

# SUPERVISOR Training Manual





Dear Friends,

Welcome to your Employee Assistance Program.

An EAP is one of the most important benefits a company can have. Active participation in the program by learning, referring, and assisting employees says a lot about your own role as a manager or supervisor in preparing for the challenges that troubled and difficult employees present. That's where the EAP comes in. It's ACI's goal to equip you with the techniques, insights, and skills that will help administrators to be even more effective and successful in dealing with challenging employees.

To get the most out of the EAP, here are a few suggestions:

- Keep this manual handy along with a referral brochure. Remember, this benefit only works if employees use it.
- Give different ideas and new information a chance. Some preconceived notions and favored ways of doing things may be challenged in the EAP training you receive. The workplace is changing rapidly, and it is ACI's job to keep you abreast of the latest concepts, techniques, and proactive strategies to serve everyone's best interest.
- Make a conscious effort to make a mental bridge from the material in this manual and in EAP training to the employees that you supervise. Review any difficulties that are currently challenging the production and efficiency of your work unit.
- The EAP is a benefit, a support, and a growth opportunity for employees. Employees are the most valuable asset a company has. Protect those assets.

Thank you for listening, and ACI looks forward to hearing about your experience with ACI, your EAP provider.

Best Regards,  
Ann D. Clark, Ph.D.  
CEO

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## The Program: A Commitment to Productivity

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The fast and demanding pace of living in today's world means that everyone encounters stress and personal challenges. Most of the time we find ways to resolve difficulties by adapting and making changes. However, there are times when problems may persist despite our best efforts to solve them. As stress builds, personal and family problems manifest themselves at work in the form of irritability, loss of concentration, accidents, tardiness, absenteeism, poor job performance, low morale, injury, and/or disability. These symptoms may affect other employees and can cause a ripple effect resulting in impaired interpersonal relationships and reduced productivity.

When challenged employees take advantage of the EAP service, the numerous referral resources available through the EAP help to resolve personal problems quickly. This early assistance may be:

- Consultation via telephone, chat, email and text messaging
- Face-to-face appointments for:
  - Assessment and referral
  - Problem resolution
  - Intervention
- Onsite intervention
- Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM)
- Webinars



## Facts: The Troubled Employee

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The troubled employee is absent ten times more often than average, especially on Fridays, Mondays, and after payday.

Don't overlook on-the-job absences such as frequent trips to the bathroom, long coffee breaks, or seeking out other employees to discuss problems.

The troubled employee has spasmodic work patterns that result in alternating periods of high and low productivity.

Emotional stress has been linked to lower back pain, gastric disorders, and other ailments. By managing stress, many of these symptoms can be prevented, resulting in less use of medical benefits.

The troubled employee has an accident rate that is four times higher than fellow employees. Off-the-job accidents also have an effect on job related performance.

Abuse of legal drugs costs U.S. businesses \$100 billion annually. Prescription drug abuse causes 60% of hospital emergency room admissions and nearly 70% of all drug related deaths.

The U.S. is the world's largest drug consumer, accounting for 60% of the world's illegal drug consumption.

Illegal drug use costs U.S. industries between \$70 and \$100 billion a year in lost productivity, accidents on the job, medical claims, and employee theft. When alcohol abuse is also taken into consideration, the annual cost to industry tops \$170 billion.

Alcohol is the most abused drug in the American workplace, and is abused twice as much as illegal drugs.

Marijuana is the most popular illegal drug in the U.S., followed by crack/cocaine and crystal methamphetamine, but heroin use is also on the rise.

75% of callers to the national Cocaine Hotline (1-800-COCAINE) said that they have gone to work under the influence of drugs or have used drugs on the job. Another 6% said drugs have affected their job performance.

Of these callers, 4% have sold drugs to co-workers, 18% have given or bought drugs from co-workers, and 18% have stolen from co-workers.

Cigarettes are also a major drain on business, and cigarette related illnesses cost U.S. industry \$3 billion per year.

\* Statistics supplied by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration and the National Institution on Drug Abuse.



# Overview of The Supervisory Referral Process

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Supervisors know that the relationship between an employee's personal problems and productivity is well established. Troubled employees cost companies in many ways and, while productivity is the critical measure, supervisor frustration, lost time spent in conflict resolution, attention diverted from primary job responsibilities, benefit utilization, Worker's Compensation claims, and the "ripple effect" of stress are also important.

The EAP helps supervisors and managers identify behavior and marshal resources to help the employee whose personal problems are interfering with job performance. Training assists supervisors in early detection of the patterns and symptoms that predict employee difficulty. Often, it is a challenge for supervisors to deal with "bad attitude," procrastination, hostility, complainers, malingers, and "know-it-alls."

The warning symptoms of tardiness, attendance problems, abuse of leaves, and other easily documentable items are not *early* symptoms. These behaviors are seen long after a problem has entered into the employee's personal life and infiltrated into the workplace. By identifying problems early on, a supervisor is more likely to have a successful resolution of the workplace issue(s).

Business consultants find most of a manager's time—and their most frequently mentioned complaint—is spent trying to cope with and understand *the problem employee*. The employee whose personal problems directly and negatively impact not only their own performance, but their peers, bosses, customers, and their own family. How to recognize, identify, and intervene early is the help a supervisor needs.



