

Remind. Recommend. Refer.

The Best Care EAP Referral Process



BEST CARE
EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

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Training Objectives

By the end of this session, you will be able to:

1. Understand Best Care EAP services and the benefits to you, your organization and your employees.
2. Identify the signs and symptoms of a troubled employee through job performance patterns.
3. Discuss and implement constructive confrontation techniques.
4. Utilize Best Care EAP as a management tool.

Your Job as an Employer Just Got Easier

Supervisor. Manager. Crew chief. Unit director. Superintendent. Head honcho. Main brain. Boss.

There are a variety of formal and informal titles for the job, but all supervisors share a common goal – to help create an environment of cooperation and satisfaction where both employees and the organization can thrive.

As a supervisor, you nurture, guide, encourage and give credit when it is due. You also help turn performance around when it's less than it could be.

Sometimes, however, even the best supervisors can't turn poor performance around by themselves. Fortunately, Best Care Employee Assistance Program (EAP), is available to provide managers, supervisors and employees with the support they need during difficult periods.

With specially-trained personnel, Best Care EAP can be a crucial element in turning a valued, but troubled, employee back into a safe, productive worker.

EAP: A Tool for Managing Yourself

Best Care EAP can provide:

- A source of support and information for personal, as well as job-related, concerns.
- Consultation when dealing with a troubled employee.
- A resource when making an employer referral.

Best Care EAP can provide help in many areas, including, but not limited to:

- Stress
- Marital/Relationship Concerns
- Parenting and Family Concerns
- Grief
- Job/Career Concerns
- Sexual Concerns
- Drug and Alcohol Abuse
- Depression and Emotional Problems
- Teenagers
- Eating Disorders
- Gambling Problems

EAP: A Tool for Managing Others

Of course, you hope your employees seek help for personal problems before they become performance problems. If employees are good self-managers, they'll seek help on their own, and you may never know they are experiencing personal problems. A great management technique is to consistently review the EAP benefit with all employees so they will use it as necessary.

If employees don't get help on their own, their personal problems can spill over into the workplace and may result in a pattern of declining job performance.

As a supervisor, your role is to help the employee find a way to correct performance problems. Attempting to diagnose and treat an employee's personal problem can unnecessarily complicate your scope of responsibility. You can provide support through job coaching and by directing the employee to Best Care Employee Assistance Program.

TIP:

Emphasize that Best Care EAP is readily available at no charge to employees and their dependent family members.



Supervisor Self-Appraisal

1. Have you ever avoided talking with someone about a performance problem because you suspected the cause was an alcohol, drug or other personal problem?
 Yes No
2. As a supervisor, have you ever overlooked an employee's performance problems because the employee was a good friend?
 Yes No
3. Have you ever tried to refer an employee to the Employee Assistance Program, but let it drop because he or she got too emotional, angry, defensive, or promised to improve . . . again?
 Yes No
4. Have you ever felt manipulated in a coaching session by an employee you suspected of having a personal problem?
 Yes No
5. You supervise an employee who is also a good friend. She's been having a rough time lately, and you know she's been drinking more than usual. You've been assigning some of her tasks to others and handling some yourself until she gets things straightened out. This is a reasonable approach.
 True False
6. An employee's personal problems are his or her own business, not the supervisor's.
 True False
7. A supervisor should send someone to the Employee Assistance Program only as a last resort. If at all possible, it's best to solve all problems within the department.
 True False
8. Before referring an employee to the EAP, the supervisor should examine his or her own role in the employee's job-related problems.
 True False
9. The first poor performance interview should be informal and casual — a fact-finding session. No documentation is necessary, since it's best to be low-key in the first interview.
 True False
10. At the beginning of a performance/EAP referral interview, it is best to put the employee at ease with non-threatening small talk.
 True False
11. It's a good idea to end and reschedule an interview if the employee becomes too emotional.
 True False
12. Once the EAP is called in, continued documentation of job performance is unnecessary.
 True False

Steps to Enhancing Productivity

Step 1: Observation and Recognition

Job performance problems need to be identified in the early stages. The following work performance problems are examples of behaviors you can identify and document. These behaviors, observed over a period of time, may be indicative of a personal problem. If possible, get a second supervisor's opinion, especially if you suspect substance abuse.

