

Workplace Supervisor

January 2018

Testimonials

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

"The clinical manager was informative, responsive and very helpful. Thank you for your support!"

"Your clinical managers are great resources. I value their advice and assistance."

"The clinical manager provided tangible, helpful solutions for a very complicated situation. Her guidance was well received and I have a plan in place to follow up. She was very open about any follow ups if needed. I am very grateful for her help."



FAQs for Managing Employees New Year, New Beginnings

Our mental health topic for January is **Substance Use**—the consumption of alcohol and/or drugs. Traditionally, the New Year is a time for new beginnings, making changes, and setting attainable goals. If you find yourself in a rut and would like to cut back on substance use, there's no time like the present. With perseverance and determination, small changes can make a big difference in reducing chances of having a substance-related problem. Start by outlining a specific plan of positive, individual strategies. For example: keep track of how much you are consuming; set specific goals about how frequently and how much you plan to consume; find alternatives to using by developing new, healthy habits; avoid triggers including people or places that make you want to use; reach out to friends and family for support; take responsibility for your actions and intentions. If one approach doesn't work, try something else. If you haven't made progress after a month or so, consider seeking professional help. And if you suspect that one of your employees may be dealing with a substance use problem, talk to that individual and express your concern. There are many resources available to both you and your employees. An excellent starting point is CONCERN. Call to schedule an appointment with a counselor, or check out the Mental Wellness Resource Center for other tips/resources at <https://employees.concern-eap.com/mental-wellness>

Q. After making a formal supervisor referral to CONCERN, why is further communication about participation and cooperation necessary from the EAP? My concern is change or improve job performance. I either see it or I don't.

A. We agree—in most ways! The employee is responsible for their performance, and managers for making clear performance expectations and providing resources needed for improving it. However, communicating with the supervisor following a formal referral for performance problems, specifically verifying contact with the EAP, represents best practice for EAPs in managing troubled workers. It recognizes that employees are motivated, in part, to follow through with the referral if for no other reason than concern over their job security. Eliminating this dynamic reduces accountability and invites a loss of urgency on the part of the EAP client. An EAP does not equate to just a counseling service. It is a programmatic approach to assisting troubled workers whose performance issues may be caused by personal problems. An EAP exists because of its primary business purpose, which is helping the workforce remain happy, healthy, and productive. Part of this must be motivating the most difficult and most troubled workers to follow through with the EAP.

Q. I have an employee who gets into fights with customers. He's had run-ins with coworkers, DUIs, and scrapes with the law. He's a classic hothead. I want to fire him, but I fear violent retaliation. Can CONCERN help or tell me what to do?

A. Your employee has persistent and severe conduct problems. Therefore, disciplinary actions are appropriate as is a referral to CONCERN. You could wait and see whether the EAP can help the employee change his behavior, but you should discuss the issue of dismissal with your management advisers (e.g., HR) sooner than later. CONCERN can't participate in administrative decisions, but can be part of your team, along with HR, management, security, etc., in managing risk. Remember to always consult with management resources and advisers when you fear for your safety. Note that it is always best to refer employees to CONCERN at the earliest sign of persistent conduct issues. This affords a better opportunity to intervene with chronic employee behavioral problems, before they grow worse.

Q. My employee's work is good, and frankly, he is my best team member. There is nothing to document regarding performance, but he has a bad attitude with his lack of humor, gruff style, isolation, and cynicism; he does not mesh well with us. Can CONCERN help?

A. Yes, CONCERN can help. You do have job performance issues that you can document and upon which you can base a referral. It's about his attitude at work and team play. Attitude can be described in a way that makes it readily observable and measurable. You can consult confidentially with a CONCERN clinical manager on useful language to consider in documentation. Useful language is critical because your organization may need such memos in the future

to support performance management decisions. The task is to describe the manner in which your employee conducts himself, the disposition and temperament he displays, and most important, the impact on others. This is key to effective documentation—describing the harm or cost to the organization in lost productivity, lower morale, conflict, lost team cohesion, etc. And when you speak with him about it, be sure to emphasize his strengths while pointing out the negative impact his attitude may pose for his career.

Q. We are pushing this year to hire more veterans. It's the right thing to do, and we believe it will be a win-win. What are some of the key issues we should keep in mind after we begin hiring?

A. If you are hiring vets, consider the special report released last year that will aid you in maximizing your effectiveness in working with vets. It's called "Mission Critical: Unlocking the Value of Veterans in the Workforce." Find it at online bookstores. In general, be pro-active and communicate effectively with veterans. Surveys of vets who are employed in the civilian workforce find that most think their unique skills—ones that would directly help the employer—are not fully or effectively used. So, when supervising vets, talk with them about their ideas, skills, and potential. Put them to the test. Vets are trained in taking or giving directions and then performing to their maximum ability. They are not necessarily conditioned to play the devil's advocate, question authority, hold brainstorming sessions, or delve into discussions about how employees feel. These participatory workplace behaviors of the modern era may require more prompting to pull vets into them. And don't forget to make CONCERN available and have its message communicated to family members and spouses. The EAP can reach vets if personal problems arise.

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