



GUIDELINES FOR MANAGERS & SUPERVISORS

Your
Employee Assistance Program

Professional Help for
Your Employees and
Their Families

EAP Provider:

Corporate EAP Resources, Inc.
(866) 635-1712

www.corpeapresources.com

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WHAT IS THE EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM?



The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a free, confidential counseling service available to employees. Your company has contracted with Corporate EAP Resources, Inc. to provide this professional service. The EAP helps the employee define the problem, provides short-term counseling and refers the employee to the appropriate resources if

necessary. The EAP helps with a variety of problems including alcohol and drug dependency, debt accumulation, stress-related issues, marital and family problems and emotional difficulties.

What is the role of Corporate EAP Resources, Inc.?

Throughout Massachusetts and New England, Corporate EAP Resources provides a network of offices available for EAP service. An experienced staff of counselors and therapists are trained and skilled in the assessment and treatment of a wide range of problems. An employee may call directly for assistance (self-referral) or maybe be referred by his/her supervisor or manager (management-referral).

Specific Responsibilities of Corporate EAP Resources Counselors:

1. Diagnose the individual's problems
2. Develop a plan to deal with the problem
3. Refer the individual to special care or treatment as may be required

Often the employee receives sufficient help from the EAP professional staff and no further referral is needed. When further help is needed, the EAP counselor will assist the employee in arranging for appropriate additional services, either from Corporate EAP Resources, Inc. or another resource, depending upon the employee's preferences or health insurance coverage. Payment for the additional services are the responsibility of the employee. Health insurance and Health Maintenance Organizations may pay in full or partially for some of these additional services.

When you or an employee wishes to call Corporate EAP Resources, Inc., please call our office and ask to speak to the EAP Counselor. If, for any reason, a complication arises when you call, ask to speak to the EAP director, and he or she can direct you appropriately. Day and evening appointments are available. **Telehealth/virtual sessions are available.**

THE REFERRAL PROCESS

There are essentially two ways that a person may enter the EAP: self referral or management referral.

Self-Referral

An employee may call Corporate EAP Resources, Inc. to speak to an EAP counselor. An appointment will be scheduled at a time convenient for the employee. All scheduled appointments, as well as what is discussed in the interview, are handled in strictest confidence.

Management-Referral



Managers/Supervisors may recommend to an employee that she/he seek help from the EAP when

- ✓ There is a noticeable decline in the employee's work performance
- ✓ There are specific on-the-job incidents or behavior which indicate the presence of a personal problem

The focus is on the job situation and not on the nature of the personal problem. No change has been made in the usual supervisory procedures for handling performance problems. Both management and supervisors, however, are encouraged to suggest a referral to the EAP whenever the employee's work performance is declining.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

The decision to seek confidential assistance must be made solely by the employee. No employee should be forced to use the program. If the employee chooses to accept a referral to the Employee Assistance Program, he/she is to be assured that: no report of contact with the EAP will be maintained in his/her personnel file. Whatever is discussed in the EAP office will remain confidential (unless a request for a release of information is made by the employee).

THE ROLE OF SUPERVISORS AND MANAGERS



Management is responsible for the objective, timely evaluation of an employee's performance. Unacceptable job performance can be a significant indicator that an employee is having behavioral or medical problems. A decline in work performance, a change in work patterns, poor interpersonal relationships are signs that an employee may be dealing with issues requiring professional assistance. All employees exhibit some job performance issues occasionally. Continued

and repeated offenses, as those identified in the Job Performance Checklist, need to be addressed using the following 5 step process:

(1) Observe and Document. When work performance of a previously competent employee begins to deteriorate, the manager should begin to observe and document the change in behavior and signs of failing performance. But the manager or supervisor is not and should not attempt to be a diagnostician, counselor, or expert on the causes of any problem. Diagnosis should be left to those who are professionally trained to diagnose. Use the **Job Performance Checklist** to help identify behavior. Be specific in your documentation process, entering dates and times.

DOT (Department of Transportation) requirements mandate specific procedures. Contact Human Resources or the EAP for further recommendations.



(2) Informally Discuss. Informal conversations with the employee where you inquire or indicate a concern regarding his/her behavior can head off further deterioration and provide the employee an opportunity to improve.

