

# MISCONDUCT TO RESOLUTION:

## PLANNING TO PREVENT UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

DEFENSE COUNTERINTELLIGENCE AND SECURITY AGENCY

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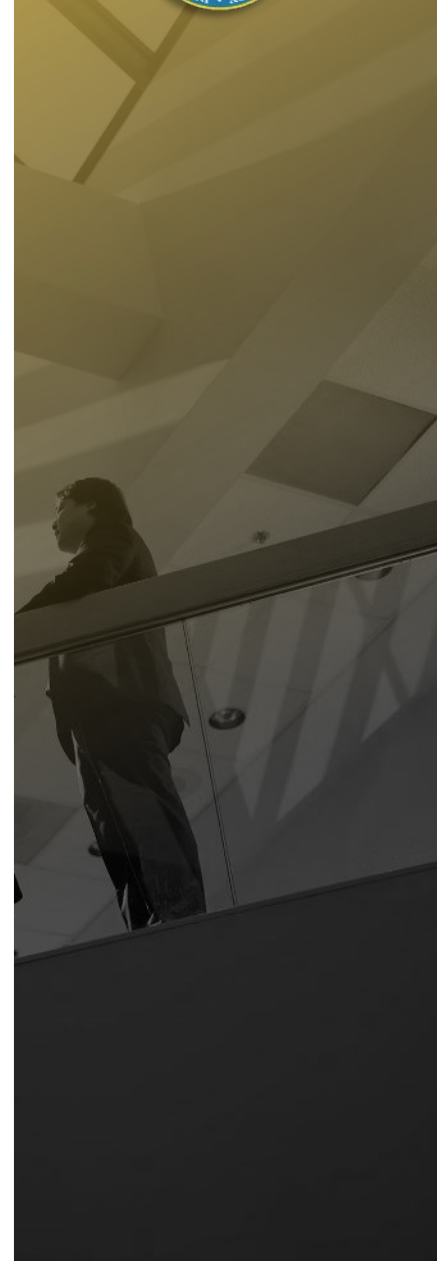
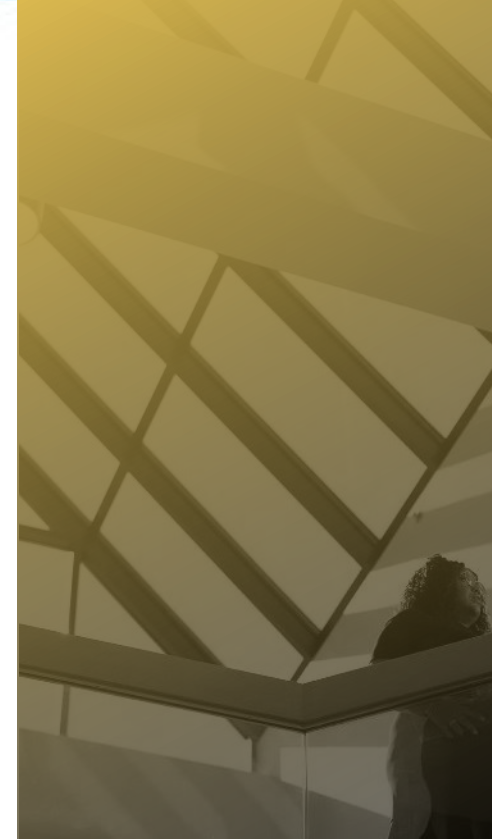




## *Disciplinary action*

*is a common organizational response to workplace misconduct and is often considered a first-line mitigation against misconduct that can also be characterized as an insider threat indicator.*

*Unfortunately, disciplinary actions can also have a detrimental effect on an individual's mindset whereby they induce new stressors, humiliation, or perceptions of unfair treatment.*





