



When an employee takes the step to ask about the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), it shows trust in you as their supervisor. Your role is to respond with acceptance, respect, and support while maintaining confidentiality.

Supporting Someone Who Asks

About the EAP

Key Principles:

Be Welcoming and Supportive: Express appreciation that the employee felt comfortable coming to you.

Avoid Judgment: Do not question or challenge their reasons for seeking support.

Respect Boundaries: Only discuss what the employee is comfortable sharing.

Maintain Confidentiality: Assure them their interest in the EAP is private and will not affect their employment.

Steps to Take When an Employee Reaches Out:

Listen with Empathy

- Give your full attention—put away distractions.
- Use supportive body language (e.g., eye contact, nodding, open posture).
- Acknowledge their courage: “I appreciate you bringing this question up.”

Normalize and Encourage

- Remind them the EAP is a confidential*, voluntary resource.
- Reinforce that many employees use the program for stress, personal concerns, or work-life balance.

Provide EAP Information

- Share access details: phone number, website, and printed handout.
- Emphasize that the service is free and confidential.

Respect Their Autonomy

- Do not pressure them to use the EAP.
- Allow them to decide if, when, and how they want to reach out.

Follow Up Gently (If Appropriate)

- Check in later with a general, supportive question like: “How have you been doing lately?”
- Avoid asking directly whether they contacted the EAP.

Connect with the EAP for additional support and guidance in leading your team.

*EAP counselors have master's degrees and are licensed professionals. Your privacy is protected by strict federal and state confidentiality laws and regulations and by professional ethical standards for counselors. Information you share with the EAP may not be released to anyone without your prior written consent, except as required by law (e.g. when a person's emotional condition is a threat to him or herself or others, or there is suspected child or elder abuse) or the issuance of a court order upon a showing of good cause.