

Manual for Supervisors

Your organization has an EAP, (Employee Assistance Program). It is a benefit to help employees at any level with problems affecting their lives. There may be stress from home or work, difficult children, caring for aging parents, or addictions.

EAP is built on the belief that troubled workers are not as productive. They may even be a hazard to each other or to the process, or the organization. You have probably seen some persons so preoccupied that they bump into things or forget what they are doing. Some workers are obsessed with private fears about which they are afraid to speak of, such as personal issues.

In an EAP program, your organization has a benefit which provides counseling service at no expense to the employee or their family members. This plan is for all the company's personnel, including you.

How to use an EAP?

The most typical way of using the EAP program is simply to pick up the phone and call us for an appointment. Anyone can do this for themselves. This is a self-referral. You call and we set up an appointment for you with an EAP counselor near you.

The second way is when you, as a supervisor, notices a problem with an employee and suggests a contact with an EAP counselor. You may also be dealing with an employee for a work-related problem, and you may choose to refer him for that reason. If this is true, it is important to note, EAP is not a part of a disciplinary process. It would make the counselors work difficult if an employee thought of EAP as a reprimand. When a referral is made because you ask as employee to seek counseling, it is a mandatory referral. You need to have your HR department work with you on a mandatory referral due to privacy issues.

How it works

All contacts with EAP are confidential. There is no charge to the employee for these sessions. The counselor will assess the person and either treat the problem, or refer the person to an outside source for treatment. The counselor and the client will arrive at a plan to deal with the issue.

The counselor will do these three things

1. Assess the problem.
2. Propose some action items with the client and counselor working together.
3. Develop a plan for that individual, couple or family, making use of the best resources possible.

Supervisor: What you do and what are you responsible for?

As a supervisor, you are responsible for productivity, performance improvement, continuous quality improvement and other such processes. This is management and leadership. Your employees are the organization's assets which you are responsible for .

The most important thing you do is the process of developing a positive frame of mind in your people. It is not enough merely to get the job done. You want your employees to show enthusiasm, problem identification, problem solving, creativity and team work.

In order to do this, open communication with you as a supervisor is essential. Every person is a potential solution to some problem. Every person represents a creative potential.

The loss of that spirit, the enthusiasm, the creative solution finding is most often the result of two things.

1. A worker feels they have little control of their work or work environment. This is a fast way to burnout and may be as true of you as it is of your employees.
2. Personal and emotional issues with individuals around them.

When you notice this of your employees, it should generate a response from you.

At work:

- Making repeated mistakes
- Bad judgment
- Confusion, can't remember what to do or what was said
- Can't concentrate
- Puts things off
- Loss of interest
- Can't keep up

With co-workers:

- Arguments
- Isolates self
- Gets others to cover for them
- Irritable
- Seems nervous a lot
- Thinks others are out for them

Getting to work:

- The Monday/Friday absence syndrome, a pattern of being off these days
- Repeated phoning for time off without previous warning
- Missing from work area
- Gone on a lot of errands
- Extended lunch or coffee breaks
- Frequent minor ills

Now that you have noticed, what is next?

First, write it down. Provide yourself a written record of what is happening. Stick to the facts. No guesses about what may be happening.

In this pamphlet you will find a sample of how you might write up a personal performance record. *Here's what you need to do.*

1. Be specific, give time, date and place.
2. Write down actual observations.
3. Be sure this record is kept confidential.
4. Be systematic, update regularly.
5. Cover extended period of time.

6. Be objective, fair and consistent.

Check yourself:

1. Are you covering for an employee?
2. Do you "bail them out" because you know them?
3. Do you take risks because they don't do their share?
4. Did you ever feel like you were getting jumped on for someone else's mistakes or inadequacies?
5. Did you ever jump on the whole crew for one person's mistakes?
6. Did you ever get so mad you act or talk before you thought it through?
7. Did you ever just ignore a behavior in hopes it would go away?

Here is what to do:

1. Check with HR. They may use EAP to deal with the problem.
2. Learn positive intervention so you can do it early enough to help. See section 'Positive Intervention'.

Here is how:

Your part is:

1. To be positive (the technique will follow). See section describing positive intervention.
2. Maintain self control.
3. Speak level and smooth without emotion.
4. Do your homework, that is, be prepared with your facts in writing.

When you have decided to act:

1. Select a private place to talk.
2. Ask employee to meet at that place, give a specific time. Set time so as not to interfere unless it is urgent. Example: Jim could I see you for a few minutes at 3:00 in my office?
3. Have your written material with you.
4. Start positive remarks while remaining absolutely truthful. "Jack, you've got 15 good years with us. I've always respected your ability to get a job done ahead of schedule." Or I've always respected your ability to get along with your co-workers.
5. Indicate your concern, this meeting is about that concern.
6. Indicate this concern issue is because it is unlike past work habits.
7. Point out the specific issue:
 - a. Give specific objective examples with date, time and situations (you have this all written down).
 - b. Emphasize seriousness.
 - c. Focus on the job. Keep discussion focused on work. Example: Beginning in March you have had an increasingly number of late days. Site the days.
8. Solicit his information. Do you have any thoughts about what the problem is?
9. Offer EAP, if appropriate. Give phone number and or card.

