

Employee **Assistance** **Program**

SUPERVISOR MANUAL

An EAP Handbook for Managers and Supervisors



1-800-433-2320
www.cascadecenter.com

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WORKPLACE CONCERNS

In today's world, individuals face a wide range of concerns including broken or struggling relationships, parenting issues, alcohol and drug abuse, and financial worries, to name a few.

When personal problems such as these are unresolved they can interfere not only with an individual's quality of life, but also with job performance.

Statistics reveal how commonplace and serious problems are:

- One in two marriages end in divorce
- 68% of illicit drug users are employed
- One in 10 individuals, at some point in their lives, will have emotional problems serious enough to require professional help
- 25% of women and 13% of men suffer at least one episode of serious depression during their lifetime

Your organization is committed to helping its employees whose personal problems effect job performance. As a supervisor or manager, you are in a key position to motivate employees with performance problems to seek help for any personal problems that may be involved.

This guide will assist you in your role as a supervisor or manager and serve as a reminder that the Employee Assistance Program is a resource to you at every stage of your coaching process.



EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a confidential and professional service where employees and their family members can get help for a wide range of personal problems which may impact, or have the potential to impact job performance.

The EAP is a win-win program because it benefits both the organization and the employee. An EAP:

- ✓ Improves productivity, employee morale, and work environment
- ✓ Reduces accidents, injuries, and worker's compensation claims
- ✓ Eliminates possible severance and replacement related costs

Although the EAP is most frequently used on a voluntary, self-referred basis, a supervisory referral to the EAP can be a powerful tool in helping an employee improve job performance. A supervisory referral may, in fact, provide the only real chance of the supervisor's message "getting through" to the employee.

Cascade Centers, Inc. - Your EAP provider

Cascade Centers, Inc. is a private company that has provided professional EAP services since 1975. Cascade's team of psychologists and counselors has years of experience in providing confidential assistance with a wide variety of workplace and personal issues.

What happens when you use the EAP?

- ✓ Identify and prioritize problems and concerns
- ✓ Identify appropriate course of action and resource options
- ✓ Problem resolution through short term counseling
- ✓ Referral to other resources as appropriate
- ✓ Follow up

CONFIDENTIAL

Use of the Employee Assistance Program is strictly confidential. Legal exceptions to confidentiality occur when there is danger to self or others. Examples include child or elder abuse, and threat of homicide or suicide. The right of privacy for EAP clients is explained in detail during the initial intake appointment. Cascade welcomes all questions regarding client confidentiality.



HOW DOES THE EAP HELP?

The EAP offers confidential and professional services to assist employees and their families in addressing a wide range of personal problems. Some of those problems may include:

- ✓ Relationships with family, significant others, co-workers
- ✓ Emotional or psychological issues such as depression or anxiety
- ✓ Financial, legal or consumer difficulties
- ✓ Grief, loss, and transitions through significant changes
- ✓ Stress and health problems
- ✓ Alcohol or drug abuse: yours, or someone you care about
- ✓ Aging or ailing family members

Any of the above problems can be serious enough to affect all areas of an employee's life, including the ability to perform at work in an acceptable manner. Job performance problems may present in various ways, including:

- ✓ Absenteeism
- ✓ On-the-job absenteeism
- ✓ Job efficiency
- ✓ Interpersonal relationships
- ✓ Personal appearance, attitude
And behavior

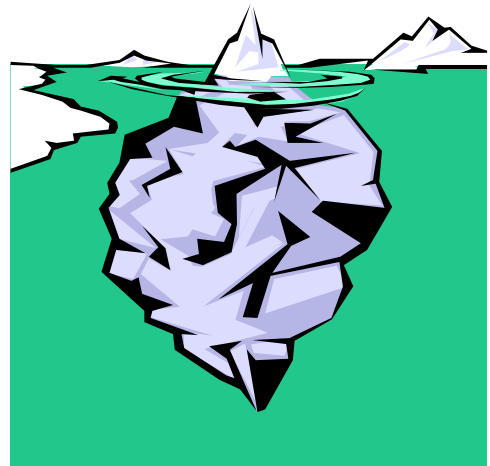
Job performance problems
are often only the tip
of the iceberg.

