**Q.** How do I deal with an employee we hired very recently who does not appear to be a good culture fit for our organization? Performance is good, but issues with communication exist, and like-mindedness with the rest of our employees is lacking.

**A.** Culture fit is viewed as important and can reduce conflicts and enhance productivity. It also helps reduce turnover. Unhappy employees tend to leave, so your goal should be to avoid that outcome. Don’t dismiss culture fit as completely irrelevant to the job performance requirements, but you must describe specifically what you mean so that documentation can work—you can describe what you want and evaluate improvement later. Discuss the circumstances with the EAP and determine an approach to help your employee better assimilate to the work culture. Consider team issues, interpersonal communication, isolation, argumentative behavior, attitude issues, avoiding of associates, personal disposition, and buy-in to the organization’s mission. Be aware that your employee may have personal problems and these could manifest as issues of culture fit.

**Q.** I don’t like reprimanding employees or telling them what they have done wrong. How can supervisors have an easier time with these tense meetings?

**A.** There is an old saying in customer service: “A complaint is a gift.” This idea sees negative feedback or criticism as an opportunity to improve and grow. This same model applies to correcting employees. View a corrective interview as a gift that will benefit your employee’s career. Consider the term “corrective interview” over “reprimand.” It is more closely aligned with this model of supervision. See these meetings as opportunities to benefit employees. You will feel less punitive and more like a coach or leader. Be aware that employees who are your star performers may require more corrective interviews because they practice initiative and take more risks. Their higher productivity may come with more mistakes if they naively cross boundaries, unwittingly step on the wrong toes, or simply rub people the wrong way. It’s part of the growth curve. A corrective interview is an opportunity to develop talent. See these meetings from this viewpoint and they will be easier to conduct, and more beneficial to your organization.

**Q.** The worst part about supervision for me is self-doubt. I am sure other supervisors experience the same problem and suffer in silence too. After all, you can’t let people know you’re doubting your ability to do the job. How can supervisors better manage this worry?

**A.** You’ve cited one of the reasons for the cliché “It’s lonely at the top.” There is hardly a supervisor or leader who has not wondered, no matter how briefly, whether he or she will cut it, succeed, or make significant contributions. Intervention with this sort of anxiety is mostly about maintaining perspective. You’ve succeeded in becoming a manager, and naturally that comes with pressure to perform. Take steps to get support. You will find confidential support at the EAP and quickly find reassurance, resources, and strategies to help you improve your skills and reduce negative self-talk. If needed, you can find one-shot, inexpensive, and short courses online that perfectly match the supervision concern you feel needs addressing.
Q. More than any factor influencing the success of an EAP, confidentiality and the perception of confidentiality reign high. How do supervisors unwittingly jeopardize this positive perception of confidentiality, and how can they enhance it?

A. Most supervisors know the importance of EAP confidentiality, but fewer understand the dynamics of perception of confidentiality and how fragile it is. An EAP may have lock-tight confidentiality and be in complete conformance with confidentiality laws, but if a supervisor improperly discloses to others or makes mention of the name of an employee he or she referred, repercussions could undermine the perception of confidentiality and harm EAP utilization. Reduced EAP utilization can increase risk to the organization, and reestablishing a strong perception of confidentiality can take a long time. Supervisors can help EAPs by regularly encouraging use of the program; talking up the confidential nature of the program; and never making conversation, even to their closest or most trustworthy associates, about those whom they’ve referred to the EAP.