

# Workplace Supervisor

June 2018

## Testimonials

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

*"I heard back from our manager that the counselor was excellent and the team really appreciated the support. The follow-up material was also very professional and helpful. Thank you everyone."*

*"I appreciated all of the clinical manager's assistance. She was very helpful and caring."*

*"Very much appreciated the timely and quick response to the needs of the organization and the team. It was a significant help in a time of need."*

*"We received very timely help. The clinical manager called back right away. He also called to check in a week or two later to see how things were going. Good job!"*



## FAQs for Managing Employees Bringing Mindfulness to Work

Mindfulness is a mental state where we purposely observe and experience our thoughts and emotions non-judgmentally and in real-time. The key words are *observe* and *experience*. It's heightened awareness of what you're experiencing in any given moment. What mindfulness isn't, is observing and then avoiding, or suppressing, thoughts or emotions. This is an important distinction because many people think that being mindful is a kind of enforced calm achieved by suppressing upsetting or distressing emotions. Emotion is an important part of what makes us human. It helps us relate to others and to the world around us. Our emotions also often carry valuable information, and by suppressing feelings, we may be missing something critical that situations or interactions are trying to tell us. At work, practicing mindfulness can be an effective tool, helping to bring focus, clarity and resilience to your day. And it doesn't take a lot of time. Let your employees know about CONCERN's **Mental Wellness Resource Center** at <https://employees.concern-eap.com/mentalhealth> where they'll find easy exercises and other realistic ways to bring mindfulness into their workday.

**Q.** If an employee approaches a supervisor about a personal problem, should the employee always be referred to CONCERN, no matter what the problem might be? For example, my employee complained that he hadn't seen a dentist in three years. I recommended mine?

**A.** If your employee asks for a recommendation for a dentist, there certainly isn't harm in sharing the name of the one you use. However, if the discussion includes reasons as to why this delay has occurred, a recommendation to talk to CONCERN about those issues might be appropriate. Every day, employees share personal problems with coworkers and supervisors at work. There is nothing unusual about it. However, some issues that at first appear benign are associated with severe problems that are suitable for bringing to the EAP. It is important for you as a supervisor to have a sense of curiosity about your employees and their well-being. The rationale is that your employees represent your organization's most valuable resource. This curiosity does not mean involving yourself in employees' personal issues or diagnosing problems or becoming their counselor. However, it does mean going a step further when an employee approaches you with something personal and determining whether or not the personal issue is negatively impacting this employee at work. Without judgment, be curious and open to listening to your employee. In your case, a delay in seeing a dentist could be associated with fear or financial hardship, among other reasons.

**Q.** What is the most difficult roadblock to supervisors using CONCERN in managing troubled employees?

**A.** The most difficult roadblock supervisors face in using CONCERN to manage troubled employees is making the switch from doing it all themselves, instead of focusing on the specific workplace behaviors that are being called into question as inappropriate or problematic. The old approach may include ignoring problems until they precipitate a crisis. In a Supervisor Referral, when an employee signs a release, this allows limited feedback about EAP participation from CONCERN to the supervisor. This relieves the supervisor from the burden of both managing and counseling the employee. This shift can be difficult because the supervisor must give up the ability to control the helping process and its outcome. Some supervisors may feel resistant to this change because of their track record of being competent in handling these counseling/case management roles and because they derive much satisfaction and purpose by over involving themselves in their employees' lives. Unfortunately, this approach carries significant risk for all parties concerned.

**Q.** Do EAPs exist as a benefit for the employee, the employer, or both? A daycare center, a credit union on-site, gym memberships, and the like are for employees. Does this mean that EAPs offer a range of benefits that employees value?

**A.** Yes, depending upon the company and the EAP benefits they choose to offer their employees. The installation of EAPs has a business rationale, as do the other services you mention because they benefit the workforce by helping employees to be happier, healthier, and more productive. The workforce is any organization's most valuable resource. In many respects, there is no distinction between an employee benefit and an employer benefit made possible by the EAP helping troubled employees with

personal problems that may (or may not) affect their job performance. Both supervisor and employee education (e.g., this newsletter), and employee seminars are very important in emphasizing how best to utilize the EAP. CONCERN serves the entire organization (company) and the workforce (managers, supervisors and employees), in offering confidential counseling, work/life services, management consultations and on-site crisis support among other services.

**Q.** Can you provide a checklist of points for meeting with an employee to confront them about performance, motivate them to correct it, and encourage them to use the EAP?

**A.** Talk with a CONCERN clinical manager or recall the process of recommended steps for your organization, but the following should be helpful: 1) First, always communicate your intentions with your company HR Manager; 2) Focus discussions on job performance; 3) Specify as to which behaviors are problematic and how they negatively impact the employee's productivity, performance and impact the workplace environment (team); 4) Ask the employee if they understand the consequences of continued problematic behaviors; 5) Ask the employee to paraphrase/summarize their understanding as to what the supervisor has discussed with them; 6) Explain that calling the EAP is voluntary and demonstrates a commitment towards positive change; 7) Set aside a specific time for follow-up and review of action items and workplace issues within a reasonable span of time (example: 2-3 weeks); 8) Recommend that the employee consider calling the EAP to seek help for any personal issue(s) that may be contributing to the workplace performance issue; 9) Explain that the EAP is confidential and give them the phone number; 10) Confirm that use of the EAP does not affect job security or promotional opportunities and is not punitive in any way.

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**