Supervisor Focus:

Identify and document job
performance problems.
Encourage use of the EAP.

EAP Focus:

Identify underlying problems,
develop a plan of action
and refer to resources.





ACTIVE SUPERVISION CONSTRUCTIVE INTERVENTION

The Supervisor Intervention process below outlines the steps you should follow when confronting troubled employees. Familiarize yourself with this process **before** problems arise to ensure an effective intervention.

STEP 1: OBSERVE

- Recognize warning signs
- Be objective

STEP 2: DOCUMENT

- Record your observations
- Accurate, Behavioral, Consistent

Psychological problems account for 61% of absences from work each year (as well as 65-85% of employee terminations and 80-90% of industrial accidents).

STEP 3: PREPARE

- Develop a plan
- Consult with others as needed

STEP 4: TAKE ACTION - INTERVENE

- Meet with employee and union representative (if applicable)
- Address the performance problem

STEP 5: FOLLOW THROUGH

- Continue to observe, document, plan
- Pay attention to performance issues discussed in step 4 (above)

STEP 1: OBSERVE

The first step in dealing with a job performance issue is identifying the problem. It is important to point out issues as you become aware of them. The following are guidelines for observing performance problems.

Ask yourself questions about what you observe

- ✓ Is this work performance or behavior acceptable?
- ✓ Is it within organization's policy and procedures?
- ✓ Is what I observe inappropriate or extreme?
- ✓ Is it unusual or out of character for this employee?
- ✓ Is it unusual or out of character for this environment?

Consider safety first

- ✓ Does it violate safety rules or regulations?
- ✓ Does it cause an "at risk" situation for the employee?
- ✓ Does it cause an "at risk" situation for others?
- ✓ Does it cause an "at risk" situation for property?

Objective vs. Subjective

It is important to be aware of how your subjective information impacts your objective information. Consider all your information and your reactions so your own emotions do not cloud the issue. Being objective helps you focus on the performance issues that need to be addressed.

<u>Objective</u>	<u>Subjective</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ What you see✓ What you hear	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Thoughts about the situation and the person✓ Feelings about the situation and the person✓ Concern about what might happen

STEP 2: DOCUMENT



"If it isn't documented, it didn't happen..."

Objective documentation

- Records a set of facts
- Substantiates a need for improved work performance

Good documentation helps the supervisor...

- Recognize patterns of poor performance over time
- Provide objective, factual feedback to the employee
- Communicate that you are serious about good performance
- Initiate a corrective process
- Substantiate a need for disciplinary action when necessary

Good documentation helps the employee...

- Understand what is expected as a performance standard
- Recognize what needs to be changed
- Receive appropriate factual feedback
- Avoid denial of a problem

The ABC'S of Documentation...

Accurate

Write it down. Don't rely on your memory
Record objective facts as they occur
Record job related behavior
Omit hearsay and rumor

Behavioral

Describe specific observed behavior
Omit opinion and assumption

Consistent

Be fair, be detailed, be precise
Document improvement and positive behavior

- Don't diagnose or label
- Don't make assumptions
- Don't make accusations



DOCUMENTING PERFORMANCE PROBLEMS

Recognition and documentation of unacceptable job performance are essential to an effective intervention with a troubled employee. Outlined below are examples of problems you can identify in the workplace.

