
Four Ways To Refer Your Employee To The EAP

Casually Encouraged Self-referral

DESCRIPTION: The supervisor mentions the EAP as a reminder in response to hearing about a personal problem first mentioned by the employee.

EXAMPLE: “Bill, don’t forget we have an EAP. It’s completely confidential and available at no cost to you. They may be able to help.”

COMMENTS: Don’t suggest what the employee’s problem might be. Don’t discuss the personal problem because this impedes motivation for professional help. Don’t view this discussion about the EAP as a supervisor referral should performance problems emerge later.

Strongly Encouraged Self-referral

DESCRIPTION: The supervisor mentions the EAP in response to an existing job performance problem hoping the employee will self-refer. No disciplinary or formal corrective action is used or believed necessary by the supervisor. No contact with the EAP is made prior to the corrective interview.

EXAMPLE: “Bill, I strongly recommend you visit the EAP. This performance problem is serious and must change.”

COMMENTS: The most hazardous referral because it is often misinterpreted by the supervisor as a “supervisor referral.” Your employee’s use of the EAP is still voluntary, though strongly recommended, and strictly confidential.

Type 1 Supervisor Referral

DESCRIPTION: The supervisor has contact or communication with the EAP. The supervisor requests performance changes, and disciplinary action is indicated if performance problems continue. The supervisor gives the employee the EAP phone number and is asked to schedule an appointment and be seen at the EAP office prior to an agreed upon date. The supervisor explains that participation in the EAP is confidential. The employee will be asked to sign a release authorizing the EAP to communicate attendance and follow through with EAP recommendations only. Follow-up is conducted.

EXAMPLE: “Bill, I am making a supervisor referral. I am planning disciplinary action if problems continue. Will you accept an EAP referral?”

COMMENTS: This referral clearly uses possible adverse action as leverage to motivate the employee. EAP attendance is voluntary (as always.) Avoidance or disciplinary action is a primary motivator. Follow-up between the EAP and the supervisor is essential. The employee decides what her or she will do.

Type 2 Supervisor Referral (Performance-based Intervention)

DESCRIPTION: Disciplinary action is warranted, known in advance, and administered if the employee does not accept the EAP referral as an alternative (accommodation) in the event the performance issue is influenced by a personal problem.

EXAMPLE: “Bill, a disciplinary action is warranted for the (performance issue, conduct). Would you be interested in visiting the EAP and following its recommendations as an accommodation in the event a personal problem is contributing to this performance issue? In this case, we would hold this action in abeyance. What would you like to do?”

COMMENTS: Powerful, but least used approach. Uses job security, or other disciplinary action as leverage. The employee is in control of whether he receives disciplinary action, but must decide now. Disciplinary action is not based upon failure to go to the EAP, but the performance issue. The supervisor referral is an opportunity to accept help – an accommodation.