

THE *Front-line Supervisor*

Presented by **DOR**

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

February 2004

CASE 1. I care about my employee, but...

➤ **Q. I know my employee personally. If I attempt to refer him to the EAP and avoid discussing his personal troubles, he will think I don't care about him. How can I avoid this discussion when making a supervisor referral?**

A. The best way to show you care is to stay focused on job performance, be supportive of your employee and demonstrate confidence in his ability to improve his performance. It is natural for supervisors to care about their employees. Employees typically want and appreciate the sympathy of supervisors. This can make a discussion about his personal troubles difficult to avoid. However, this sympathy can interfere with your efforts to make a supervisor referral. If your employee initiates a discussion about his personal problems, be genuine in your concern, but stay true to your role as a supervisor and stay focused on job performance. You could even tell an employee that an appointment with DOR would be more helpful to the employee than you, as a supervisor, could be. If the employee's job performance is fine, you can make an informal referral to DOR, just to remind him that EAP is available to discuss his personal issues.

CASE 2. Release of Information

➤ **Q. Once an employee accepts a supervisor referral to the EAP, my fear is that he or she will suddenly reject it if asked to sign a release so the EAP can verify attendance. How should this issue be approached during the referral?**

A. In practice, it is rare for an employee to accept an EAP referral only to reject it over the need for a release. A supervisor referral is not a casual event. It is a management decision to offer the employee help to avoid an adverse response to continuing performance problems. As a result, employees are typically anxious to have supervisors know they followed through with an EAP referral and participated in the program's recommendations. This can only be done with a signed release. An employee's desire to participate in the EAP, and have it verified, increases when the supervisor is clear about the possible consequences for continuing performance problems. It is diminished when the supervisor appears not to care if the employee attended the session. Remind your employee that supervisors are not provided personal information with a release, only verification of attendance.

DOR

Employee Assistance Program
1-800-367-3271 * (612) 332-4805
www.doreap.com

Information contained in *The Frontline Supervisor* is for general information purposes only and is not intended to provide specific guidance for any particular supervisor concern. For specific guidance on handling individual employee problems, consult with **DOR**.

© Copyright 2004 by *The Frontline Supervisor*.