Absenteeism	<input type="checkbox"/> Unauthorized leave or excessive sick leave <input type="checkbox"/> A pattern of Monday or Friday absences <input type="checkbox"/> High absenteeism rate; excessive tardiness <input type="checkbox"/> Peculiar and improbable excuses for absences
On-The-Job Absenteeism	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexplained absences from worksite during work day <input type="checkbox"/> Frequent trips to the restroom/water fountain <input type="checkbox"/> Long coffee breaks <input type="checkbox"/> Physical illness on the job; frequent trips to nurse's office
High Accident or "Near Miss" Rate	<input type="checkbox"/> Accidents or "near misses" on the job <input type="checkbox"/> Accidents off the job (may or may not affect job)
Difficulty Concentrating	<input type="checkbox"/> Work appears to require greater effort or more time <input type="checkbox"/> Frequently seems to stare off into space
Confusion	<input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty in recalling instructions, details, etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Increasing difficulty handling complex assignments <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty in recalling mistakes
Inconsistent Work Patterns	<input type="checkbox"/> Significant highs and lows in productivity <input type="checkbox"/> Alternating periods of accuracy and non-accuracy
Resistance to Change	<input type="checkbox"/> Doesn't change easily <input type="checkbox"/> Rigidly maintains current behavior, despite feedback or directives to change.
Change in Physical Condition	<input type="checkbox"/> Comes to work or returns to work in an obviously abnormal condition
Lower Job Efficiency	<input type="checkbox"/> Takes more time to complete tasks; misses deadlines <input type="checkbox"/> Increased waste or damaged products <input type="checkbox"/> Makes mistakes or uses poor judgment
Unacceptable Behavior	<input type="checkbox"/> Argues with others <input type="checkbox"/> Threatens <input type="checkbox"/> Is potentially violent

STEP 3: PREPARE

Start with yourself

- Examine your personal feelings about the employee and the problem. Acknowledge and accept those feelings.
- Focus on what you want to achieve. What is the desired outcome? Any feeling of nervousness or anxiety is normal.
- If your feelings are hindering a fair, objective process, consider help. Resources: Your Supervisor, H.R. or Personnel Department, the EAP.

Consider the employee

- Think of the situation from the employee's point of view.
- What reactions might you expect from the employee? Defensiveness, hostility, cooperation? Think about ways to acknowledge feelings.
- Return to your focus of desired outcome.
- This process provides the employee an opportunity to make changes.
- Give the employee this important message: "You are valued".

Develop a plan of corrective action

- Review the organization's policies and procedures which apply.
- Review and summarize documentation - remove subjective material.
- Decide what is to be done to correct the problem.
- Establish bottom line expectations for performance improvement.
- Arrange for the meeting considering the employee's current behavior.
- Assure privacy with no interruptions.
- Allow sufficient time for the meeting but set a time limit.

Confer with the Employee Assistance Program in advance of your meeting for objective, professional help and to discuss a possible referral based on job performance.

Call your EAP at
1-800-433-2320

STEP 4: TAKE ACTION - INTERVENE

Objective:

Meet with the employee to address the performance problem and provide opportunity for improvement.

The supervisor's role

- To know supervisory responsibilities
- To respond appropriately to signs of deteriorating performance
- To provide information in a constructive manner
- To listen attentively
- To focus on the job performance issues only
- To keep action confidential, only share information with the employee and supervisor if need

The employee's role

- To make an informed choice about job performance
- To be responsible for change

Intervening with poor performance includes:

- Risking the supervisor's relationship with the employee
- Breaking the silence surrounding the performance problem
- Describing the employee's behavior and how it impacts others
- Providing a clear statement of expected job performance
- Providing an opportunity for improvement
- Referring the employee to the EAP for confidential help

An overwhelming majority of Americans (92%) agree that personal problems often spill over into work, decreasing productivity.

This is communicating under pressure. It helps to:

- Manage your own emotional investment in the situation
- Avoid enabling. Express concern but don't "rescue"
- Listen actively, without reacting or interrupting.
- Keep the discussion focused on solutions to the problems
- Follow up. Specify a time to re-evaluate the employee's progress

REMEMBER, this may not be easy, but it will get easier with practice.

STEP 5: FOLLOW THROUGH

Follow through is an on-going process.

- Observe and document job performance.
- Pay particular attention to the job issues discussed in your meeting.
- Reinforce positive change with appropriate praise and support.
- If the employee's performance does not improve in a reasonable amount of time further disciplinary action may be necessary. Follow through.
- Don't avoid further disciplinary steps. By postponing the inevitable you are postponing the opportunity for the employee to get additional help if needed.
- If a referral has been made to the EAP, be clear about your expectations of the employee's participation and follow through.