(3) Confronting the Employee with the Problem. If an employee's performance continues to decline, a more formal discussion of the issues needs to take place with the employee. Before such a meeting, it is important to discuss the situation with your supervisor or manager and/or the Human Resources staff. A specific plan should be made that outlines the consequences if the performance fails to improve. Prepare for the meeting using the **Meeting Guidelines**.



(4) Refer to the EAP. You, as the manager or supervisor, should contact the EAP counselor at Corporate EAP Resources and provide the information about the declining performance or behavior of the employee who is being referred.

(5) Follow Up. It is very important to continue to monitor the performance (not the use of the EAP services) of the individual referred to the EAP. The employee's use of the Employee Assistance Program is always voluntary. It is a tool to help with improved performance. If performance does not improve, it is important to follow the progressive discipline process discussed with the supervisor.

JOB PERFORMANCE CHECKLIST

Note that your evaluation should be based on observable behavior. Track dates and times where possible. Refrain from diagnosing as some exhibited behaviors can be misinterpreted. Any questions should be referred to Human Resources or the EAP.

Absenteeism

- Multiple instances of unauthorized absences
- Excessive absence due to illness
- Frequent Monday or Friday absences
- Excessive tardiness, especially on Monday mornings or in returning from lunch
- Leaving work early
- Peculiar and increasingly improbably excuses for colds, flu, gastritis, etc.
- Specifics: _____

On-the-Job Absenteeism

- Continued absences from work area than job requires
- Frequent trips to the water fountain or rest room
- Long coffee breaks
- Physical illness on the job
- Excessive use of phone for personal reasons
- Excessive sharing of personal problems with coworkers
- Specifics: _____

Health and Safety

- High on-the-job accident rate
- Accidents off the job (but affecting performance)
- Careless handling and maintenance of equipment
- Needless risk-taking
- Disregard for safety of others
- Specifics: _____

Job Performance Checklist (CONTINUED....)

Personal Appearance

- Dramatic change in appearance
- Slurred speech
- Bloodshot eyes, unfocused vision, glassy eyes
- Deteriorating personal appearance
- Observed using alcohol or drugs
- Increased concern about family or marital difficulties, financial worries, poor health
- Looks tired, without sleep
- Smells of alcohol
- Specifics: _____

Peer Relationships

- Altercations with others
- Unreasonable resentments
- Creating unnecessary dissention among staff
- Contributing to poor morale
- Avoidance of others, isolation on job
- Over-reaction to real or imagined criticism
- Borrowing money from co-workers, wants check early
- Wide mood swings
- Concerns and complaints raised by co-workers
- Emotional outbursts such as anger, tears, laughter
- Specifics: _____

General Performance

- Jobs take more time
- Alternate periods of high and low productivity
- Missed deadlines
- Work requires greater effort
- Increased wasted material
- Increasing customer complaints
- Improbable excuses for poor job performance
- Cannot be depended on to be where they say they will be - or do what they say they will do
- Blames others for personal problems
- Specifics: _____

Job Performance Checklist (CONTINUED....)

Mental Factors

- Decreased concentration or increased confusion
- Difficulty understanding and following instructions
- Poor short-term memory
- Repeated mistakes, especially the same ones
- Difficulty in recalling own mistakes
- Increased carelessness, errors in judgment
- Increasingly difficulty handling complex assignments
- Reluctance to accept new assignment or tasks
- Specifics: _____

Effect on Your Job

- Doing or redoing employee's work for him or her
- Disproportionate time involved in dealing with employee (high maintenance)
- Employee's problem has become your problem
- No noticeable change as a result of your prior warnings
- Specifics: _____

WHY DO MANAGERS/SUPERVISORS PROCRASTINATE?



Some common reasons managers and supervisors have for putting off one-on-one discussions of performance problems: ¹

I am too busy with more important things

I don't want to hurt the employee's feelings

I am afraid the employee will quit

I don't want to get involved in anyone else's personal problems

It is better to let sleeping dogs lie

Time will take care of the problem

I might do or say something my boss won't support

It won't do any good

I don't have enough authority

I can't stand to see anyone cry

He already has more problems than he can handle

I am afraid of her

I don't know what to do about a drug problem

I just can't communicate with young people

The old timers won't pay any attention to me

I'm afraid I'll lose the argument

Just give it some time. He or she will come around

A confrontation might have results that would make me look bad

Remember that long-term, unsolved problems generally will get worse without intervention. Anytime you feel inadequate to handle the problem at hand, consult HR or the EAP.

