



Employees—
Your Most
Valuable
Resource

Frontline Supervisor

August 2018

ESPÿR

(855) 584-3855

■ **I am frustrated and angry with my employee for coming to work late. Sometimes, I lose my cool. However, I am not letting the employee get away with it. I encourage coworkers to confront the behavior. A fellow manager said I am an enabler. How so?**

Enabling exists because you are failing to implement a strategic approach to resolving this problem, and the emotional and personal involvement prevents its implementation. When an employee exhibits unacceptable performance like poor work quality, tardiness, or conduct problems on the job, it is appropriate to confront it. Hopefully, things improve. The correct approach relieves you from the emotional involvement you have experienced. The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) model allows you to step away from all the emotionality. Instead, you make the assumption that some personal problem or concern outside the employee's control drives the behavior. A ladder of progressive steps ultimately motivates the employee to get help. Talk to the EAP about these progressive steps. You will most likely be successful in getting your employee to accept help because, when properly implemented, the EAP intervention steps demonstrate to the employee that the organization will not permit an ongoing problem with attendance. Consult with your Human Resources advisor as needed.

■ **Can our EAP advise our management group on the possible psychological effects of a pending disciplinary action on an employee who is not a client of the EAP?**

The EAP might discuss a manager's concern about a pending decision to use disciplinary action, to help him or her gain clarity, offer support in managing stress associated with the decision, or address personal fears. However, the EAP would not render a psychological judgment in general regarding risk of a disciplinary action. Doing so interferes with management processes and violates an ethical boundary of non-interference by EAPs. If the EAP engaged in this process, it could be viewed as authorizing, consenting to, approving, and sanctioning the decision. This would produce a schism within your management group if the EAP, as an expert, trumped others' opinions. Some managers might agree, while others not. Management would feel forced to accept whatever the EAP recommended. This bind would take a toll on the EAP's ability to attract employees and managers. Psychological evaluations are outside the scope of the EAP, but it can help your organization arrange such resources if needed. Be sure to consult with HR about this matter.

■ **I saw an online article that said bad bosses can make employees sick. What are they referring to, and exactly what supervisor issues affect employees most?**

Studies show that 50% of employees have quit a job because of a bad boss. One study reported that 75% consider their boss a major source of stress, but most have no plans to quit. The health issue is stress. Here's a list of common complaints from a Harris Poll in order of severity: 1) not recognizing employee achievements; 2) not giving clear directions; 3) not having time to meet with employees; 4) refusing to talk with subordinates; 5) taking credit for others' ideas; 6) not offering constructive criticism; 7) not knowing an employee's name; 8) refusing to talk with people on the phone or in person; and 9) not asking about employees' lives outside of work. Nearly all of these fall in the realm of communication, and some you may find surprising. For example, employees want you to know more about them personally. Do any apply to you? The EAP can help you become a champ on any of these issues.

<https://hbr.org/2015/06/the-top-complaints-from-employees-about-their-leaders>

■ **Can you give me a basic formula or a “do it by the numbers” way to write a corrective memo, one that explains step-by-step what to include?**

Here is a sample of effective documentation. Letter to employee: 1) On (date), _____ incident occurred. 2) Specifically, _____ (what was seen, heard, said, happened, etc.). 3) Mention negative effects or outcome of incident on immediate work unit or operation. 4) State unacceptability of event/incident and why it is unacceptable. 5) Reference any similar past events. For example, _____. 6) State larger impact and effect on productivity for organization. 7) State that you are anticipating this won't happen again. 8) Invite employee to meet and discuss issues, concerns, or precipitating events to prevent any future incident. 9) Provide a strong recommendation to use the EAP confidentially to discuss any personal problem that may be associated with the issue. 10) Give phone number to EAP. 11) Thank employee for attention to the matter. 12) Invite employee to discuss any other concerns. 13) Copy next-level supervisor and 14) Importantly, contact the EAP yourself to consult about the referral at the start of this recommended documentation process. This is one example of a structured memo with essential elements. However, your HR department or policies may also have recommendations or guidance for you.

To refer an employee to the EAP, or to consult about a supervisory or organizational issue, please call **(855) 584-3855**. To view an on-line supervisory training about the EAP, please visit our web site at www.espyr.com and log in using your password: **SOG2015**