Remember the Employee Assistance Program

There are many causes of poor job performance. If a personal problem is the cause of job performance problems, professional help may be necessary. Let the EAP professionals make that assessment. There are two ways a supervisor can direct an employee to the EAP:

1. Informal Referral. A supervisor may *recommend or encourage* the employee to contact the EAP for support and guidance. This referral may be made if the employee expresses a need for assistance or is having job performance problems.
2. Management Referral. This is a formal referral. It is usually part of a disciplinary process. The supervisor receives information from the EAP regarding the employee's participation and assessment recommendations that are made. It is important that you coordinate this with your Human Resources or Personnel Office and the EAP before you initiate the referral.

Call the EAP 1-800-433-2320

- ✓ To support you through the intervention process
- ✓ For a Management Consultation
- ✓ To arrange a Job Performance Referral

The average number of days absent from work for an emotional reason ranges from 3.2 to 9.4. Depression is associated with the greatest number of absences. The average for depression is greater than that attributed to all conditions except cancer and cardiovascular problems.



WHAT IS A JOB PERFORMANCE REFERRAL TO THE EAP?

A management referral to the EAP can be a powerful tool in helping an employee improve job performance. Although the EAP is most frequently used on a voluntary, self-referred basis, a management referral may, in fact, provide the only real change of “getting the employee’s attention” and helping him/her resolve the problem.

When performance has declined or workplace behavior is unacceptable and your attempts to intervene with an employee do not bring about the desired improvement, you may wish to make a Job Performance Referral, sometimes called a Management Referral. This is a formal process. Use this type of referral when you wish to receive information from the EAP about the employee. It is important that you coordinate this with your Human Resources or Personnel Office and the EAP before you initiate the referral with the employee. This ensures that the process will proceed smoothly and you receive the feedback you need.

Confidentiality standards forbid the EAP to provide information about an employee who uses the service. If you have formally referred an employee and notified the EAP a form will need to be signed by the employee to release specific information.

The standard release form used by the EAP usually allows release of the following information:

- ✓ Whether or not the employee kept the initial appointment with the EAP as agreed
- ✓ Whether or not the EAP counselor made a recommendation(s)
- ✓ Whether or not the employee followed the recommendation(s)

This release format allows you as the supervisor to receive the minimal amount of information needed so that your focus can remain on performance issues.

Before completing the release forms it is recommended that the following format be observed:

- ✓ Decide who receives feedback from the EAP
- ✓ Decide what specific feedback from the EAP is necessary

Improved job performance is the best indicator
of progress and problem resolution

Sometimes improvement will be slow; the problem will probably not be resolved overnight, but job performance should remain the focus of your intervention. Let the employee be responsible for resolving any personal problems.



FAQS (Frequently Asked Questions)

QUESTION: An employee has shared information with me about a personal problem. How can I stay out of her personal life and still be helpful?

RECOMMENDATION: Tell the employee you appreciate her honesty and willingness to share the problem with you. Explain that you feel you can best help by reminding the employee of the EAP, where competent professional consultation and help can be arranged. If the employee does not have a private work environment, consider offering the use of your office of telephone so she can call the EAP right away.

QUESTION: How do I respond to the employee who blames poor job performance on personal problems?

RECOMMENDATION: Note that the record shows this problem has existed for some time and that since it has not been resolved on its own, it is obvious that the employee needs more help. Urge the employee to consider contacting the EAP for assistance and recommendations. Document the conversation. Remind the employee that, in any case, the job performance problems must be corrected. Continue the discussion with a plan and a target date for improvement.

QUESTION: My employee demonstrated performance problems and acknowledges there is a personal problem, but claims it is only temporary, and prefers to take care of it alone. Should I involve the EAP?

RECOMMENDATION: Be frank, but supportive. If the personal problems have existed for some time and job performance is affected, recommend (urge) the employee to contact his EAP for support and guidance. Note that you are responsible for his performance. Depending upon the situation, you might consider making a Management Referral to the EAP.

QUESTION: The employee claims there is no problem and responds in an angry manner. How do I respond to his anger or intimidating behavior?

RECOMMENDATION: Use caution! If you have reason to believe the employee is emotionally unstable or perhaps in violation of your Alcohol and Drug Policy, do not continue the interview alone. Keep the person calm and request help from your manager and/or Human Resources Department.



For more information on job performance referrals, management consultation or regarding any other EAP services, please call our toll free number.

1-800-433-2320



Notes....

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on the right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.