

What is the difference between being a good manager and being a good leader? Can EAPs help with leadership issues, or is this more of an education and training process apart from what EAPs do?

Leadership is not just a few people at the top making all the decisions. It's an organizational process. Many supervisors are not used to thinking like leaders, and a lack of definition can make leadership sound vague and confusing. The key is viewing those under your supervision not as individuals with specific functions you monitor, but as part of an orchestra of talent and potential that you assist to reach success. The EAP is an excellent resource for helping you look in the "leadership mirror" to see potential roadblocks in your approach to leadership that keep you from connecting with your team the way you envision.

How can I be more assertive with the help of the EAP? I avoid certain employees I do not like to supervise. These are difficult personalities, and I know I need to change this coping style because it is creating unspoken tension. I can feel it.

Assertiveness is a key component to being an effective manager, and is particularly important when dealing with difficult employees who thrive on testing your boundaries. Assertive management starts with clearly defining and consistently reinforcing your expectations, boundaries and the overall goals of the company and / or department. The good news is that assertiveness is easier to learn than most people think because there are mechanics, word phrases, and sentence structures that can be tested and their results experienced. EAPs are pros at helping employees, including supervisors, be assertive. The EA professional will help you get started, process the outcomes of your attempts, and help you make forward progress.

My employee is not happy in her current role. Being unhappy isn't a performance problem, so is an EAP referral appropriate?

Sit down with your employee and find out what is causing her to appear so unhappy in her job. Make sure to document this discussion. There are perhaps a hundred reasons employees become unhappy, and they can range from not knowing what they are doing to having various medical or behavioral health problems. It is true that unhappiness alone is not a performance problem. However, the behavior or attitude associated with being unhappy can still affect the work environment, her initiative, and her demeanor. It can create an unsupportive work environment that adversely affects coworkers and their productivity as well. Sometimes it is necessary to consult with your EAP. Together, you may discover ideas to help renew her enthusiasm for the position.