Absenteeism and Time-Off Abuse:

- Unauthorized leave
- Excessive sick leave
- Excessive tardiness
- Monday absences, Friday absences, or both
- Frequent abuse of breaks and lunch periods
- Peculiar and increasing improbable excuses for absences
- Coming or returning to work in an obviously abnormal condition

Performance:

- Mistakes due to carelessness or poor judgment
- Bad decisions
- Missed deadlines
- Lower quality and quantity of work
- Complaints about performance
- Difficulty in recalling instructions and details
- Difficulty in handling complex assignments
- Improbable excuses for poor performance
- High accident rate on and off the job
- Alternate periods of high and low productivity

Personal Behavior:

- Changes in mood
- Temper loss
- Overreaction to real or imagined criticism
- Borrowing money from fellow employees
- Increased isolation from fellow employees
- Unexplained memory lapses
- Laziness
- Decline in personal grooming habits
- Denial of a job performance problem
- Playing the "Blame Game"

TIP: Avoid diagnosing an employee's personal problem.



Step 2: Documentation

A good manager makes consistent notes about an employee's job performance. This is especially important when dealing with a troubled employee who may look for loopholes to get out of trouble. Without documented "proof," it may be difficult for the employee to comprehend the problem. Good documentation also has important legal value in the event of a grievance against the company.

How to Document Work Performance:

Write down acceptable, as well as unacceptable, work performance as it happens. Be clear and concise. Include the date, time, place and exact nature of each incident.

- Be objective. Record actual events – not impressions or hearsay.
- Document incidents that are related to behavior on the job.
- Document all managerial warnings, reprimands and recommendations.
- Document any referrals (formal or informal) made to the EAP.

Remember:

All documented information should be treated as confidential and discussed only with the employee, your supervisor, human resources or the Best Care counselor.

TIP:

Avoid making moral judgments – direct your comments to job performance or attendance.

Step 3: Coaching

Assess Your Own Reaction:

When work performance problems become evident, bring them to the attention of the employee as soon as possible. This is not always easy. It is especially difficult when previous efforts to handle the situation have not worked, when tensions have built, or when communications have become strained or blocked.

It is common to feel apprehensive about confronting the employee. Identify your feelings toward the employee and the problem, accept those feelings as normal responses to a stressful situation and move ahead with your coaching discussion. It may be helpful to call one of the Best Care EAP counselors for guidance as you plan your strategy.

Anticipate the Employee's Reaction

Further prepare yourself by assessing the situation from the employee's point of view. The employee may be defensive, anxious, or even hostile. A Best Care EAP counselor can alert you to common reactions and how to deal with them

Such reactions may include:

- Elaborate excuses
- Fabrications
- Blame shifting
- Attempts to play you against someone else
- Attempts to put you on the spot
- Efforts to gain your sympathy
- Efforts to strike up a closer relationship with you
- Claims that he or she is already seeing an EAP Counselor

Your awareness of these reactions will help you meet your goal and not get sidetracked. The employee must understand that his or her job performance has deteriorated and he or she may face serious consequences if the problems are not resolved.

The Coaching Session

Coaching is successful when both parties leave the session with a clear understanding of expectations. This includes the employee's cooperation and intent to improve performance.

Steps to include:

1. Setting the tone
2. Getting an agreement that a problem exists
 - State the facts
 - Encourage the employee to respond
 - Keep the discussion focused
3. Mutually discussing alternative solutions, including reminding of or recommending EAP
4. Mutually agreeing on action to be taken
 - Get a commitment
 - End on a positive note
5. Following up to measure results
6. Recognizing any achievement when it occurs

TIP:

You will not help the employee, yourself or your organization by allowing poor performance to continue.



On the other hand, coaching can result in little action, no action, or negative action by the employee. Too often, destructive comments or ineffective behavior take place unintentionally.

Steps to avoid:

1. Minimizing or trying to soft-sell the problem
2. Not getting to the point by talking around the problem
3. Acting apologetic
4. Antagonizing the employee
5. Letting the employee control the interview
6. Not sticking to the facts and objectives
7. Asking simple “yes” and “no” questions
8. Mentioning problems without offering suggestions on how to make improvements

TIP:

Emphasize that Best Care EAP is completely confidential. Information is released only with the client’s written permission.

Constructive Coaching Tips:

- Have documentation on job performance readily available. Do not rely on your memory.
- Be familiar with company discipline policies.
- Before acting, put everything in perspective. Always remain calm; avoid overreacting or personalizing.
- Meet with the employee in private.
- Separate the individual from the behavior. Be positive about the individual’s character. The meeting is to address specific behavior. Mention positive things about the individual’s work or behavior that are appreciated.
- Assume the position of helping the person. Indicate a strong belief that the individual will work on the problem for personal benefit and to benefit the organization.
- Emphasize that the past is the past. Good things are expected to occur in the future.
- Set a time for follow-up. This affords an opportunity to check progress, address any new problems and reward the individual for improving performance.

Key Points to Remember:

- You are meeting with the employee to discuss his or her job performance.
- Remain in control of the coaching discussion. Do not let the employee sidetrack you from meeting your objectives.
- If you feel yourself losing control, take a short break to reassess your position.
- It is always appropriate to remind and recommend utilization of the EAP as the employee works on improving job performance.

