



## CARE's WorkLife Solutions

Toll Free 866.888.1555

[www.caresworklifesolutions.com](http://www.caresworklifesolutions.com)

---

# The “Sometimes” Speech

An EAP is an invaluable resource for employers who have employees with job performance problems. However, there is growing concern that, when confronting a troubled employee, a supervisor risks saying something that may infer that s/he has “diagnosed” the employee. Terms like “alcoholism” and “depression” are diagnoses that can only be made by trained medical professionals. Also, to say that an employee is “alcoholic” or “depressed” subjects the supervisor and, by extension, his or her employer to possible legal action under current defamation and slander laws. Even to say that an employee is “stressed” may imply a disability that might afford an employee access to his/her workers’ comp benefit.

To protect supervisors and employers while at the same time offering them full access to the services of an EAP, EAP professionals developed what is referred to as the “Sometimes Speech.” The speech directs attention away from the employee and normalizes the fact that personal problems “sometimes” interfere with job performance. Here’s how the “Sometimes Speech” reads:

“Everyone wants you to improve your performance, especially me. We all have personal problems sometimes. Everyone in this organization has had to carry some personal burden. And whether they realize it or not, these problems sometimes show up on the job and start to affect work. I’m not saying this is true in your case, but if it is, the Employee Assistance Program is available to help employees resolve personal problem. The EAP is free and it’s confidential.”

“But, regardless of whether you contact the EAP or not, you and I need to meet again in 30 days to review your progress concerning your job performance.”