

THE CONTINUUM **EDGE**

INFORMATION FOR LEADERS

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What are the main ways that supervisors can use Continuum EAP for themselves as a confidential source of support?

Supervisors can use the EAP in several ways — some highly effective yet often overlooked. Consider these ways of leveraging the EAP for yourself:

- Seek confidential counseling for one's own personal needs and concerns.
- Consult on improving communication with upper management.
- Learn stress management tips.
- Seek guidance on approaching employees prior to conducting corrective interviews and participating in sensitive conversations.
- Consult on handling specific situations involving difficult employees and reducing risk in managing problematic employee behaviors.
- Consult on and gain expert advice on handling difficult employee situations, performance issues and workplace conflicts.
- Get help with pre-referral planning, post-referral communication, and post-discharge follow-up of formally referred employees.



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I don't want to diagnose personal problems despite knowing they are likely to exist. Sometimes I know the exact nature of the personal problem. How do I stay away from discussing the "diagnosis" and remain focused on correcting the behavior?

A: Supervisors sometimes wonder how to avoid discussions with employees that may border on examining underlying personal causes of problematic performance. Here's one approach of many: No matter the performance issue, approach the corrective interview with two central ideas: describing the problematic performance and pointing out its adverse impact. Don't ask why the behavior is occurring. Instead, let the worker react to your concern.

You might hear, "Well, aren't you going to ask me why?" The "why" is often a segue to an explanation by the employee designed to postpone consequences or accountability. **(Of course, a real workplace issue might be mentioned and an opportunity to correct it therefore exists.)** However, if a personal problem is mentioned, recommend that they utilize Continuum EAP as a resource to help address the problem.

What is the “Great Detachment”? I saw this in a news article recently and how the majority of employees aren’t satisfied with their jobs.

What can supervisors do, and how can Continuum EAP help?

A: The “Great Detachment” is a workplace trend where employees are emotionally disconnecting from their jobs (*Gallup 2024*). Only about 18% of employees are engaged, which means feeling committed to the job and employer; being enthusiastic and often doing more than expected; finding the job meaningful and fulfilling; and feeling loyal to the employer’s mission, consistently acting and speaking positively about the company. Consult with Continuum EAP about the unique aspects of your work unit and what more you can do individually and collectively to connect with staff.

Realize that young workers, frontline staff and remote staff are more at risk for disengagement. Check in with your employees one on one and have mini five-minute meetings to discuss needs, goals and how work can be more enjoyable. The relationship with their supervisor reportedly is one of the most often cited reasons employees find more meaning in their jobs, thereby increasing their loyalty to the employer, according to Marcus Buckingham, author of *Love and Work: How to Find What You Love*.

Source: gallup.com/workplace/653711/great-detachment-why-employees-feel-stuck.aspx



● **Although employees do self-refer to the EAP, many believe that a formal referral to Continuum EAP is a punishment. What explains this persistent dynamic? I think it is partly stigma, but is there anything supervisors can do to minimize it?**



A: Continuum EAP is a voluntary program with staff who know how to quickly put a client at ease and establish a helping relationship that facilitates personal disclosure. Most employees, even those who are formally referred and resistant at first, quickly realize that the program is a safe and inviting experience. Stigma attached to or fear of the program usually dissipates at this point. Troubled employees who have experienced conflict with supervisors for lengthy

periods of time may naturally feel that a referral is a punitive step. Regularly promoting the program in staff meetings, making assurances about confidentiality, and making EAP materials readily available are crucial strategies for increasing familiarity, reducing stigma and normalizing the services of the program. Work units where the EAP is never mentioned and its literature is out of sight may experience more stigma and fear that the program is not confidential.