Company policy will dictate the steps in dealing with difficult employees. **Review the corporate policy and procedures** related to the EAP referral process. It may be helpful to speak with the Human Resources or other management representative to review the steps that best relate to the company policy. The EAP is a resource provided to the company; its managers, supervisors and/or other administrative personnel. If there is any question if EAP can help, call and have a brief consultation with an ACI clinician.

### **How to Initiate a Referral**

To initiate a referral, fill out a Supervisory Referral Form with the employee and either fax or scan and email it to ACI. Regardless of the type of job performance problem, a faxed referral will begin the process. Provide specific information as to the reason for the referral—by describing the specific job performance issue at hand, an appropriate plan of action can be implemented. Once the referral is received by ACI, an ACI clinician will contact Human Resources or Management via email and/or phone to confirm that the referral was received then arrange a phone consultation. During the phone consultation, an ACI clinician will take detailed information regarding the referral and help plan and explain the next course of action.

### **Confidentiality**

In all instances, the use of the EAP by the employee is strictly confidential. That is, all state and federal laws, especially HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act), protect the information provide by the employee. Should the counselor feel it is in the best interests of an employee to reveal privileged information to a third party, and the employee agrees, said employee must sign a release of privilege, or confidentiality release. No information will be provided to any third party except as required by state and/or federal laws without a written release of information.

There are several ways to use the EAP:

### **Informal**

In some instances it may be helpful simply to remind an employee of the EAP as a resource— such as providing a brochure or other contact information. For example, an employee may confide that a divorce is distracting from job performance. In this example the supervisor, lead or manager may suggest the EAP as a resource that includes legal, financial and other services.

### **Performance Referral**

A job-performance referral may be management-initiated. Whether written or oral, specifics of the performance problem should be included. The EAP is suggested as a resource to help the employee correct the job performance deficiencies.

### **Mandatory Referral**

A mandatory referral is used according to company policy. Usually a written policy with related procedures dictates how the EAP is used. A mandatory referral requires that certain performance standards be met in a timely manner. Failure to meet such standards results in negative consequences defined by management. Again, the EAP is a resource for providing assistance to the employee in correcting job performance. There are two types of mandatory referrals depending on the urgency of the need for service and the severity of the employee's behavior:

- **Standard Referral:** Most referrals will fall under this category. Some examples of standard referral issues are: stress management, anxiety, mild depression, communication problems, etc.
- **Urgent Referral:** Some examples of urgent referral issues are: when an employee is in a serious situation, produces a positive drug screen, or is placed on leave until assessed by a provider. If you think the employee may be in a current state to harm him/herself or others, you should call 911 to get assistance from local authorities.

# Management-Initiated Referral

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When it is first recognized that an employee's attendance, job performance, or conduct is deteriorating, the supervisor should document in order to be specific when discussing job performance with the troubled employee, Human Resources or the EAP.

## 1. Documentation

- A. Detailed records of tardiness, unauthorized absences, vehicle accidents, accidents on duty, and other accidents at work should be routinely kept, but also keep records of a pattern of job performance or function deteriorating.
- B. It is important for supervisors to document the employee's deficiencies in job performance, not merely for use in determining possible disciplinary action, but also as a clue or symptom of an underlying problem in order to assist the individual to seek help and return to effective service. This documentation can help leverage the employee into an EAP contact.
- C. In the administrative handling of unsatisfactory performance cases, the company's policy comes first.
- D. Documentation should contain job performance and dates. Stick to the observed facts, and make no reference to suspected causes of the performance problems. Remember, identification, not diagnosis.



## 2. Discussion

- A. When a problem is observed or identified, the supervisor should review the corporate policy. The facts should be specific, observable, and verifiable. Be supportive, candid, and direct.
- B. The HR or Personnel department can be very helpful in reviewing your plan, suggesting the next step, and providing data from other sources. Include them early on in the process.
- C. A call to your HR department or the EAP should include:
  - i. Work aspects that are slipping, not meeting expectations, or not consistent with training, years of experience, changing demands, and so forth
  - ii. Records of absences, tardiness, and AWOL (present but not at workstation)
  - iii. Interpersonal relationships with other employees
  - iv. Safety record (if it is a cause for concern)
  - v. Any other pertinent points
- D. Advise the employee that his or her work performance is unacceptable and what is expected to bring it within acceptable limits. Be specific and set measurable goals.
- E. Give the employee a specific time limit to bring performance or attendance up to an acceptable standard. Be prepared to follow through with the next step in disciplinary process up to and including termination.
- F. The supervisor should inform the employee about the EAP program. It is important to stress that the program is entirely voluntary and fully confidential.



### **3. Performance Improvements**

If the employee brings his or her performance or attendance in line with what is acceptable, the managing objective is reached.

### **4. Performance Problems Continue**

If the employee *does not* bring his or her performance or attendance in line with what is acceptable, not only should the disciplinary process continue to the next level, but the supervisor should consult with the EAP concerning the referral. Often employees agree to counseling but do not follow through. Remember, confidentiality applies to the counselors, not to you. You can give information helpful to the process.

