



# FRONTLINE SUPERVISOR

JUNE • 2021



## FIRST RESPONDER RESISTANCE

**Q. I notice some first responders are resistant to self-referral to the Assistance Program. Confidentiality concerns a few, but others think asking for help will tarnish their macho image. How can I help reduce this resistance?**

**A.** To overcome myths and misconceptions about Assistance Programs and getting help, mention the program to your personnel often, and have periodic awareness programs arranged by or with AP staff. : Encourage use of the program and make the program a frequent topic of discussion as a way for personnel to see it as part of the 'first responder culture'. This will have a significant impact on reducing resistance to using the program. In effect, this type of visibility has a marketing effect that normalizes the idea of getting help. Regarding your role as a supervisor, be careful about language. If you are involved in a "bad call" or a horrific event, model reaching out to personnel, follow critical incident stress management protocols and don't make statements that reinforce the macho mentality among personnel, like "Suck it up, it's your job." Be aware of the role alcohol plays among personnel, and how it is used to manage stress within your department. Discuss with the AP strategies that educate about and encourage healthy behaviors for managing stress.

## OFF-DUTY DOT VIOLATION

**Q. At a Memorial Day party I saw my DOT employee at a distance smoking a joint. He has a regulated, safety-sensitive position. I pretended not to notice, but now that I am back at work, I must act on our policy and refer to testing. I fear this is going to cause quite an upset.**

**A.** Your employee may be upset about a confrontation, but it is he who placed you in the position of having to make a referral for a reasonable suspicion test. Being friends and socializing with employees happens with great frequency but also with risk, because a "dual relationship" of friend and boss may potentially interfere with one's ability to act, as in this case, on a drug-free workplace policy. Smoking marijuana will cause an employee to test positive for up to 30 days. If you saw a worker smoking pot in the company parking lot, you would also be obligated to act. You have personal knowledge of drug use, so do not allow a potentially toxic employee to risk the lives of others. Still anxious and nervous? Speak to the Assistance Program if you have time before the next work shift so you can process your decision and gain fortitude to act.

A COMPANY  
NEWSLETTER

### IN THIS ISSUE

First Responder Resistance • P. 1

Off-Duty DOT Violation • P. 1

Bullying Up • P. 2

Becoming A Better Supervisor  
• P. 2

# BULLYING UP.

## Q. What is “upward bullying”?

**A.** Upward bullying is a term that refers to subordinates who treat bosses with disrespect. Behaviors of “upward bullies” may include inappropriately correcting the boss, nagging the boss to obtain something they desire or intimidating the boss in some manner to be the one who has the power and control in the supervisor-supervisee relationship. Regaining control in a supervisory relationship with an upward bullying employee requires reestablishing effective and appropriate authority by leveraging your assertiveness skills and obtaining assurances from next-level managers that your efforts will be supported. Often upward bullying employees establish relationships with next-level supervisors. These relationships may then be used to empower a bully’s willingness to take more risks with inappropriate communications with the boss, as they may believe consequences for their behavior are unlikely given their friendship with this other manager. If you believe you have lost control of the supervisory relationship with your subordinate employee, contact the Assistance Program to work on a plan for reestablishing an appropriate balance of the power in the relationship.



## BECOMING A BETTER SUPERVISOR

**Q.** There are hundreds of resources on becoming a better supervisor, but who has time to read this stuff and incorporate it into one’s supervision style? I think supervisors often must muddle through with trial and error until we learn how to be supervisors, right?

**A.** Much supervisory skill development is by trial and error, but a key growth strategy is also mentorship, formal and informal, early in one’s career. A recent study showed that those who spent a few quiet moments each morning thinking about leadership and reflecting on their experiences, strengths, and goals for improvement actually advanced their leadership abilities. Take a look at the following questions that study participants were asked to consider. Participate in your own study with the same questions and see if your leadership skills advance. Ask: What are some of your proudest leadership moments? What qualities do you have that make you a good leader or will in the future? Think about whom you aspire to be as a leader, then imagine everything has gone as well as it possibly could in this leadership role. What does that look like? What effect do you want to have on your employees? Do you want to motivate them? Inspire them? Identify and develop their talents? What skills or traits do you have that can help with those goals?

Source: [www.news.ufl.edu/2021/04/best-leader-self/](http://www.news.ufl.edu/2021/04/best-leader-self/)