# WHY THIS MATTERS TO INSIDER THREAT PROFESSIONALS



## WHY IT MATTERS

*Many insider threat cases escalate after a workplace stressor.*



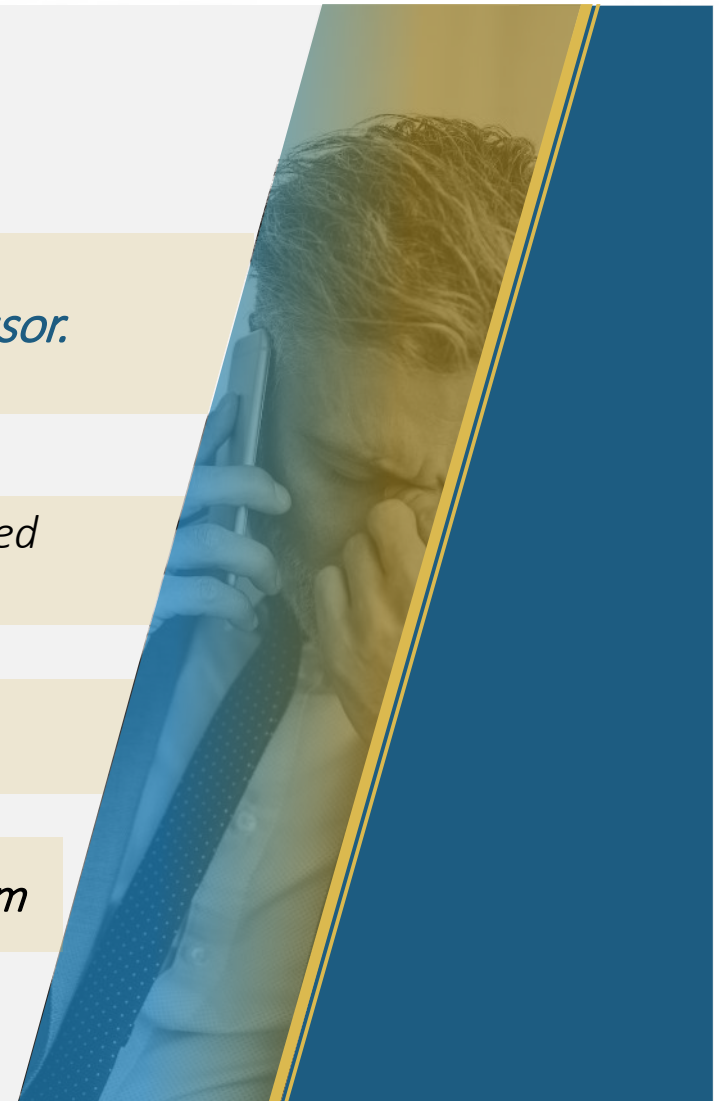
*Disciplinary actions can introduce emotional distress, perceived injustice, shame or humiliation, fear of job loss*



*These stressors can contribute to: retaliatory thinking, disengagement, loss of trust in leadership*



*Our role is to ensure discipline does not become a catalyst for harm*





# TYPES OF DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

	TYPES OF DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS	DESCRIPTION
<b>Initial Corrective Action</b>	Verbal Counseling	Initial, formal steps aimed at clarifying expectations and correcting minor issues early on. Often documented by the supervisor.
<b>Formal Warnings</b>	Written Reprimands Letters of Concern Performance Improvement Plans (PIP)	Formal notices that become part of an employee's official personnel file.
<b>Rehabilitative or Serious Interventions</b>	Performance Improvement Plans (PIP) Suspensions (paid or unpaid) Demotion	PIPs are a structured attempt to improve performance with clear goals and timelines. Suspensions and demotions are punitive measures for continued or serious misconduct.
<b>Final Measure</b>	Termination	Typically occurs after all previous steps have failed or a single instance of gross misconduct.