### **5. Referral**

- A. The employee is being referred to the EAP because of a performance problem, and that this is in compliance with organization policy which requires that employees be given an opportunity to participate in the program.
- B. Advise the employee that the EAP process will be held in a *confidential* manner, and have an EAP brochure at hand. The EAP program is a resource for correcting job deficiencies.
- C. Before concluding the session, stress that continued poor work performance may result in negative consequences, regardless of whether the employee accepts the referral to the EAP.

# Signs and Symptoms of the Troubled Employee

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Many troubled employees exhibit characteristic behavior, and early detection by a supervisor can increase the likelihood of successful resolution. Think about the employees that you supervise. Do any of them have a number of the following characteristics?

## **Absenteeism**

- Repeated absences, especially if a pattern is established
- Excessive tardiness, especially on Monday and Friday, or after lunch
- Leaves work early
- High number of illness-related absences
- Elaborate or dramatic excuses and contrived alibis

## **Lowered Productivity**

- Missed deadlines
- Mistakes due to inattention/poor judgment
- Complaints from customers or coworkers
- Deteriorating job performance
- Improbable excuses for poor performance

## **Difficulty in Concentration**

- Inattentive or vague
- Work requires inordinate amount of effort
- Jobs take longer than expected
- Often exhibits poor judgment
- Must be micro-managed due to a lack of follow through

## **Appearance**

- Disheveled or poor hygiene
- Erratic appearance—sometimes well-dressed, sometimes poorly dressed
- Bizarre Appearance

## **Confusion**

- Difficulty in recalling instructions or details
- Difficulty in handling complex tasks
- Difficulty in recalling own mistakes
- Unclear about assignments and responsibilities

## **Irregular Work Patterns**

- Alternate periods of high and low productivity
- Weekend work

## **On-the-Job Absenteeism**

- Continued absence from post more than job requires
- Frequent trips to the restroom
- Physical illness on the job
- Long lunches; too many breaks

## **Poor Employee Relationships**

- Overreaction to real or imagined criticism
- Wide swings in morale or mood
- Secretive behavior
- Withdrawal from the rest of staff
- Often angry and aggressive
- Frequently defensive and blames others
- Harbors unreasonable resentments
- Frequently questions authority



## Workplace Violence

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Each year, nearly one million employees across the U.S. become victims of violence at work. Crime victimization costs nearly \$55 million in yearly lost wages due to absences alone. Your partnership with the EAP is a way to reduce violence through early recognition. What are the characteristics of the potentially violent employee or the workplace conditions that exacerbate violence?

Violent employees are often antagonistic, question authority, express bitterness, and aren't satisfied with their jobs. They are frequently substance abusers and often suffer from depression and suicidal ideation. Within a company they are often shuttled from one task to another, frequently ask for transfers, and generally blame others for their problems. Violent employees often harbor pent up rage and lack a support system of friends and family to help them cope.

A few of the behaviors that may indicate impending violence are:

- Overreaction to changes in corporate policy
- Threats, even in jest, to co-workers or supervisors
- Antagonistic behavior and violence (such as fights outside the workplace)
- Financial and legal difficulties
- Repeated violation of company policy
- An attitude of blame and an “everyone is against me” mentality
- Vague references to a “getting even,” or a “plan” that will “solve everything”
- Mood swings and substance abuse
- Repeated references to weapons owned or proficiency with weapons

Discuss any observations with an EAP counselor. Remember, a phone call to the EAP has the same confidentiality that protects all clients who use the EAP.

# Warning Signs of Substance and Alcohol Abuse

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## Emotional Signs

- Lifestyle characterized by “drama”
- Sometimes nervous, irritable, and hard to get along with
- Evidence of financial problems
- Avoids people and becomes withdrawn
- Becomes grandiose, angry, or argumentative

## Physical Signs

- Deteriorating appearance in dress and hygiene
- Hangover on the job
- On the job accident rate is above average
- Off the job accidents (comes in with bruises and injuries)
- Auto moving violations and accidents
- May frequently use breath deodorizers to cover up drinking
- Exhibits excess weight loss or weight gain

## Verbal Signs

- Glamorizing drinking and hangovers — “Boy, did I get plastered!”
- “Party-hearty” attitude — bingeing on occasions of parties or celebrations
- Excuses become more elaborate and sometimes bizarre

## Your Partner in the Workplace!

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Confronting an employee and discussing job performance problems can be a difficult task, yet this is occasionally necessary for the employee to obtain the assistance required. Assisting managers and supervisors with handling troubled employees is just one of the many services available through the EAP.

Remember, if you have any questions about referring or recommending the EAP to an employee or would like additional assistance in planning a constructive confrontation, supervisory consultation with an EAP counselor is available to you.

Contact ACI Specialty Benefits at  
**800.932.0034**  
**[eapinfo@acispecialtybenefits.com](mailto:eapinfo@acispecialtybenefits.com)**  
**[www.acispecialtybenefits.com](http://www.acispecialtybenefits.com)**

To learn more about your  
EAP services and  
resources, call now.

**800.932.0034**

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