


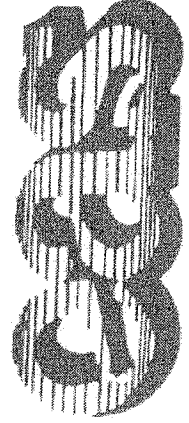
Your Employee Assistance Program's

HANDBOOK for SUPERVISORS



Partners in Well-being
A Division of Behavioral Health Services North, Inc.
www.bhsn.org

**BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
SERVICES NORTH, INC.**



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Plattsburgh ■ Malone ■ Paul Smith's Campus ■ Saranac Lake Ticonderoga ■ Westport
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OBSERVE

The key words in relation to the job performance problems noted below are **continuing** and **repeated**. A pattern of job performance deterioration should be readily apparent. **This requires documentation and meetings with the employee.**

ABSENTEEISM

The patterns of absenteeism may vary. The following are some general patterns. Any excess absenteeism and increases in absenteeism should be noted.

- Unauthorized leave
- Absences immediately before or after weekends, holidays or paydays
- Peculiar and increasingly improbable excuses for absences
- Frequent unscheduled short-term absences (with or without medical explanation)
- Excessive tardiness
- Leaving work early
- Higher absenteeism rate than other employees for colds, flu, gastritis, etc (and consequently more health insurance claims)
- Repeated absences of 2-4 days
- Excessive sick leave

ON-THE-JOB- ABSENTEEISM

- Continued absences from his/her workstation or desk more than the job requires
- Long coffee or smoking breaks
- Avoidance of pertinent tasks (large staff meetings, business travel)
- Frequent trips to the water fountain, bathroom, coffeeemaker, etc
- Physical illness on the job

HIGH ACCIDENT RATE

- Accidents on the job
- Accidents off the job which affect job performance
- Frequent trips to see the nurse

DIFFICULTY IN CONCENTRATION/CONFUSION

- Work requires great effort
- Jobs take more time
- Increasing difficulty in complex assignments
- Difficulty in recalling instructions, details, own mistakes, etc

OBSERVE

(continued)

SPASMODIC WORK PATTERNS

- High and low levels of work

TENACITY TO JOB

- Can't change as job changes

COME & GO in ABNORMAL CONDITIONS

GENERALLY LOWERED JOB EFFICIENCY

- Misses deadlines
- Wastes more materials than normal
- Improbable excuses for poor job performance
- Makes mistakes due to inattention or poor judgment
- Makes bad decisions

EMPLOYEE RELATIONS ON THE JOB

Friction in employee relationships, including supervisor/employee interactions, usually results in decreased job performance and efficiency.

- Over reaction to real or imagined criticism
- Wide swings in morale
- Borrows money from co-workers
- Complaints from co-workers
- Unreasonable resentments
- Begins to avoid co-workers or supervisors

REMEMBER - all employees, including yourself, exhibit some of these job performance problems occasionally. It is a *pattern* of job performance problems over a period of time (several months) that you should **note** and **document**.

IF YOU ARE UNCERTAIN ABOUT ANY OF THESE PROCEDURES, PLEASE CALL E A S

DOCUMENT

DOCUMENT...

DOCUMENT...

DOCUMENT!!

Proper documentation of performance consists of an objective written record of:

- ☞ Specific aspects of the employee's work performance that do not meet established minimum requirements
- ☞ On-the-job behavior patterns and work habits that cause or contribute to poor job performance
- ☞ All interviews and meetings including:
 - Date of interview
 - Note of others present during meeting
 - Content of the interview
 - Supervisor's remarks and directives
 - Employee's responses
- ☞ Actions taken to correct the employee's deficiencies
- ☞ Other pertinent information:
 - Improvements in work performance
 - Behavior following interview
 - Situational problems or pressures related to performance

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DO's and DON'Ts

DO meet in a confidential, private setting with the employee.

DO make it clear that the company is concerned only with unsatisfactory job performance, and that unless it improves, the job is in jeopardy.

DO make it clear that help is available through EAS to assist the employee to resolve personal problems affecting job performance.

DO emphasize the program is confidential.

DO check with your Human Resources or Personnel Department to assure you have complied with all company, state and federal policies.

DO emphasize that if professional help is accepted, time will be allowed to return performance to a satisfactory level.

DON'T delay confrontation and referral.

DON'T label or diagnose the problem. Restrict comments to job performance.

DON'T cover up the problem.