¹ James Fearing, *Workplace Intervention* (Center City, Minnesota: Hazelden Information and Educational Services, 2000).

Meeting Guidelines: CONFRONTING THE EMPLOYEE WITH THE PROBLEM



The word ‘confrontation’ can have a strong aggressive connotation. Interpret it to mean that your meeting will be focused and definitive, not aggressive. The key to a successful confrontation is to stick to the facts as they affect work performance and to avoid emotional involvement. This should not be difficult if you have carefully documented as specifically as possible the nature of the individual’s performance record.

The meeting should be in the tone of a job evaluation, with the supervisor pointing out the areas of deficiency and offering to help in solving problems. The discussion should be free of sympathetic and apologetic overtones. Only rarely in this meeting will an individual admit the precise nature of his/her problem(s). Keep the conversation on a business basis.

- (1) Review the purpose of the meeting, making it clear that it is a joint discussion.
- (2) Review the job requirements and cite the employee’s strengths.
- (3) Review recent past problems and lack of correction; stick to the facts.
- (4) Have all documents available; do not rely on memory.
- (5) Encourage the employee to assess his/her performance.
- (6) Discuss alternatives. Try to get the employee to set his/her own improvement targets, reinforcing positive contributions.
- (7) Explain the consequences if expectations are not met - discipline with possible termination of employment.
- (8) Listen to the employee.

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Meeting Guidelines (CONTINUED....)

- (9) Be supportive and, above all, firm.
- (10) Indicate that you are concerned and as a means of further trying to assist the employee, you are asking him or her to participate in the Employee Assistance Program.
- (11) Agree on an action plan, which will include a follow up meeting.
- (12) Conclude the meeting with an expression of hope.

TIPS for the Meeting

DO NOT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attempt to discuss drinking habits or drug use; you are likely to emerge as the loser. Substance abusers are expert manipulators.
DO	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maintain control of the conversation and stick to what you know and can document: instances of unacceptable behavior such as absenteeism, accidents, mistakes, failure to meet objectives and deadlines.• Avoid meaningless threats about disciplinary action. If there is a threat, there must also be a commitment to follow through. Such action should be discussed with management prior to a discussion with the employee.

EMPLOYEE DEFENSE STRATEGIES



When supervisors meet with the employee concerning performance problems, the employee often feels threatened and may use various defenses. Some of these defenses and recommended counter-moves are listed and described below. Your experience will add other examples to this list.

Defense	Description	Counter Move
Excuses & sympathy	Employee will have a good reason for everything that happens: “You’d have the same problems I do if you had a wife like mine”.	“I’m sorry to hear that there are problems at home. My concern involves your performance and my data here says you are not doing your job.”
Apology & promise	“I’m really sorry. You know that! I’ll never do it that way again”	“I appreciate your apology. But what you did is serious and this causes me great concern. I’m filing a deficiency report”.
Switching	“I know about that but look what a good job I’ve done on the XYZ job!”	“You did do well on XYZ but we need good work on all jobs. You have had more problem jobs than successful ones lately. Look at the record here.”
Anger	“Damn it! One mistake and the roof falls in - after 15 years of killing myself for this place”	“Getting angry won’t help anyone, especially you. I’m concerned about your performance. And I am not talking about one mistake”
Tears & helplessness	“I don’t know what to do. I’ll never get out of this mess”. (crying)	“I can understand why you are upset. I want you to know that I want to help, which is why I set up this meeting. You have been a valuable part of our organization. I want to tell you about the Employee Assistance Program...”

Employee Defense Strategies (CONTINUED...)

