



## **EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM GUIDE FOR MANAGERS**

### **When Your Employees Need Help...**

*This Guide has been written to assist you in your role as a manager. **ACCESS EAP**, your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provider, exists to help employees whose personal problems may be affecting their job performance. Examples of personal problems include family, relationship and emotional problems, alcohol and drug abuse, legal and financial problems.*

*Many employees use the EAP to resolve personal problems before their job performance is affected. However, some employees do not seek help and their personal problems end up interfering with their work. You, as a manager, are in a key position to motivate and encourage employees to seek help through the EAP.*

*This Guide describes the EAP from the manager's point of view. It explains what to do when dealing with a troubled employee and how to do it. As in other situations involving employees, you should work closely with your manager, your Human Resources Department and follow your company's established procedures.*

### **WHAT IS AN EAP?**

The EAP is a voluntary and confidential assessment, short-term problem resolution and referral service to provide employees and their families with an opportunity to address concerns affecting their work and personal life. Problems may include family, relationship and emotional problems, alcohol and drug abuse as well as workplace issues.

Many employees use the EAP to resolve issues before job performance is affected. However, some employees do not seek help. Managers are in a key position to motivate and encourage employees to seek help from the EAP when there is a decline in productivity.

A referral to the EAP allows you, the manager, to focus on what you know best - the employee's job performance.

## **HOW CAN EMPLOYEES ACCESS THE PROGRAM?**

Employees can access the EAP either by self-referral or manager referral.

A self-referral occurs when the employee contacts ACCESS EAP on his or her own, by dialing our toll free 800 number.

A manager referral occurs when, after observing an employee's deteriorating job performance, you suggest that he/she contacts the EAP.

## **FOCUS ON JOB PERFORMANCE NOT PERSONAL PROBLEMS**

There are many factors which can negatively affect an employee's work performance. For example, an employee may not have the knowledge or training to do the job well. When you know that this is not the case (for instance, when an employee has worked well in the past), it is likely that there is an underlying personal problem. As a manager you will notice a deterioration in job performance that is chronic and repeated, and observe a pattern of behaviors such as these:

### **Absenteeism**

- repeated absence - after weekends or holidays
- coming in late or leaving early
- excessive sick leave
- chronic absences from the work area

### **Decreased Job Efficiency**

- missed deadlines
- mistakes due to poor judgement
- poorly prepared assignments

### **Erratic Work Patterns**

- alternating patterns of high and low productivity
- inability to keep up a regular work pace
- work requires greater effort

### **High Accident Rates**

- accidents on the job
- accidents off the job affecting work performance

### **Concentration Problems**

- trouble remembering instructions and details
- difficulty recalling mistakes

### **Poor Interpersonal Relations**

- frequent mood swings
- arguing with co-workers

### **Changes In Personal Appearance**

- poor hygiene
- disheveled appearance

## SUGGESTED ACTIONS FOR MANAGING PERFORMANCE PROBLEMS

Once you have noticed a chronic and repeated pattern of deteriorating work performance, you need to take action.

### Action 1 - Document The Problem

- Write down the specifics of the problem (for example: occurrences of absenteeism, inefficiency, poor employee relations - remember to include dates and times.)

### Action 2 – Contact The EAP

- Call ACCESS EAP to discuss the situation and the employee's job performance issues **prior** to discussing an EAP referral with the employee. As needed, your ACCESS consultant will review how to approach the employee and handle a referral to the EAP.

### Action 3 - Consult With Your Manager and HR

- If necessary/required speak to your manager and Human Resources representative.
- Review your company's personnel policies.
- Be certain you have sufficient documentation to justify your position and recommended actions.

### Action 4 - Set Performance Objectives And Timelines

- Be prepared to specifically outline necessary improvements in work performance.
- Be prepared to set time frames for contacting the EAP, showing work performance improvements and meetings to review work performance progress.
- Be prepared to outline consequences for substandard work performance.

### Action 5 - Address The Employee

- Review the documented work performance problems, identify specifics for improvement and timelines.
- Arrange for the employee to call the EAP and set up an immediate appointment.
- Stay calm, focus on the work performance and do not get involved in diagnosing or "treating" the employee's personal problems.

## DO'S

- ▶ Have your **documentation** organized and readily available.
- ▶ Prepare an **outline** of what you want to cover with the employee.
- ▶ Let the EAP know **ahead of time** when you are meeting with the employee so that the EAP consultant can set aside an appointment slot and the employee can be seen as soon as possible.
- ▶ Base your discussion **only on job performance**. Be firm and be prepared to deal with the employee's anger, resentment and defensiveness.
- ▶ **Offer the EAP** as a resource, but make it clear that participation in the program will not save his/her job if performance does not improve.

- ▶ **Specify** a plan for monitoring job performance and schedule regular appointments to discuss progress.
- ▶ **Stress** that the employee is valuable and that you are sincerely interested in helping him/her achieve an acceptable level of performance.
- ▶ **Make it easy** for the employee to call the EAP by providing the phone number, a telephone and the time to make the call. Depending on the situation, you may want to give the employee time off from work to go to their first appointment.

## **DON'TS**

- ▶ **Don't** be judgmental.
- ▶ **Avoid** discussing the personal problems which may be affecting job performance.
- ▶ **Don't** accept promises, excuses or emotional outbursts designed to evoke your sympathy or your anger. Always refer back to the documented pattern of job performance problems.
- ▶ **Avoid** feeling obligated to protect a person who was once a good worker.
- ▶ **Don't** ignore or cover up the problem until it becomes so disruptive that you feel justified in terminating the employee.
- ▶ **Don't** argue with the employee.

## **The ACCESS EAP Preferred Provider Network**

The ACCESS EAP Preferred Provider Network includes; licensed clinical social workers, psychologists and other professionals who have extensive experience handling a variety of concerns ranging from emotional problems to relationships and family problems, from job stress to substance abuse, from financial difficulties to legal issues.

Dealing effectively with work performance problems is one of the most difficult task facing any manager. ACCESS EAP helps the employee address and remedy their personal problems so that you, the manager, can focus on the job to be done.

For further information, please contact:



**ACCESS EAP**  
**Employee Assistance Program**  
**800-248-1688**