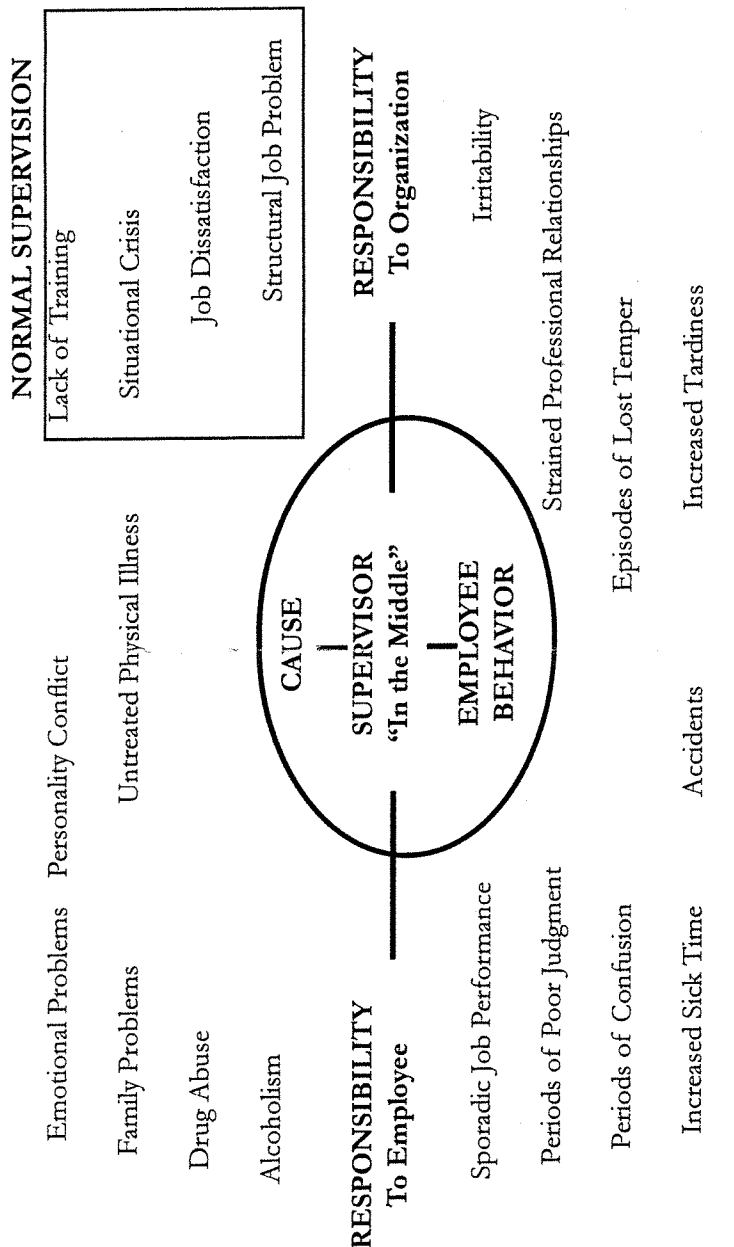
DON'T be trapped by sympathy-evoking tactics.

DON'T play counselor.

DON'T offer personal solutions.

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TYPES of EMPLOYEE PROBLEMS and BEHAVIORS



STRESS and ANXIETY cause "burnout," high turnover, accidents, inability to focus or solve problems, loss of productivity, heart attacks, ulcers, hypertension, migraines, and many other illnesses.

ALCOHOLISM-DRUG ABUSE cause absenteeism, lateness, accidents, blackouts, impaired judgment and impaired coordination - plus serious medical problems.

MID-LIFE CRISIS causes staleness, loss of interest, accidents, loss of creativity, loss of productivity.

PERSONAL PROBLEMS - marital, health, children, death in the family - cause absenteeism, inability to concentrate, loss of productivity, impaired judgment and accidents.

DEPRESSION causes staleness, boredom, inability to focus, absenteeism, loss of productivity, impaired judgment and accidents.

PRE-RETIREMENT worries cause fear, preoccupation, impaired judgment and loss of productivity.

