

Workplace Supervisor

February 2018

Testimonials

Here are some quotes from HR Managers who recently called on CONCERN for a Management Consultation:

"It's a wonderful service you provide at a time we had nowhere to turn. You came for the night shift to meet our need. We are grateful for the work you do and the service provided, all done with heartfelt concern for our staff. Thank you immensely."

"The onsite support was very well received by staff. Appreciate the flexibility and assistance. It was great!"

"The clinical manager provided expert and compassionate advice. We are very grateful for his services."



FAQs for Managing Employees Try a Little Kindness

Observed on February 17, National Random Acts of Kindness day is celebrated nationwide to encourage acts of kindness, and to pay it forward. It's an opportunity to do something nice for a complete stranger, a family member, friend or coworker. In the workplace, it can be something as simple as helping a coworker with a deadline, bringing them a cup of coffee, paying someone a compliment, or sharing praise with a co-worker's boss. Performing acts of kindness not only helps others, but it can boost happiness as well. And did you know that happy workers are, on average, 31% more productive and 3x more creative? Even better – studies show that kindness is contagious. You might want to encourage your employees to try performing a few good deeds every day as a way to promote kindness in the workplace. Once they get in the habit, it could become second nature. For more tips about promoting kindness and improving happiness and well-being, check out the Mental Wellness Resource Center at <https://employees.concern-eap.com/mental-wellness>

Q. We have conducted harassment prevention training for employees and supervisors. I know a channel for bringing complaints forward is also crucial. Can you discuss that, and in particular, precautionary tips for the supervisor who receives such complaints?

A. Although education is an important prevention measure, another piece of the "prevention/intervention pie" is reinforcement of a complaint procedure so employees understand it and are encouraged to use it. You want to know when employees are being discriminated against, being harassed, or facing other problems like bullying on the job. Periodically remind employees about the complaint procedure, and if you are a supervisor, be careful not to minimize or ignore complaints brought to you by employees. It is easy to ignore indirect complaints, "slight mentions," and passing comments about problems from victims or third parties. No matter how it is couched, minimized, or diplomatically described to you, treat a complaint as a complaint. Anything less may cause you to overlook victimization and place your company at significant risk. Do not treat harassment complaints as "personality conflicts" in need of some sort of coaching or mediation. Steps like these taken by supervisors that minimize or "define problems down" place organizations at risk of later legal claims that you knew or should have known about the harassing behavior but did nothing about it.

Q. How do I coach an employee with a negative attitude? Until now, I have ignored or avoided this employee. Should I continue this approach and coach others to do the same, or intervene? If I intervene, what steps can I use before finally referring to the EAP?

A. Negativity is an attitude issue within the definition of job performance. Other factors include quality of work, quantity of work, attendance, appearance, behavior, and availability. Meet with your employee and discuss the negativity. Share examples so there is no dispute over what you observe. Negative attitudes can stem from many causes. Some are benign, but off-putting, like a cynical sense of humor. Others are more serious, like major complaints about the organization or a supervisor, or dislike of one's job. Your conversation will probably yield a good explanation for the negativity, because most employees are aware and learn of their personality issues from past confrontations or relationship struggles with others. Ask your employee how your relationship with him or her can facilitate a more positive disposition. Do not tell others to cope better with negativity. Negativity has a contagious influence, so offer or refer to CONCERN earlier than later rather than risk morale problems.

Q. Is there a way to not just motivate employees to do their job but also have them really go to the next level and become excited and proactive about their role and the company's mission? Or is it just pure luck if you get an employee who can motivate him—or herself like this?

A. Some employees do motivate themselves because they know the value of being energized. They've learned that love of the job comes by engaging the organization, understanding their role and its importance, and seeing all the possibilities before them. Other employees must

be inspired and shown what lies over the mountaintop. Your ability to inspire this latter group is a critical skill that can reduce turnover and attitude problems and boost productivity. To inspire employees, spend time with them and demonstrate your own enthusiasm so they can see it. They will be compelled to model it. Help them get clear about their role and your performance expectations. (A common complaint heard by EAPs from employees is a lack of understanding of what the supervisor wants from them.) Help employees understand the company's strategic plan and direction, their role in it, and the value of their work product or services. Always let employees have some say in what they would like to accomplish, and set goals, evaluate, and give feedback during the year.

Q. Is it ever appropriate to encourage employees to quit their job versus referring them to the EAP? I think some employees would do better with another employer and would be happier and healthier as a result.

A. Employee assistance programs are in the business of helping employees resolve personal problems that may affect job performance, so it would never be advisable to encourage an employee to quit as a solution to his or her personal issues if the EAP has not been afforded the opportunity to help the employee. It would be improper for the CONCERN to endorse or discourage disciplinary or administrative actions, but certainly the EAP referral should be attempted early in the process of this situation you describe. If you have not done so, refer now. CONCERN can then help the employee make the best decision based upon all the issues discovered in the assessment interview. That being said, discussing the idea of "goodness of fit" between an employee and their position can sometimes minimize the employee's frustration or fears of failure. But do so judiciously, and leave the decision-making up to the employee.

CONCERN: EAP teams with Human Resources to provide another resource for managers and supervisors to consult about how to manage issues with individuals, within and between work groups, and across departments. When you call CONCERN: EAP, ask for a Management Consultant or request to speak to a Clinical Manager.

Call: 800.344.4222
employees.concern-eap.com