

I am feeling burned out. I am exhausted, apathetic, and frustrated. Should I go to my manager first or visit the EAP for answers on how to get out of this state of mind?

Whether you approach your manager or the EAP is your decision. Here are some ways the EAP can help: 1) Assess the degree to which burnout is affecting your physical health (a medical referral may follow); 2) Identify the ways in which burnout has affected your work-life balance, with the goal of developing a return-to-wellness strategy; 3) Offer suggestions for interventions outside of work that can help you return to a more fully functioning state with your job; 4) Help you examine on-the-job interventions, some of which may require discussion with your manager in order to implement them; and 5) Follow up with you to facilitate, monitor, and help you implement your return-to-wellness.

We hired an employee who was recently paroled from prison after being incarcerated for a few years. Can I refer the employee to the EAP to be interviewed and assessed for any risk issues?

No, this would be beyond the scope of EAP practice. The employee can self-refer to the EAP for any reason, of course, and you could refer the employee (like any other employee) for performance issues, but meeting with the EAP to help management better gauge the employment decision would not be appropriate. Your new employee has a parole officer, and the court has a discharge plan. The court takes responsibility for a parolee's assessment, release, and suitability for work. This often includes communication with the employer. EAPs promote their confidentiality and their reputation as a safe and helpful resource. When this perception is eroded, risk to the organization will increase because some employees may shy away from using the EAP.

The spouse of an employee phoned me on Sunday night to say his wife would not be at work the next day because of a car problem. It all seemed rather odd. I recommended this employee visit the EAP in the past for being absent on Mondays. What's my next step to intervene?

Many employees will visit the EAP based on a supervisor's recommendation. However, some will not. There are a variety of reasons for either response. The question is how long to tolerate repeated performance problems before deciding upon an action. The next step would be to meet with the employee and outline your concern, expectations for improved performance and possible disciplinary action if the issue is not resolved. At this point you may consider formally referring the employee to the EAP. As a reminder a referral to the EAP is not intended to be a disciplinary action, but as a resource to help resolve the concerns that could lead to further disciplinary action in the workplace. ERC is happy to answer any questions or concerns you might have on the formal referral process.