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One of my employees has a teen that was caught selling marijuana in school. I learned about this from another employee. The father of the teen is an excellent worker. Should I leave this issue alone, not say anything, or mention the EAP as a resource?

In a private conversation, you may let your employee know that you have learned of his child's problem. You don't need to say how you learned; if you feel comfortable offering your support then do so. If not, mention the EAP and say that the professionals there can offer several types of support helpful to all members of the family. This can include referral to expert resources in the community, help for understanding unique issues associated with parenting a teenager with a drug use problem, follow-up, support, and education. Dealing with drug use / abuse can be a long and difficult road that often involves relapse, parenting challenges, and crises requiring the support of experts that the EAP can help identify.

When employees are in conflict, it can disrupt workflow and group harmony, but should supervisors intervene in every instance? Can you offer guidelines for deciding when to take control of a situation and step in?

Most supervisors know conflict is normal in the workplace, and responding to conflict is part of a supervisor's job, but there are important guidelines. It is not necessary to intervene in every conflict; on the contrary, it is usually better to let employees work it out together. A better tactic is monitoring what is taking place. So, when should you intervene? Intervene when the issue poses some sort of larger risk to the organization, as in the case of harassment, discrimination, or potential for violence. Hold employees responsible for resolving conflicts; never let them perpetuate. The EAP can be a resource for supervisors when conflicts remain unresolved. When in doubt, contact ERC to discuss how to address this conflict and when a referral to the EAP may be necessary.

I have an open-door policy. I let my employees know they can come to me at any time to share concerns or problems. I rarely get visitors; so, this is a sign everything is going well, correct?

Well, maybe. An open-door policy encouraging workers to visit and discuss issues and concerns requires more than simply a door swung open. You must also have a psychologically safe workplace. This encourages employees to approach you, and take advantage of what you are offering. They do so because they are confident they will not be rejected or punished for admitting a mistake, bringing a complaint, asking a question, or offering a new idea. Help employees feel respected, accepted, and comfortable at all times. Model this to others. The bottom line is: How you interact with employees outside your office will determine whether they will walk through your open door later.