

# THE *Front-line Supervisor*

Presented by **DOR**

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

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## CASE 1

**I don't want to "brush off" my employee's concerns...**

➤ **Q. I found myself advising my employee about her personal problems when she disclosed them in a corrective interview. I suddenly realized how easy this is to do. I know I should refer her to the EAP, but isn't it offensive to say the employee, "don't tell me, tell the EAP?"**

**A.** Admittedly, it is difficult not to respond with an idea or a possible solution to a personal problem when one is disclosed in a corrective interview. This does not mean that your employee must experience rejection from you for sharing something personal. Empathetically listening to your employee and acting supportive is a legitimate role for a supervisor. It does not imply that you are offering solutions, counseling your employee, or involving yourself in the personal problem. Suggesting that the employee come to DOR if something personal is contributing to job performance problems is also a good move in a corrective interview. It frequently prompts a disclosure of some personal problem. This can make a supervisor referral based on job performance problems even more meaningful for the employee.

## CASE 2

**Is an employee "immune" if they seek EAP?**

➤ **Q. Our company policy states that using the EAP will not jeopardize an employee's promotional opportunities or job security. Does this mean that no matter what performance problems exist, going to the EAP will make an employee "immune" from certain job actions?**

**A.** The policy statement you cite is designed to address stigma and protect employee from biases that some people have against others who seek help. Participating in the EAP does not preclude management interventions to address performance, conduct or attendance problems, and it does not make an employee "immune" from management actions. The stigma of seeking help for personal problems is not as great as it once was, but it is still an important issue to address. As a result, organizations that sponsor EAPs make assurances to employees that they are safe to use. Many CEO's and top management officials in the largest of American companies have disclosed their use of the EAP to large groups of employees to demonstrate their approval for the program and to encourage its use.

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