

EAP: What You Need to Know as a Supervisor

WHEN TO MAKE A REFERRAL

You may at any time **recommend** the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) if appropriate to your employee as you would any suggestion that might improve job performance. The basis for this recommendation is:

1. A moderate decline in one or more areas of the job performance not corrected in a reasonable amount of time after a performance review session; or
2. The employee admits to a personal problem as yet not affecting his job performance.

In this instance participation by the employee is voluntary. You will receive no feedback other than what the employee wishes to share with you and that information required to substantiate any absence.

If the employee performance is such that disciplinary action or termination may be appropriate you can **require** the employee to contact the EAP. The basis for a required referral is one or a combination of the following:

1. A serious decline in the employee's work performance;
2. Continued performance problems or deficiencies after repeated counseling;
3. A series of incidents which indicates the possible presence of a personal problem;
4. Any violation of the County's Drug Free Workplace Program or Alcohol and Controlled Substance Testing Policy for Commercial Motor Vehicle Drivers; or
5. As part of a disciplinary action (under the County Administrator) when approved by the Appointing Authority.

This type of referral is identified by several different names: administrative, management, supervisory, required, or mandatory. All mean the same.

1. In a mandatory referral the employee must contact the EAP for an assessment interview conducted by the EAP counselor.
2. Further participation with treatment recommendations is voluntary; however, failure to improve performance may result in disciplinary action or termination.
3. The EAP counselor will not share the nature of the problem and/or diagnosis with the employer without the employee's consent.
4. Following treatment a Return to Work conference may be held with the supervisor, the EAP coordinator and the employee. The conditions for continued employment will be presented to the employee at this time.

In the case the referral is a violation of the County's Drug Free Workplace Program or Alcohol and Controlled Substance Testing Policy for Commercial Motor Vehicle Drivers the provisions stated therein will apply.

Participation in the EAP will not excuse the employee from normal disciplinary proceedings or from abiding by personnel and departmental rules and policies.

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GUIDELINES

The following is a practical guideline for implementing the Employee Assistance Program policy and procedures. If you have further questions, call Human Resources, Employee Assistance Program liaison at 464-4570. The decision to refer an individual for evaluation will be based on evidence of deteriorating or unsatisfactory job performance. Job security or promotional opportunities normally will not be jeopardized solely by an EAP referral.

Focus on Job Behaviors:

1. Observe job impairment as demonstrated by excessive absenteeism, decreased productivity or other problems.
2. Document: It is important that data that is collected is as specific as possible and centered on job performance or any unusual behavior on the job. Recurring patterns are to be noted. Everyone has an "off day" once in a while, so observation or documentation should go on over a period of time. Collection of data helps the administrator or supervisor make a fair and impartial assessment of job performance. It also guards against "euphoric recall," that is, remembering only the peaks of performance — the "good days" and not the "bad days". The supervisor is not a counselor or judge. Rather, he or she is someone who assesses performance and, when appropriate, refers the employee to the Employee Assistance Program.

Performance Problems to Note:

1. Frequent days off with vague or implausible excuses.
2. Excessive use of sick leave.
3. Chronic lateness.
4. Early departures.
5. Erratic or deteriorating production.
6. Missed deadlines.
7. Failure to follow instructions.
8. Errors in judgment.
9. Frequent absences from workplace.
10. Repeated unreasonable accidents on or off the job.
11. Patterns of decreased efficiency as compared to past performance.

Other Indications:

1. Complaints from fellow employees about being difficult to get along with.
2. Overreaction to criticism.
3. Manipulation of others to take over job responsibilities.
4. Avoidance of co-workers, or supervisor.
5. Deterioration of personal appearance.
6. Appearance of being withdrawn or preoccupied.
7. Wide mood swings during the day.
8. Complacency in supervisory duties.
9. Conflicting instructions issued to subordinates.
10. Delegation of responsibilities clearly within the employee's own job description.
11. Submission of incomplete reports.
12. Budget mismanagement.

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HOW TO MAKE A REFERRAL

Preparation

1. Document absences, poor job performance, and other pertinent incidents (*be specific*) and have this information available during the discussion with the employee.
2. Be aware of the standards of performance.
3. Be consistent.

The supervisor must initiate all mandatory supervisory referrals through the EAP liaison in Human Resources.

Confront and Support the Employee

In this discussion, it is extremely important that the supervisor not make any attempt to analyze the cause of the performance problem or attempt to counsel the employee.

The Discussion

Absolute privacy must be ensured in your discussion with the employee.

1. Preface your discussion of performance deficiencies by emphasizing to the employee that the department recognizes his or her value to Pinellas County.
2. Be straightforward; using your documentation outline, discuss with the employee the specific deficiencies of performance.
3. Base your discussion on the employee's job performance, not the person.

Make the Referral

If the employee blames poor performance on an off-the-job problem, avoid personal involvement in the problem. If the employee appeals to you for advice, your course of action is to refer the employee to the EAP at 866-615-3047.

Follow-Through

As a supervisor, your role remains the same after the employee completes the program. The best support you can provide is monitoring job performance. Give credit when due; identify errors or omissions.

The key is consistency. The employee doesn't want or need sympathy or special favors. The employee wants to do a good day's work and be recognized for it.

Do not over monitor the performance of an Employee Assistant Program. Doing so may cause the employee to feel unwarranted pressure, which may impede progress. Be consistent!

If You Need Help

If needed you may call the Pinellas County EAP liaison in Human Resources at 464-4570 to discuss the employee's decline in performance.

For more information, see the [Employee Assistance Program Plan](#).