# Key Principle: Not All Misconduct is a Threat



MISCONDUCT

Misconduct does not automatically equate to Insider Threat Risk

## Important Distinction:

- Policy Violations
- Performance Issues
- Human Error
- Personal Stressors

## Over-labeling employees as “threats” can:

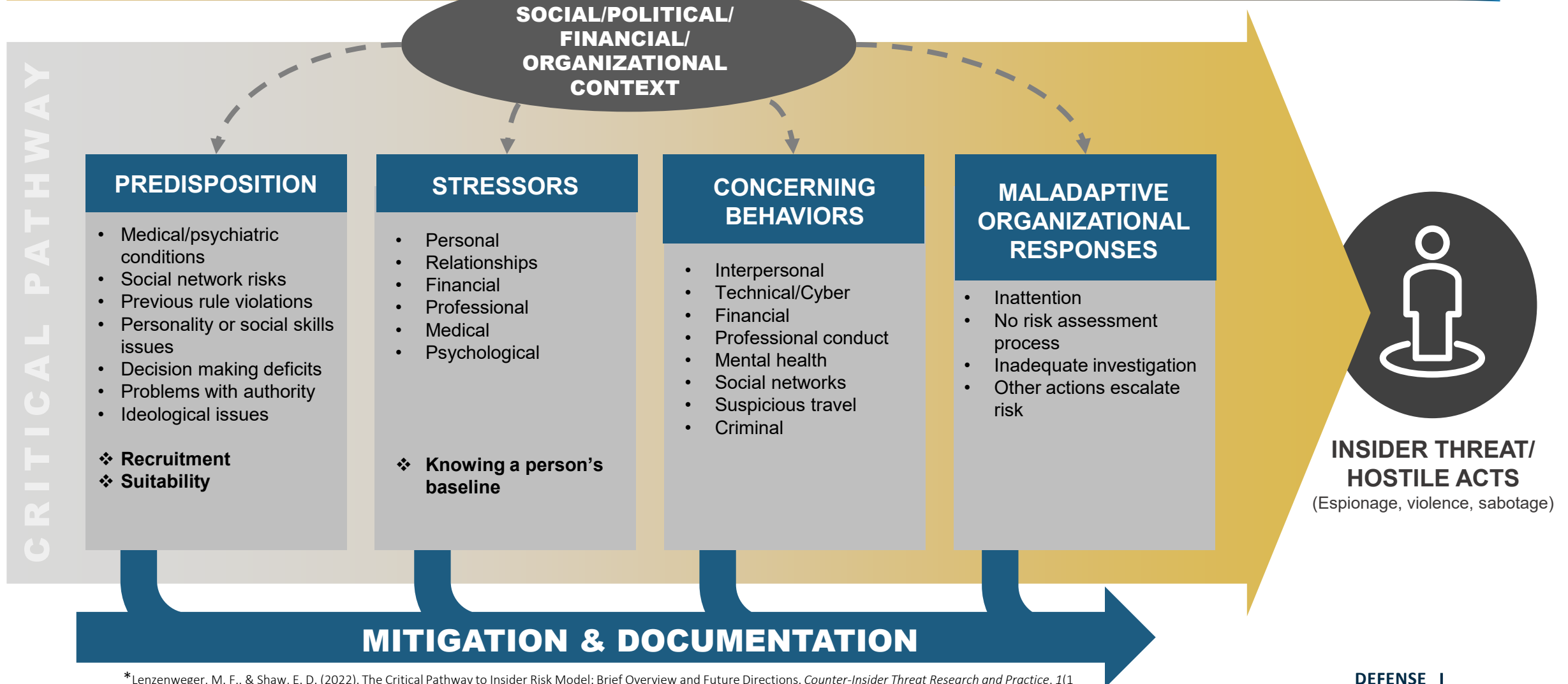
- Damage trust
- Create fear-based cultures
- Reduce reporting and engagement



# Misconduct, Discipline, and the Critical Pathway

BI/Adjudication

InT/SEC / CI / LE



\*Lenzenweger, M. F., & Shaw, E. D. (2022). The Critical Pathway to Insider Risk Model: Brief Overview and Future Directions. *Counter-Insider Threat Research and Practice*, 1(1)



# Are We Creating a Threat With Our Action?



REDUCE RISK

## Before imposing discipline, ask:

- Could this action unintentionally escalate stress?
- Is the employee already experiencing personal or professional strain?
- Are we balancing accountability with dignity?

*Discipline should reduce risk, not introduce new vulnerabilities.*



*Insider Threat mitigation is as much about prevention as enforcement.*

# The Supervisor's Role is Central



SUPERVISORS





# Communication is the Intervention



COMMUNICATION



Firm and empathetic  
Clear expectations  
With compassion comes  
accountability



