emerge and remain unresolved, give employee feedback about your performance expectations and recommend the EAP. Remember that making an EAP referral is not an accusatory act or punitive step in helping an employee.

CASE 2

➤ **Q. I described my employee as "moody" on his performance evaluation, but he succeeded in having the statement removed. I thought this term was precise and descriptive, but have been told it was too vague. What else could I have written?**

➤ **A.** Although you believe the word "moody" adequately describes the behavior of your employee, he is entitled to a more precise description of his attitude or conduct on the job so he can consider changing it. If your employee is given to changeable emotional states, especially that of gloom, then use such language to describe his behavior and state what the ramifications of his behavior might be. For example; "When you ignore your co-workers when they say "Good Morning" to you, they feel as if you might be angry with them and they don't know why." Avoid words that label, incite emotion, or require others to ask, "What do you mean by..." Also, document the effect of the problematic behavior on others or the work environment. Documentation written in this manner benefits both the employee and the organization. Make sure the employee has tangible feedback necessary to consider change, and that the language is adequate enough for others in your organization who may have to rely upon it to support administrative actions that may be necessary later.

dor and associates, inc.

Employee Assistance Services

1-800-367-3271 * (612) 332-4805

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