Self-pity	“I knew this would happen. I’ve never been able to do anything right”	“I’ve checked into this detail (points to records) and you’ve got to start looking at your part in what happens. May that’s a problem you have....”
Innocence & blaming	“It’s not my fault. Joe let me down. I don’t get any help at all around here”	“I wouldn’t be taking this time to talk with you if I didn’t have faith in you. So let’s move on to talk about what can be done to help...you now our Employee Assistance Program would be just right...”
Hopelessness	“I may as well quit right now”	“Wait to hear what I have to say. You have done excellent work. We want more of that from your department. Which is why I set up this meeting.”
Friendliness & seduction	“Now, Bill, you know we’ve been through this before and we worked it out together. Let’s get together after work and figure this out where we can be more comfortable”	“I know we’ve been through this before and this time things will be different. I am filing a discrepancy report because I’ve done all I can to work this out on the job..I think something else is bothering you and I want you to speak with the EAP counselor.”

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE EAP COUNSELOR

Once the employee who was referred by the supervisor or manager to the EAP, becomes involved in the program, it will be the responsibility of the EAP counselor to report regularly to the Human Resource Director and the employee's supervisor if:

- The employee made and kept the appointment
- The employee has made a plan to deal with his/her problem
- The employee is following through on the plan



The employee is requested by the EAP counselor to sign a written release of information specifically authorizing a reporting of the above information to his/her employer. All contacts with the EAP are strictly confidential. At no time will there be any discussion of the nature of the employee's problem with the supervisor of the Human Resource staff.

When a plan involves treatment, every effort will be made to schedule the treatment so as to minimize the disruption of the workload and the efficiency of the employee's department.

The EAP counselor will only report on EAP participation to those supervisors or managers who call Corporate EAP Resources office, speak to the EAP counselor and formally make a referral of an employee to the EAP.

In summary, the EAP counselor will:

- (1) Diagnose the individual's problems
- (2) Develop a plan to deal with the problem
- (3) Refer the individual to special care or treatment as may be required

Often the employee receives sufficient help from the EAP professional staff and no further referral is needed. When further help is needed, the EAP counselor will assist the employee in arranging for appropriate additional services, either from Corporate EAP Resources, Inc. or another resource, depending upon the employee's preferences or health insurance coverage. Payment for the additional services are the responsibility of the employee. Health insurance may pay in full or partially for some additional services.

THE RETURN TO WORK



Efforts are always made by the EAP to keep the individual working and to avoid any further disruption to the work flow. Due to the confidential nature of the EAP process, co-workers may not even be aware that an individual is seeking counseling. In some cases, however, it may become necessary for an employee to leave his/her position for a period of

time to address personal needs. Individuals returning to the job after treatment for alcoholism, drug or emotional problems should be afforded the same consideration as those who have undergone care for any other medical problem. While there should be expression of support and an interest in the person's well-being, this should not be done in an overstated manner at the expense of singling out the employee for special attention. At this time, primary focus is again on job performance.

The supervisor's involvement does not end with the intervention and referral. Emotional illness, alcoholism and drug dependence usually build up over a long time during which individuals often become entrenched in a different way of life and adopt a different set of values. These cannot be expected to change overnight.

Returning to work after a period of treatment is difficult. The individual must overcome the stigma of earlier failure. In effect, her or she must be re-employed and re-established. Sympathy and overprotectiveness by the manager should play no part in deciding work assignments since this may only reinforce the stigma and the attitude that the individual is somehow 'different'.

Another factor for the manager to consider is the importance of the work environment itself. The job may have been a contributor to the individual's problem. Anxieties and tensions may be sparked by lack of personal achievement, lack of recognition or disinterested supervision. If the troubled individual returns to the job and finds all these conditions just where they were before, the chances of recovery are lessened.

Conversely, an individual's job may indeed be a stabilizer, a very important part of the daily ritual. Work performance improves when the employee is comfortable in his or her position.

The Return to Work (CONTINUED...)

Just as management is not expected to overlook poor work quality neither should good work be overlooked when it is apparent.

Management may notice rough spots along the way such as detecting or observing changes in mood, difficulty in coping with routine situations, lack of interest in the duties at hand or strained relationships with coworkers. These may be danger signs on the road to recovery and management should remain understanding but alert. Any such developments will provide occasions for the Human Resources director to communicate with Corporate EAP Resources or other EAP counselors so that problems that developed after the resumption of work may be resolved. Regardless of the particular situation, the work of counselors becomes far more persuasive and effective when they are able to relate specifically to management's assessment of the employee's on-the-job behavior, attitudes, and performance.

Notes

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