



SUPERVISOR NOTES

NE S ETTE O PE SONNE N E ENT I E S

November 2001

Employee Assistance Program 278-5018
Christopher Knight, EAP Coordinator
eap@csus.edu

In This Issue: *Supervisor Notes* email delivery
EAP referrals may be felt as retaliation

Myths about EAP referrals
Verbally correcting employees

This is the last distribution of *Supervisor Notes* !
Sign up for automatic email delivery or personal paper copies of *Supervisor Notes*.

If you did not receive an email copy of *Supervisor Notes* and would like to receive future editions:

Send your email address to eap@csus.edu and receive every issue on your desktop, automatically. You can also send us the addresses of colleagues who may be interested.

Or, send us your name and mail-stop, and you will receive paper copies.

Visit the EAP webpage...

www.csus.edu/eapprogr

Information, articles, self-help websites community resources and more.

- **I referred my employee to the EAP because of poor job performance. She became very upset, saying that I was retaliating against her over another matter I consider closed. Can the referral of an employee to the EAP ever be considered retaliatory?**

Employee assistance programs are not disciplinary tools; therefore, a referral to the EAP for performance problems cannot be retaliatory. Unfortunately, many supervisors refer too late to their EAPs. When this happens, use of the EAP may appear as a "pre-step" to disciplinary action or discharge of the employee. In such instances, employees will connect the EAP to the organization's disciplinary process and resist accepting the referral. When the supervisor refers in anger, the same response from an employee may be observed. The supervisor referral feels retaliatory. To increase cooperation, be supportive and remind

employees about the purpose of a supervisor referral - helping employees improve performance.

-
- **Myths and misconceptions about the EAP can interfere with employee motivation to accept a supervisor referral. What are some of the myths or misconceptions that supervisors need to dispel?**

Although the following are not found among all employees in all work groups, the most common myths about EAPs include... Myth #1: A supervisor referral means that the supervisor believes you have a psychological problem. Myth #2: A supervisor referral is a pre-step to disciplinary action. Myth #3: A supervisor referral is for the worst employees. Myth #4: Accepting a supervisor referral means you agree with the supervisor on the cause of your performance problems. Myth #5: The EA professional will force you to answer personal and intrusive questions. Myth #6: The EAP will tell your supervisor about your personal problems. Myth #7: A record of your EAP attendance and problems will be placed in your personnel file. Myth #8: Going to the EAP will interfere with your promotional opportunities. Myth #9: EAPs always accept the supervisor's view of performance problems. Myth #10: Accepting a supervisor referral means you admit you have a psychological problem.

-
- **When verbally correcting employees, are there some techniques I can use to reduce their natural defensiveness? How can I help them focus on performance improvement rather than how upset they are about my feedback?**

You can conduct a corrective interview that will help preserve your working relationship and assist your employee to become a better worker. Here are a few tips: 1) Do not underestimate the power and influence of what you say in a corrective interview. Approach the corrective interview as an opportunity to help your employee. 2) Be direct and get to the point quickly. Be clear about the performance issue of concern. Explain its undesirable impact and the changes you expect. 3) Check your emotions to help you avoid saying something that will diminish the goal of your meeting. This includes labeling your employee, using parent-like or condescending language, or using language that sounds loud and harsh. 4) Validate your employee's worth and contributions to the degree possible. Acknowledge the skills and abilities of your employee that are valued by the organization. This validation will not diminish the importance of the performance concerns; it will empower your employee to change.

Call the EAP for a confidential consultation about supervisory concerns, job-related issues or personal problems.

Information contained in *Supervisor Notes* is for general information purposes only and is not intended as specific guidance for any particular supervisor or human resource management concern. For specific guidance on handling individual employee problems, consult with your Employee Assistance Program professional.