



# SUPERVISOR NOTES

July 2004

A NEWSLETTER OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT IDEAS

Employee Assistance Program

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## In This Issue:

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- > Conflict among groups
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**Question:** My employee says she is bored with her job. She comes to work late, she doesn't complete assignments, and says she doesn't have the energy to be the performer she used to be. I shouldn't suggest the EAP, should I?

**Answer:** It is a misstep in managing a troubled employee to accept at face value the employee's self-diagnosis ("I'm bored.") because there is no way to confirm it, and it can leave you feeling at a loss about what to do. Your employee might be bored, but she could also be depressed. Many other issues may contribute to what appears to be boredom. As a first step, encourage your employee to visit the EAP to address her feelings of boredom. Also ask what she needs from you to feel more enthusiastic about work.

**Question:** Two groups of employees in our organization are in ongoing conflict. The negative impact on productivity is very clear. I know the EAP works with individual employees, and coworkers in conflict, but what about larger "inter-group" conflict?

**Answer:** Examine the conflict between the two work groups, then meet with the EAP to see if its capabilities and scope of services match your intervention needs. Inter-group conflict may be fueled by organizational issues that members have little control over, specific underlying needs and personal issues of individual group members, or both. The EAP may be appropriate for any part of the conflict, or it may refer you to other intervention services. Discuss with the EAP the issues of the conflict, the fighting and making-up pattern between the groups, how they retaliate with each other, the role of individual employees, and the degree to which employees feel fatigue and desire for resolution of their conflict. Bring these issues to the EAP. Together, you and the EAP can identify a strategy for helping resolve the conflict.

**Question: How can I keep my employees motivated and excited about their jobs? My budget doesn't permit me to reward employees for good work, but perhaps there are other ways I can keep them feeling good about what they do.**

Answer: Perhaps no task is more important than helping your employees stay motivated and excited about their jobs. Accomplish this task by paying attention to what your employees are doing. You will discover what turns them on and be able to give them more of what they want. Ask your employees: What will help you grow and stay challenged in your job? What was the most exciting and challenging experience you had in the past year? What new things did you learn? What new things would you like to learn next year? It is normal for most employees to feel some boredom after a few years on a job. Most employees fight boredom by discovering new ways of remaining interested in their jobs, but others need some help. The above questions will help you keep them fired up before they start to lose energy and drive and begin looking elsewhere for excitement.

**Question: What can I expect from the EAP when I seek help as a supervisor in managing a troubled employee?**

Answer: Expect the following from the EAP: 1) a patient, understanding, and professional hearing of your problems and concerns about your employee; 2) a discussion about performance issues, with the goal being to help you decide on a plan and approach to managing your employee; 3) guidance in effective documentation of performance and behavior problems; 4) guidance and support in confronting your employee about his or her performance and behavior problems.

**Question: The EAP came and met with us six months ago, after an employee was killed. Everyone thought it was helpful. Many of us still complain of vague worries about life and death. Should we call the EAP again?**

Answer: It is normal to experience stress reactions following a traumatic event, but these should diminish over time. Your EAP can talk with you about common stress reactions, but a few include intrusive thoughts and images, recollections about the event, feelings of anger or sadness, or feeling insecure about personal safety or the safety of those you love. Additional help may be necessary if these reactions persist or interfere with your social and occupational functioning. Start by contacting the EAP to discuss your personal needs. Also discuss what you have observed on the job with your employees. The EAP will offer a suggestion on how to deal with the employees' residual effects of trauma.

***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.