A SUPERVISOR'S CHECKLIST

1. You observe a PATTERN of poor performance and/or attendance.
 - Have you already given the employee feedback?
 - Have you kept a documentation record for your own files?
 - Is your documentation legible?
 - Does it follow the documentation model?
 - Is it solely objective?
2. You decide when the documentation warrants a FIRST INTERVIEW.
 - Have you prepared for the interview (private setting, comfortable seating, available documentation and an outline)?
 - Do you have EAS' phone number or business card available?
 - Do you have a date determined for a follow-up interview?
 - After the interview, have you objectively recorded the highlights of the interview?
3. You plan to conduct a SECOND INTERVIEW.
 - Have you continued to monitor and document performance?
 - (optional) Do you wish to consult with EAS prior to the interview?
 - Do you have EAS' phone number or business card available?
 - Do you have a date determined for a follow-up interview?
 - After the interview, have you objectively recorded the highlights of the interview?
4. You plan to conduct a THIRD INTERVIEW.
 - Have you consulted with EAS, your Human Resources or Personnel Department, and your supervisor before conducting the interview?
 - Have you fully explained that the employee must improve performance or accept a referral to EAS or accept a suspension/termination after a specified period of time (*check your company's policies*)?
 - During the interview, have you let the employee know that if they sign a release of information form at EAS that you may then be informed of their compliance with your request?
 - Again, have you objectively recorded the highlights of the interview?

SUGGESTED FORMAL REFERRAL LETTER

The following is a suggested format for a formal supervisory referral letter on *your* letterhead after you have consulted with EAS:

Date of meeting with employee

Employee Name
Department/Unit

As a result of _____ (job behavior) _____ which we discussed on (date of incident or meeting) _____, you are asked to make an appointment with a counselor at Employee Assistance Services and be seen prior to (call to get date from EAS). I ask that you sign a release of information form to confirm your attendance at the meeting and your cooperation. We will meet again on (1-2 business days after the date noted above) to address your job performance.

Your signature

cc: Bonnie Black
Director, Employee Assistance Services

You may choose to disclose specific information regarding the job performance issues with EAS in a confidential manner. **We will never discuss information supplied by you with the employee**, just as we will not disclose information about the employee with you (unless a specific *Release of Information Form* was obtained by the counselor) but having information will guide our staff in how best to serve the client.

BARRIERS to SUPERVISORY REFERRALS

Sometimes a supervisor doesn't make the proper early referral even when the employee's job performance continues to deteriorate and work behavior worsens. Frequently, this reluctance is caused by feelings and attitudes such as:

Anger - You may feel anger because the employee is frequently absent, causing continual schedule adjustments or because the employee breaks promises and turns in unsatisfactory work.

Guilt - You may feel guilt because you think you handled the situation incorrectly or feel you are incapable of handling it. There may be guilt because tempers flew last time you confronted the employee. Guilt leads to feelings of inadequacy which cause you to avoid dealing with the situation at all.

Fear - You may feel fear because you consider discussions with the employee to be highly personal. You may also fear losing control of your actions if you become too angry. You may fear criticism in return for some real or imagined failings. You may also fear the effects which a referral will have on an employee's job security.

Denial - Frequently, you may deny the employee has a job performance problem. This denial may be reflected by statements such as:

"The best employee I have, when he or she is here."

"Job performance is great except when he or she gets into moody periods."

"Gets the work done, just drinks on the job."

Ego Involvement - This occurs when you feel that you have molded the employee in your own image. You see your employee's successes and failures as your own, and therefore want to solve the problem yourself rather than request consultation and assistance.

All of these feelings are normal. Most people are reluctant to become involved in what they see as difficult and unpleasant situations. You need to be aware of these feelings because they prevent the employee from getting assistance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Whenever an employee has been sent to EAS, whether on an informal or a formal basis, it is recommended to:

Focus on the employee's job performance and ignore the problem which has been identified.

Establish a Plan for Improvement:

Set concrete standards of performance evaluation.

Arrange periodic joint evaluations on a regular schedule.

Document all performance reported in the Improvement Plan in the employee's confidential file.

Accept no excuses for failure. Adequate performance is the responsibility of the employee.

Give the employee regular and detailed feedback on his or her performance.

The ultimate success of any treatment program is determined within the first three months. This is a difficult period of stabilization for both you and the employee and both of you share a responsibility in the outcome.

You must be aware that you may have developed many "bad habits" in supervising the employee. Suspend your judgment and give the employee an opportunity to demonstrate competence. Work closely with others on the management team to assure you are viewing the employee's performance objectively and not based on stigma, stereotype, or past poor track record.

REMEMBER -

E A S is there for you, as your partner in managing effectively.

Waiting to do something about a problem usually makes the problem worse