10. Specify performance concerns and point out where performance has slipped relative to past.
11. Avoid judgments or analysis.
12. Focus on work performance.
13. If situation merits, end discussion with expectation of improvements.
14. Set up a time to review progress.
15. If no progress at selected review time, set timelines for improvement.
16. Offer EAP again.
17. Determine and agree on desired results.
18. Be specific without threatening.
19. Set another review appointment.
20. Emphasize the employee is responsible for resolving present situation and avoiding further consequences.

As this manual indicates, a change in performance, behavior, or appearance is most likely an indicator of a problem developing with an employee. It can begin very gradually or have a sudden onset. Your main response as a supervisor should be first to document, then confront the employee. It is also important for you to suggest using the EAP to an employee as a benefit, not a reprimand.

Employee's Reaction	Employee Says	Supervisor may say
Explanations	There are just too many things In my life to keep track of... I don't have the money for two cars.....	I'm sorry things are so difficult and I want to keep focus on your absenteeism, language, etc...
Remorse & Apology	I'm really sorry I made so much trouble...	I'm glad you understand how important this is. We all depend on your being reliable. What can you do to improve?
Change Subject	Look, I've got 8 years of good performanceI did the last two assignments in two days less than projected.	You're absolutely right! That is why this slump concerns me.
Anger	You and your **** quotas You can shove it...	Andy, this is about as angry as I've ever seen you it has to be a real pain in the neck for you. I'm glad you're able to trust me enough to blow off some steam but right now I just want to talk about your language to Rachel.....
Cries a lot	I never thought it could get this bad. I just want to die. This is awful...	We're here to help and not to destroy you. Let's talk about what's wrong and see what we can do to fix things.
Shift Blame	It's not like I am the only one to ever do that...If Mark hadn't said..	That certainly is a common attitude and today our talk is about what happened with you at quitting time...
Self Pity	Why me? If something goes wrong It's always my fault.	That's probably what it seems like and we need to talk about what to do to change that. Today we are talking about your performance on the job.
Not my Fault	The stuff never got done here... Mike promised he'd...	This isn't a matter of blame, this is a problem we have to solve. Now let's look at what happened.

Positive Intervention

Positive intervention is an approach used when dealing with people which reduces or eliminates barriers and resistance. It often results in enlisting the person as helper and problem solver.

First, initiate the interview on a positive note.

1. _____ I am so glad you could make time for us to talk.
2. _____ we've always been able to count on you to _____.
3. In your time with us, you are not a person I have heard bad things about.
4. We've been fortunate to have a person like you who learns quick.

The object of positive intervention is to visualize your employees as positive assets, as valued team members. Picture them in just that way, as essential to the team. We want them to leave with renewed commitment to the team. It will help to take a few minutes before you talk to put yourself in a positive frame of mind. It helps if you do not confront a situation on the spot but rather think of it as making preparations to confront a difficult situation. The preparation is simple. Explain to the team member that you would like to talk with him or her at (place) at (time). Then you can prepare for the intervention.

The positive remarks must be truthful and represent as honest appraisal of the workers positive points. Be prepared for anger, resentment and explanations. These three are almost always the result of hurt. They serve to protect and insulate the wounded ego. A counter attack only serves to make things worse. If I counter attack my employee, what if I "win"? Then he loses and must rally to a new attack to vindicate himself. It is enough to know that being confronted is likely to result in hurt feelings. You can use this knowledge to cool the fire of anger.

Respond to anger by going with the pressure of it. "Bob, I can really see how angry you are", "Millie, this really is difficult isn't it. Your anger is clear to me and I want to talk about things that are happening with your work". Eliminate the power and authority words in the initial interview such as "must, have to, required", etc. This is especially true of the angry employee. It is not productive to tell him we MUST talk about his work. It is okay to use empathy and respond with words of understanding; after all, the anger is most likely covering fear and hurt.

Now we can move to a positive plan. Put the responsibility on the employee. "Herb, what do you think will improve this?" Don't accept the first suggestion, rather, say something to the effect, is this something you're sure you can do? Put the responsibility for the change back on him again.

Then add "when can I review this with you to see how it is going?" And close with a date and some specific criteria by which to measure compliance. Now reassure your co-worker how valuable they are to you and how much you are looking forward to hearing the next report from them. You may want to review the list of responses on the previous page.

Documentation

Documentation Review:

1. Have a small tablet or note card to carry in pocket so documentation can be done immediately.

2. List observations, date and time.
3. Be specific on observed behavior.
4. List other employees involved or equipment or products.
5. If applicable list specific ethnic, performance or rules violated at the time.
6. Also record other repercussions or work performance deficits caused by employee's behavior.
7. Double check your observations and documentations to make sure they are not just your first impressions of the situation.
8. If employee is confronted at this time be sure to document his reactions to your intervention, especially his specific goal for change.

It could look like this

Observations	Date	Time
Absent- said it was due to headache	5/4/yr	8:05am
Late for a.m.- car trouble	5/6/yr	8:15am
Absent- stomach problems	5/8/yr	8:05am
Late for p.m.- car trouble	5/11/yr	12:30pm
Was not in staff meeting- "forgot"	5/12/yr	3:15pm
Complaint for co-worker, employee not at job site	5/16/yr	2:30pm
Absent- flu	5/19/yr	8:05pm
Complaint from co-worker, angry and rude	5/23/yr	4:25pm
Late for work- wife took his car keys to work with her	5/24/yr	8:25pm