Public Correction  
Shaming language  
Dismissive or punitive  
tone





# The Workforce is Watching

*Disciplinary actions send messages beyond the individual involved.*

*Employees observe:*

- *Fairness*
- *Consistency*
- *Respect*

*Thoughtful discipline reinforces organizational values*

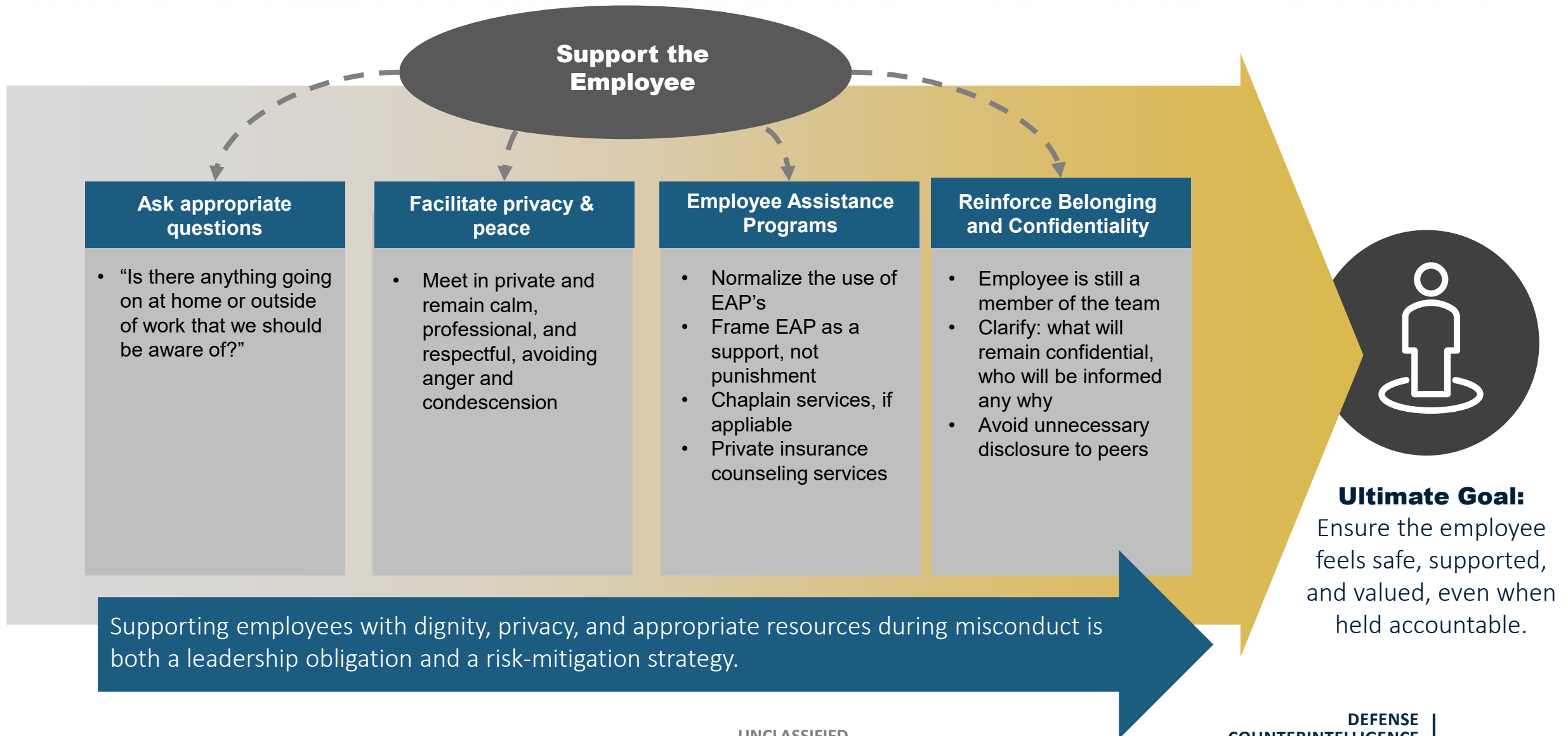
*Poorly handled discipline can:*

- *Undermine morale*
- *Increase fear and silence*
- *Erode trust in leadership*





# Supporting the Employee – Reducing the Risk



# Emotional Intelligence is Not Optional



*Supervisors must develop EQ as part of risk management*

➤ Emotional IQ supports:

- *de-escalation;*
- *trust-building;*
- *early identification of distress*

Leadership behavior can either stabilize or destabilize an employee.

**EQ Resources:**

Training: <https://www.federaltraining.com/leadership-development/emotional-intelligence-and-leadership.aspx>

Books: "Emotional Intelligence 2.0" by Drs. Jean Greaves and Travis Bradberry







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# CLOSING TAKEAWAYS

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