Step 4: Conducting the EAP Referral Interview

If job performance does not improve through the coaching process, if the employee's job is in jeopardy, or if a serious incident has occurred, it may be appropriate to make a formal referral to EAP. A formal supervisor or employer referral means you are requesting an employee go to EAP and that you would like to receive feedback from EAP. To obtain this feedback, the employee will be asked to sign a Release of Information.

The formal EAP referral interview with the employee includes:

1. Stating the facts of the performance problem (refer to your documentation).
 - Objectives set at first meeting not accomplished
 - No improvement in job performance
 - Description of critical incident
2. Presenting a written reprimand (or other action as specified by your organization).
3. Going over the Employer Referral Form with the employee (see pages 11 & 12).
4. Informing the employee of the EAP appointment by giving written notice of the date and location of the meeting with EAP.
5. Discussing the confidentiality issue and your request that he or she sign the EAP Release of Information.
6. Stressing the importance of keeping the appointment. **Advise the employee:**
 - that it is in his or her best interest to keep the appointment
 - that normal disciplinary procedures will still be in effect
 - that his or her position may be at stake if job performance does not improve

TIP:

Avoid small talk. It will make it difficult for you to make the transition to a serious discussion, and it may confuse the employee.

Step 5: Follow-Up

After an EAP referral, supervisors are often concerned about how to treat employees while they are getting help.

Please refer to the following guidelines:

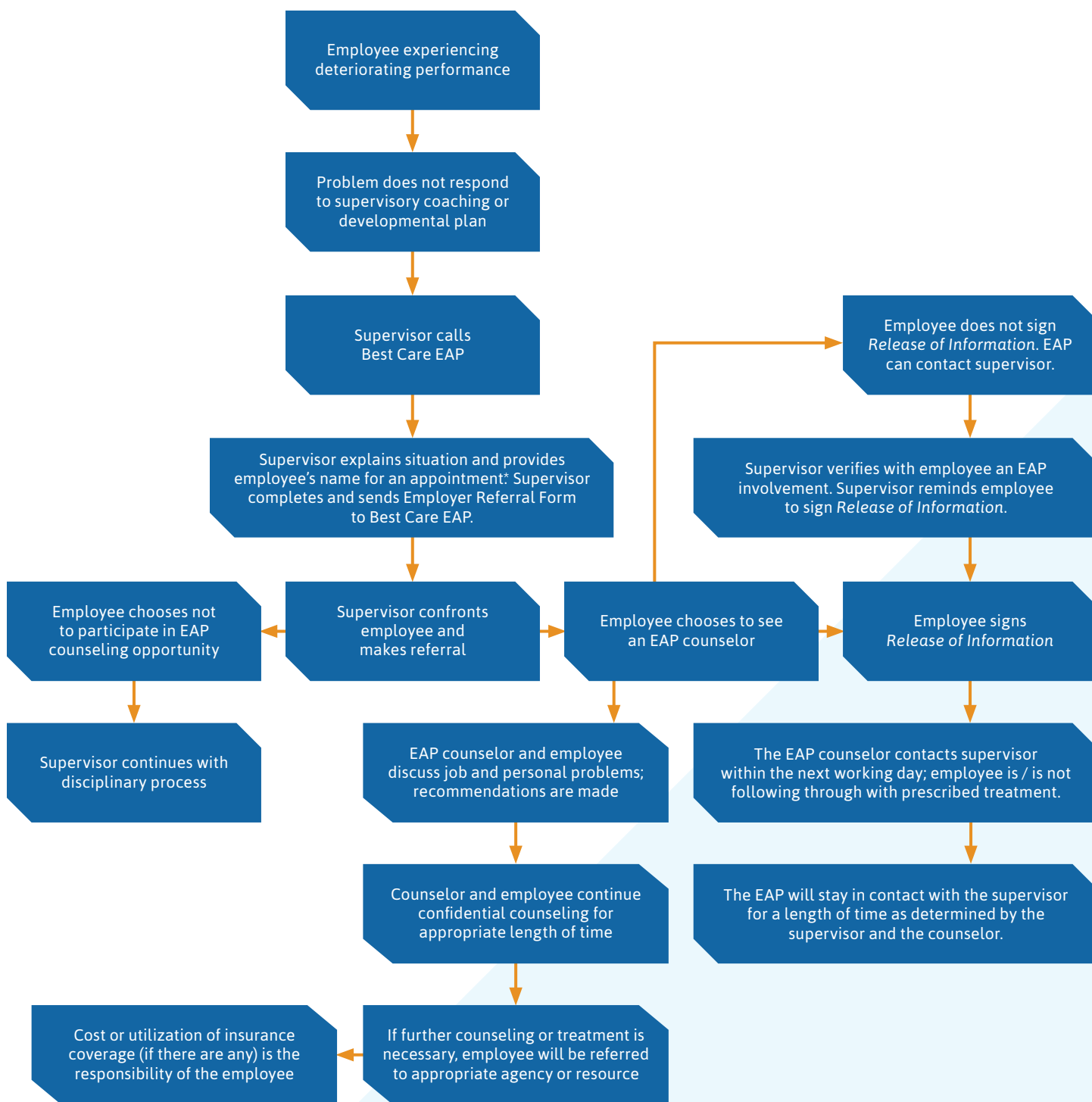
- Schedule regular meetings with the employee to discuss job expectations and progress.
- Continue to document the employee's job performance; note problems and improvements.
- Emphasize that continued participation and cooperation with EAP is necessary.
- Do not ignore performance or behavior problems because the employee is getting help. Corrective action should be taken whenever the employee does not perform adequately. Be consistent.
- Look for improvement in the employee's job performance. Praise often and offer support.
- Continue to protect the confidentiality of the employee's problem and participation in the EAP.

