*Is This Confidential?*

What can you do, and say, if an employee comes to you and says, “I need to tell you something, but I don’t want you to do anything about it.”

Advise the employee that they can trust you will maintain their confidentiality, unless something they share with you requires you to take action and provide examples such as legislation or a policy has been broken, or someone’s safety is at risk.

Or tells you about a situation, a serious situation, and then at the close of the conversation says “but this is confidential, right? I don’t want you to say/do anything.”

It depends:

* What was discussed?
* Has a piece of legislation or policy been broken?
* Is someone’s safety at risk?
* Will this have a far-reaching or long-term effect on the work environment, or is this an interpersonal conflict between two individuals that will not affect the work or work environment?

As leaders, we have a responsibility to address legislative and policy breaches or intervene when safety is at risk. This may even mean:

* Initiating a formal investigation without a complaint
* Making a report to a governing or licensing body
* Or referring the situation to another investigative body, perhaps even the police or Child and Family Services.

If the situation is isolated or less likely to have serious effects on the work environment, reinforce for the employee their responsibility to address the issue informally and perhaps seek appropriate help to do so which may be from you, human resources, EAP, or other potential supports.