

# FRONTLINE SUPERVISOR

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MIIA  
Employee  
Assistance  
Program

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## Documenting Subtle Abuse

**Q. Documenting employees who participate in subtle abuse or bullying behaviors is sometimes difficult because one can't describe what's being witnessed, like tone of voice, for example. In the end, it just sounds like one's opinion!**

A. You are correct. Tone of voice is difficult to describe in documentation without being subjective, which may lead to its being dismissed by management as opinion. The way around this problem is to document reactions by the victim or others to the tone of voice. These effects are visible and therefore describable and measurable. Now you have something less refutable, and not based on opinion. Several of these documented situations constitute a preponderance of evidence that supports the thrust of your documentation, which makes it useful for administrative purposes.



## Top Employee Complaints

**Q. I am a new supervisor. What are the top complaints of employees about supervisors? I plan to avoid all of them.**

A. A national 2015 Harris Poll was conducted that asked employees this question. Read about it online in the Harvard Business Review at hbr.org (search for "top complaints"). These complaints, starting with the most frequently cited, are not recognizing employee achievements, not giving clear directions, not having time to meet with employees, refusing to talk to subordinates, taking credit for others' ideas, not offering constructive criticism, not knowing employees' names, refusing to talk to people on the phone or in person, and not asking about employees' lives outside work. Keeping this list in mind, conducting a self-assessment, and working to champion all of them will produce more engaged and happier employees, reduce turnover, and play a role in helping your bottom line. The EAP can help you be a stronger performer in any of these areas where you think you fall short.

### Management Consultation Services

- Employee Performance
- Change Management
- Workplace Trauma
- Conflict Resolution
- Layoff Support
- Lunch & Learn Seminars
- Management Trainings
- Organizational Stress

### Employee Services

#### Confidential Counseling

- Addiction
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Family Issues
- Stress Management
- Work Concerns

#### Resources & Referrals

- Legal
- Financial
- Child Care
- Elder Care



# FRONTLINE SUPERVISOR

## Improving Your Relationships With Employees

**Q. How can the EAP help me as a supervisor in developing and improving my relationships with employees?**



**A.** The success of the supervisory role is largely dependent on the effectiveness of relationships that you have with employees.

An effective relationship allows you to play an influential role in maximizing the job satisfaction and productivity of your workers. There is more to achieving these goals than most supervisors realize. EAPs have resources and counseling skills, and they understand relationship dynamics that can help. Developing and enhancing emotional intelligence is the path to success, and EAPs can consult with you on ways to improve relationships and enhance them in specific ways--determining how to motivate employees, utilize their talents better, help them feel rewarded, and listen to and understand their needs. You want employees to be honest with you, open up, share their workplace struggles and their ideas, and tell you how they can best be utilized. All of this depends on your ability to be your authentic self, open up, exercise patience, and demonstrate vulnerability. These are relationship skills that your EAP's expertise can help you attain and develop.

## From Supervisor To Leader

**Q.** The best supervisors in my career did not just supervise; instead, they raised employees up, attracted their loyalty, and inspired their desire to be part of a cohesive and close work unit. I think this is a learned skill, not just charisma. Am I correct?

**A.** You are describing the qualities of a good leader. The following are a few contrasts between being a supervisor and being a leader. Instead of simply administrating, look for ways to innovate and improve systems within your work unit. Place your focus on people and developing them, rather than only paying attention to the letter of their job descriptions. Take safe risks with your employees' abilities and talents, rather than pigeon-holing them into who should do what. This inspires trust between you and them. Think about the future of your work unit, not just what is happening from day to day. When employees complain, pay attention to their needs. Do not see making changes as giving in to demands, but rather as challenging the status quo. You have unique talents. Know what they are, and how you will elevate your work unit and organization with them. Focus on doing the right thing for your employees, rather than thinking "we can't do it that way because it has never been done." Stepping outside of the structure will cause you to make some mistakes, but leadership means you will lack one attribute: being perfect.



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