

June 2018

Can you provide a checklist for meeting with an employee regarding a small performance issue? We are looking to motivate them to correct the issue, and encourage them to use the EAP; but, do not want to make this a mandatory condition of employment?

We suggest you follow your organization's recommended process including a conversation with the EAP; however the following steps could be helpful. 1) focus on the issue - job performance; 2) be specific; 3) ask the employee if he/she understands the situation clearly; 4) have them paraphrase what you (the supervisor) have said; 5) ask the employee for a commitment & specific ideas for change; and 6) set a specific time for follow-up and review. 7) Explain to the employee the benefit of seeking help for any personal issue that may be contributing to the performance issue; 8) offer EAP services and discuss confidentiality; 9) fully assure your employee that use of the EAP is intended to be helpful NOT punitive, and does not affect their job security or promotional opportunities in any way.

What is the most difficult roadblock to supervisors using the EAP in managing troubled employees?

The most difficult roadblock supervisors face in using the EAP to manage troubled employees is making the switch from doing it all themselves, to using a systematic approach to assess, refer, treat, and follow up on a troubled employee. Using an EAP means the supervisor is removed from direct involvement in the employee's problems. Leaving the helping process and its outcome up to professionals who are trained to help, benefits the employee, the supervisor and the company. Supervisors unfamiliar with the EAP may want to know they will have some contact (allowed by a signed release of information) with the EAP provider. This helps them maintain a positive supervisory relationship and can decrease their overall stress level.

A couple of weeks ago, I met with my employee to discuss attendance issues and make a referral to the EAP. The EAP referral was rejected, but surprisingly, attendance has been perfect ever since. Should I tell the EAP about this meeting?

Although this meeting was two weeks ago, let the EAP know about it. Inform your employee you have done so. Encourage use of the program once more. There are a few reasons for doing this. 1) The EA professional may offer guidance to you on managing your employee's attendance issues. 2) Your employee's knowledge of your contact with the EAP may facilitate changing his or her mind, and information you supplied will allow a more complete assessment. (3) Your employee may have attendance issues in the near future and realize help is needed, thereby self-referring in a crisis. 4) The EAP would encourage and educate the employee about the value of signing a release to allow confirmation of their EAP involvement.