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I have two employees who don't get along. It's starting to create friction within the department. How and when is it appropriate to involve the EAP?

These type of conflicts typically do not respond to classic attempts at problem-solving and negotiation. Ending the quarrelsome pattern requires self-discipline and resolve because these types of conflicts can become habitual. Make the conflicting employees aware that change is nonnegotiable and that you are committed to an administrative or disciplinary solution if necessary. You can encourage each employee to utilize the EAP services as a resource to help identify what attitudes and behavioral changes would contribute toward resolution. You may also consider utilizing ERC's conflict resolution services which takes a more systems approach involving all of the affected parties. This service provides consultation to the leadership team, a structured assessment process to understand the basis for the conflict, development of an intervention plan, and coaching for the employees on plan implementation. This service is outside of the scope of the EAP agreement with your organization and therefore, an additional charge is required. For more information on how the EAP and the Conflict Resolution services might help your organization with employees in conflict, simply call ERC and speak to a member of the Customer Service Team.

I referred an employee to the EAP two years ago due to problems with absenteeism. Things had been going great since then until recently. He is missing some days and is late on others. Can I refer him to the EAP again?

First, speak with your employee in a corrective interview to address the concern with attendance and review expectations. The employee may disclose something personal, but you should refrain from engaging in solutions. While a formal referral back to the EAP may be appropriate and beneficial, it is your decision how you wish to proceed. Based on the history, your organization may have a disciplinary action in mind. Consider a cost-benefit analysis that weighs returning your employee to a satisfactory level of performance versus an action that could result in dismissal.

I am hesitant to confront an employee who might be under the influence unless it is pretty obvious. Is this wrong?

If you are trained to identify signs and symptoms of an employee who may be under the influence, it is crucial to follow the guidelines of your drug-free workplace policy. Employees in mid-stage alcoholism, even if their blood alcohol level is relatively high, do not necessarily appear drunk. They are, of course, still at risk for accidents and injuring others. When you do confront your employee you may encounter resistance and defensiveness and it's important to develop a plan for intervention using the workplace policies as a guide. Your EAP can be of assistance in three ways: 1) Training for your leaders on reasonable suspicion, 2) Consultation to your leadership when confronted with this type of situation, and 3) Providing help to the employee to address their problem.