TIP:

Let the employee know that although his or her involvement with Best Care EAP is voluntary, it may be an important step in resolving the job performance problem.



Employer Referral Process



**If the employer schedules the appointment, it enables the EAP to immediately contact the employer if the employee does not keep the appointment. Once the employee contacts the EAP office, he or she becomes a client and the policies of confidentiality apply. If the employee has been an EAP client prior to this supervisory referral, confidentiality policies will apply.*

Employer Referral Form

Best Care EAP strives to provide successful outcomes for employer/supervisory referrals. Please include as much helpful and relevant information as possible for this supervisory case. Complete this form and promptly submit it to EAP when you make the referral.

Employee Name

Employee's Job Title

Company Name

Today's Date

Referred By

Title

Phone

Email

Deadline by which employee is to call EAP for an appointment (if applicable)

Reason for Referral is due to (check all that apply and please complete checklists on second page):

1. Ongoing Performance Deficiencies (please explain):

2. Gradual Performance Deterioration (please explain):

3. Drug / Alcohol Related Incident (please explain):



4. Critical Incident (please explain):

Employee's Current Level of Work Functioning (please circle one):

1. Outstanding 2. Above Average 3. Average 4. Below Average 5. Unsatisfactory

Supervisory Steps Already Taken (check all that apply and send helpful documentation):

1. Discussion with employee regarding work performance problems.

How many discussions?

Dates

Does the employee clearly understand improvements expected from the referral to EAP? ___ Yes ___ No

2. Verbal warning

3. Verbal and written warning

4. Second written warning

5. Suspension.

6. Return-to-work agreement. Copy enclosed? ___ Yes ___ No

Work Performance Problems Check List

Note: For each performance problem listed below, please check the appropriate box to the right, signifying the severity of the problem. Never - Does not happen. Rarely - Happens once in a while; not an issue. Occasionally - Happens once in a while; is an issue. Frequently - Happens with some regularity. Routinely - consistently happens.

| | Never | Rarely | Occasionally | Frequently | Routinely |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Excessive sick leave | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Excessive tardiness | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Patterned absences (especially, Mondays / Fridays) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Frequent unscheduled absences without medical reason | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Unauthorized absences | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Significant accident rates | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Wide swings in morale / mood | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Difficulty in recognizing own mistakes | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. Makes mistakes due to inattention or poor judgment | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. Misses deadlines | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. Increasing difficulty in handling complex assignments | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. Complaints from customers | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 13. Complaints from co-workers | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 14. Overreacts to real or imagined criticism | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 15. Requires excessive or increased supervision | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Summary

Why Employers Act

Many times it is difficult for employees with personal or job performance problems to change without help. Encouraging them to seek support is a demonstration of good management principles.

Remember:

- Personal problems can affect anyone.
- Good supervisors observe and intervene. It is their job to do so.
- Follow the recommendations in this guide, which allow supervisors to help without becoming personally involved. Supervisors are not parents to subordinates; they are simply supervisors.
- Avoid discussion of the use of mood-altering substances (alcohol or drugs) unless it occurs on the job.
- Recognize that the troubled employee, even if a co-worker, may attempt to make you the “bad guy.” This is natural. A capable supervisor will not allow this to interfere with necessary action.
- Consult the resources of your company.
- Consult Best Care EAP at (402) 354-8000 or (800) 801-4182.

You Can Make a Difference!

Supervisors are among the most successful in motivating an employee to recognize a problem and seek help. Recovery rates are high when assistance is initiated in the workplace.

When employees recover from personal problems, the benefits to themselves, their families and their employers are enormous.

Remember: Utilize your Best Care EAP as a management tool – Remind, Recommend, Refer.

We're here to help.



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