

THE *Front-line Supervisor*

Presented by *dor and associates, inc.*

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

July 2000

CASE 1.

➤ **Q. I am having problems getting along with an employee I supervise. We clash when I ask him to perform tasks, provide information, or discuss work matters. Should he and I schedule a session with an EAP counselor to mediate our ongoing conflict?**

A. The problems you face supervising your employee make a session with a counselor sound attractive, but this could do more harm than good or produce only short-term results. Your conflict is not the same as two coworkers struggling to maintain a positive working relationship. Instead, your conflict arises from your employee's insubordination and refusal to work. You may find it helpful to attend a coaching session with a **dor and associates, inc** counselor by yourself to examine your communication style or other issues that may interfere with your ability to supervise this employee. Also examine what keeps you from employing disciplinary tools to manage this employee successfully. Do you fear the reaction of your employee if you take disciplinary action? Without examining your supervisory practices, including your willingness to be assertive, a mediation session could send a message to your employee that change is optional.

CASE 2.

➤ **Q. My employee is apparently following EAP recommendations, but performance isn't improving. When I mention the possibility of disciplinary action, the EA professional only tells me to consult my progressive disciplinary policies.**

A. You should assume the EAP is officially neutral on the question of administrative or disciplinary actions you consider in response to ongoing problems. EAP theory establishes non-interference with such actions. You may feel awkward considering an adverse action knowing that your employee is following through with the **dor** counselor's recommendations, but your focus must remain on performance. Talk with your employee about performance remaining unsatisfactory. Ask the EAP and ask the employee what you or the organization could do to help her be successful. You have been a diligent supervisor by taking this step. It is the employee's responsibility to let you know if she needs some accommodation in order to help her improve performance, but you can also ask. EA counselors can't guarantee an employee's performance will turn around after a referral, even if the personal problem is resolved.

dor and associates, inc.

Employee Assistance Services

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