

January 2017

I was about to make a supervisor referral to the EAP, before I could, the employee self-referred to the program. This is great, but I don't have a signed release, as I would if this was a formal referral. Should I ask him to sign one?

Unless a serious work rule violation occurred, where a formal referral would be included, you can monitor your employee's performance for now as you normally would. You should expect resolution of performance issues. If your employee continues to struggle, then initiate a formal EAP referral and request a release as usual. If your employee was aware of a pending supervisor referral, and decided to self-refer to prevent your communication with the EAP, this will have no effect on your ability to monitor performance and act as needed. The key is to focus on performance.

Is it okay for supervisors to talk about their personal problems and stress in front of employees, or are we supposed to never let them see us sweat?

Employees who perceive you as a "real person" are more likely to consider you approachable when the need arises with work related challenges they can't handle alone. This does not mean that you should make an effort to share your personal problems. Instead, present yourself in a way that matches your personality style and facilitates professional, constructive relationships with employees. It is a matter of choice: There is no hard-and-fast rule about personal disclosures, but you should consider their impact regardless. Some employees may need you to be direct and formal, while others may benefit from seeing your more vulnerable side. Be cautious of getting in the habit of over-sharing or complaining to employees. They are likely to follow your lead and if you handle stress well this will foster a more positive environment. Be sure to have appropriate outlets to assist you in managing personal and work-related stressors.

How can I energize my employees and get them to feel excited about the work we are doing?

You can energize employees by taking time to recognize their contributions while urging them to excel. Spend time periodically letting them feel your enthusiasm for the work, the goal, the vision, and the ultimate outcome. This positivity is contagious when it's genuine. Be sure you find your own ways to stay excited and energized because if you can't feel excitement yourself, it will not be possible to pass it along to others. Remind employees about their past achievements, and help them to understand the underlying reasons they succeeded and did so well. Urge employees to top last year's achievements. If they feel your energy and genuine concern for them, they are more likely to be energized.