



SUPERVISOR NOTES

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A NEWSLETTER OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT IDEAS

Employee Assistance Program

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EAP

Q. My employee doesn't trust anyone, and in my view, probably won't open up with the EAP. How do EAPs work with employees like this? I am sure the belief that some employees won't "open up" with the EAP plays a role in some supervisors' reluctance to refer them.

A. Do not presume that an employee you know well, who appears closed and unwilling to warm up to others, won't be just the opposite with the EAP. An EAP interview may be the only place where your employee feels safe enough to disclose his or her personal story. Employee assistance professionals are specially trained and experienced at establishing trust with their clients. They know how to listen and ask the right questions in the right order without making judgments. As licensed therapists they are often able to put clients at ease and determine how slowly or quickly an employee will begin to share personal information. They also know where to start asking questions in order to help an employee feel safe and open up. Even more important, they know when certain questions should wait until the next meeting. The promise of confidentiality is also important in establishing a safe place for the employee to open up; knowing that they can say anything and have it be kept private (minus the few exceptions in law that are clearly explained prior to beginning sessions) can be extremely helpful in establishing the trust people need in order to talk freely. So continue to recommend and encourage your employee to use the services of EAP and allow the therapist there to deal with any reluctance or unease so as to create a safe place to talk.



Q. I had an employee get angry with me and say, "Someday, I'm going to even things up." I confronted the employee to get an explanation about what "even things up" meant. Nothing more was said. I was nervous, but should I have done more? Is an EAP referral appropriate?

A. It's clear that you interpreted this expression as a threat (which it was). It is positive that you addressed your concern at the time and asked for clarification. Too often, people avoid following up on comments where asking for clarification is indicated. Early intervention can often help keep a situation from escalating. Based on what you say, it appears the employee did not explain the comment, but went "silent". You will want to follow up with the employee about the comment. Referring them to EAP and alerting your own supervisor is indicated. It would also be prudent to contact Campus Police to alert them of the situation. The main point is you do not want to tolerate a threat, even when it is not clearly stated as a direct threat. Early intervention can prevent smaller problems from escalating to larger ones.



Maintaining a Safe Campus



We have all heard in the news about the horrific events that have happened around the nation, too frequently on college campuses, involving acts of violence aimed at random people. While there are no absolute guarantees such events can be prevented, there is the knowledge that early intervention can often keep a person, or situation, from escalating to something out of control. We all have a part to play in keeping our Sac State campus a safe place for students to learn and for all of us to work. If you have any concerns, you can consult confidentially with a member of the Crisis Consultation Team, whose members are listed below.

Edmundo Aguilar, University Counsel. 278-6940

Ken Barnett, Chief of Police. 278-7321

Leonard Valdez, Director of Student Conduct. 278-6060

Elizabeth Redmond, Interim Associate VP for Human Resources. 278-4488

Bert Epstein, Associate Director, Psychological Counseling Services. 278-6416

Doug Adams, Employee Assistance Program. 278-5018

Except as required by law, all consultations can be kept confidential. Early awareness of a troubled student, employee, or situation, may be crucial in circumventing a tragedy.

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 one of our Employee Assistance Program professionals.