

# Workplace Supervisor

May 2018

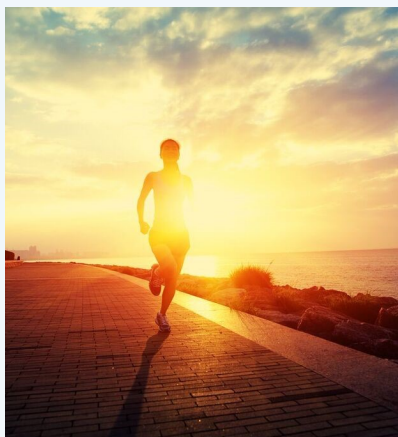
## Testimonials

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

*"Counselor was very professional and caring. She was extremely helpful in assisting the employees' understanding on how to get through this difficult time. We appreciated the quick response from CONCERN. Thank you."*

*"The Clinical Manager not only gave me excellent information on alcohol abuse and the needed treatment, but also helped me address my own boundary issues."*

*"I've always been an advocate for CONCERN: EAP. With our facility tragedy, I knew you would be a great benefit for our employees. The Clinical Manager was responsive and supportive. Staff commented on how quickly we responded and had support available. Thank you!"*



## FAQs for Managing Employees

### May is Mental Health Awareness Month: Mental Wellness in the Workplace

We know that a healthy workplace is good for employees and employers. By establishing a culture of health, companies increase morale, reduce absenteeism, and improve productivity. It's important to remember, however, that physical wellbeing and mental health are inextricably connected. One simply does not exist without the other. Modern behavioral and health sciences have shed new light on that connection, exposing just how much our mental and physical health depend on each other. Being mentally fit doesn't mean a life absent of bad times, disappointments, or emotional hardships. Challenges and rough patches are normal, and sometimes even helpful. Rather, it's about learning how to cope with sadness, anxiety, and stress, and growing stronger from the experience. Just as physically resilient people can bounce back faster from bodily injury, the mentally resilient can more readily recover from setbacks and emotional pain. Help foster a culture that supports mental wellness and reduces stigma in your workplace. Let your employees know about CONCERN's **Mental Wellness Resource Center** at <https://employees.concern-eap.com/mentalhealth> where they'll find everyday approaches to help build resilience and positively influence their physical and mental well-being. There's also an Employer Toolkit on the site, with resources to help managers educate employees on the importance of a proactive mental wellness approach. Tools include educational posters, information sharing ideas, and suggested seminars.

**Q.** Regarding supervisor behavior, what does the phrase "silo mentality" mean? Can CONCERN play a role in helping supervisors overcome this practice?

**A.** The phrase "silo mentality" is more applicable to the dysfunctional practice of departments within organizations isolating themselves by being concerned only with their unique purpose. Withholding information, competitiveness, communication breakdowns, and when severe enough, nearly isolated work environments with charismatic leaders can result. Supervisors can unwittingly practice a similar behavior by isolating themselves, withholding information, failing to engage with workers, and focusing more on charts and metrics than developing their people. Avoiding this practice requires skills of engagement, collaboration, sharing information, coaching, and modeling. New supervisors are especially at risk for isolation behavior if they give in to their insecurities.

Some may deny their role and hope the work unit can function without their direction by deferring to one or two strong subordinates. It may feel safer, but it is a recipe for disaster. CONCERN is an ideal source of help. Beyond coaching, which is more appropriately obtained from a next level manager, the EAP can confidentially assess personal issues and help the supervisor identify and overcome roadblocks to full engagement.

**Q.** I have always understood humor in the workplace to be a good thing. Recently, I heard that this is not necessarily true. Can you explain this with respect to supervisors who do a lot of kidding around?

**A.** There is a difference between employees expressing humor within a psychologically safe workplace and the supervisor over-employing humor as a way to interacting and managing employees. This can heighten employee vulnerability, while at the same time making supervisors less approachable. Ironically, some humor may contribute to an intimidating and offensive work environment. Overused, humor can also send a message that there is nothing very serious about what we do here—that mistakes and problems are not to be taken seriously. This results in the loss of a healthy sense of urgency and leads to diminished performance by employees. This dynamic can prompt employees to focus on personal matters rather than workplace productivity; indeed, research has shown this to be the case. However, humor is a natural human behavior. It is not something that has to be deliberately learned or practiced. Naturally occurring, it can be an indicator of a positive work climate where employees are able to be happy, healthy, and productive. Learn more at <https://wustl.edu> (search “humor in the workplace”).

**Q.** I have been offered a manager position in my company, but I don't know if I have the leadership skills to do it. I don't mind a challenge, but isn't leadership a natural aptitude sort of thing? Can CONCERN help with my decision?

**A.** It is a myth that leadership can't be learned. Here are a few rewarding challenges to master—all teachable: thinking and acting in ways that encourage others so they trust and follow you; creating a vision or a direction in which you want to lead a team; having a personal vision for yourself within this context; considering crises that can happen and how to respond to them; being optimistic (optimistic authority figures inspire others); resolving conflicts; taking charge before being told what to do; pulling others into the action; striving for excellence, not perfection; maintaining high standards and giving others credit where it is due; praising employees frequently to inspire them to produce; taking risks out of your comfort zone; being truthful with yourself; knowing your strengths and weaknesses, and depending on others with skills you lack to achieve work-unit goals; building your brand as a leading expert in one or two areas; being a credible resource others trust; being a role-model for compassion, commitment, effort, integrity, teamwork, good communication, and vision; and getting to work on time! Feeling insecure about any of these? Talk to the EAP and troubleshoot hurdles throughout your career.

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](https://employees.concern-eap.com)**