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The wife of one of my employees phoned to say he was threatening suicide in an argument over the weekend. But looking at him now, he appears perfectly fine to me. This sounds like a domestic dispute, and not my business. It also appears the crisis has passed. Should I refer her to the EAP and forget it?

Recommend the EAP to the spouse but inform your boss or HR advisor about the call. Together decide how to proceed with regard to discussing the matter with your employee. This sort of phone call is rare, but it is serious. Many employers have received similar phone calls from family members reporting domestic incidents. Be calm but proceed as if the report is true. In other words, you're responding responsibly out of an abundance of caution, because even if it is a domestic dispute it could become violent and spill into the workplace, placing employees at risk. Call the EAP and consult on this matter. Always team with your boss and advisors to determine next steps with incidents of this nature. Don't go it alone.

I encouraged my employee to visit the EAP, strictly as a self-referral because of job problems and some personal problems. Can I ask him or her to sign a release so I can hear back from the EA professional to confirm things are getting "handled properly"?

If you have concerns about your employee's performance and must have communication to feel assured about follow through in obtaining some sort of help, don't push for a "self-referral" and a signed release. Instead, make a formal referral. The benefit of a formal referral is it helps you manage a troubled worker in his or her performance improvement. Some supervisors are hesitant about making formal referrals. They mistakenly believe that a formal referral to the EAP is categorically serious or punitive or will create a record to negatively impact the employee's job situation. EAP policies preclude these possibilities. An EAP formal referral is not disciplinary action and creates no special personnel record by itself, and its confidentiality provisions are no different than a self-referral.

I think I am a good role model for my employees because I am dedicated to the company, a good listener, a team-builder, and a problem solver. Does this cover the bases or is there more to being a good role model? Is there a checklist for self-evaluation?

There's no perfection or checklist. Being a role model is leading by example. Employees reflect on nearly everything you do or hear you say, and all the implications for them. This is a natural process. If you don't take vacations, employees will be self-conscious taking vacations. Some may even model this behavior. If you come in late, employees notice it. Some may feel more freedom to come in late, too, or not worry so much about it. This dynamic can be applied to hundreds of matters. Regarding your role in leading by example, most behaviors fall under these headings: 1) How you prioritize your work and where you put your focus; 2) your attitude and demeanor, and communication style; 3) taking care of yourself, work-life balance, dress, exercise, use of leave, and work hours; 4) dedication to the employer and loyalty to the organization; 5) How you treat and interact with others, vulnerability and openness, and how you show appreciation.