Without any apparent reason, Marco began taking more and more time off work – saying he was sick.

One of Marco’s colleagues recognised that this was out of character and suspected that there was an underlying problem. He encouraged Marco to call the Employee Assistance Programme.

At first, Marco really did not know what to say to us – just that he felt very alone and vulnerable. A professional counsellor encouraged Marco to 'open up' and explain the real reason for his absences. It turned out that he felt he was being picked on by his supervisor and nothing he did was good enough. Also, he was not the only one who felt this way – the problem seemed to be spreading to others in the workforce.

The conversation with our counsellor helped Marco realise that he must face the problem rather than simply avoid it by not turning up for work. He was given support on ways of approaching his supervisor, asserting his views and resolving the problem.

He arrived at work the next day in a far more positive frame of mind and spoke to his supervisor – who was actually horrified to discover that her behaviour was perceived by Marco and others to be unfair. She had been under the impression that she was simply being tough to get the job done more efficiently when in fact the converse was true. Now the situation has been resolved and things are running smoothly.