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I have always understood humor in the workplace to be a good thing. Recently I heard that this is not necessarily true. Can you explain this with respect to supervisors who do a lot of kidding around?

Humor is a natural human behavior. Naturally occurring, it can be an indicator of a positive work climate, one where employees are able to be happy, healthy, and productive. However, as with most things in life even a good thing can be overdone. There is a difference between employees expressing humor within a psychologically safe workplace and a supervisor overusing humor as a way to interact with and manage employees. This use of humor increases employee vulnerability, and makes the supervisor seem less approachable. And some types of humor could contribute to an intimidating and offensive work environment. Supervisors need to be careful of sending a message that mistakes and problems are not taken seriously. This takeaway results in the loss of a healthy sense of urgency and leads to diminished performance by employees. Research shows this dynamic can prompt employees to focus on personal matters rather than workplace productivity. For more information on humor, go to <https://wustl.edu> (search "humor in the workplace").

I have been offered a managerial position in my company, but I don't know if I have the leadership skills to succeed. I don't mind a challenge, but isn't leadership a natural aptitude sort of thing? Can the EAP help with my decision?

Yes an EAP provider can help you troubleshoot hurdles throughout your career. It is a myth that leadership comes naturally and can't be learned. While some people are gifted with leadership skills; more people have leadership skills that are developed with classes, seminars, mentoring and through various life experiences. Many resources for new leaders can be found on the ERC website (<https://ercincorp.com/>) including short leadership training videos and information on our *Fundamentals of Leadership* workshop. Ask ERC about consultation services that help leaders identify their strengths, learn new skills and better understand what it takes to become a successful leader.

I have an employee who is a very nervous person. He worries about making a mistake around me, and his hands tremble. I am reassuring, but it's not helping. Should I make a formal referral to the EAP or encourage a self-referral?

Your employee's nervousness affects communication, interferes with the relationship between you, increases his risk of making mistakes and getting injured on the job, and may ultimately cause him to quit. His issues are interfering with his job satisfaction, which is also important. These documentable issues justify a formal referral. Your employee may respond to an encouraged self-referral, but why wait? There is nothing improper about making a formal referral that will allow you to communicate with the EAP and help your employee.