

Workplace Supervisor

September 2017

Testimonials

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

“The onsite counselor was great and had great suggestions for us managers to support the employees.”

“I greatly appreciated the clinical manager’s time and one-on-one attention. This was a difficult situation and he provided context that supported me in conveying next steps to our leadership team and how to move to accountability for the employee.”



FAQs for Managing Employees

Q. I have two employees who don’t get along. It’s starting to create friction within the department. I don’t want battle lines to be drawn among the others. This is my last shot to end the problem, but how and when do I involve CONCERN?

A. Personality conflicts can lead to quarrelsome relationships. They typically do not respond to classic attempts at problem-solving and negotiating like other workplace conflicts. These problematic dyads often follow a progressive path: mini-crisis, counseling or pleading by supervisors, periods of calm, and a repeating cycle. Ending the quarrelsome pattern requires self-discipline and resolve if only because it has typically become habitual. If the pattern of behavior you are describing is long term and you have unwittingly enabled it by counseling, threatening, and not following through, the warring parties must then be made to believe management is now determined to take action if the two employees do not. That’s your most important role. Make employees aware that change is non-negotiable and that you are committed to an administrative or disciplinary solution to help the employees change if they don’t make progress. This message may instill the needed sense of urgency. CONCERN can assist at any point along the way.

Q. Perhaps others won’t admit it, but I am hesitant to confront an employee who might be under the influence unless it is pretty obvious. A lot of employees drink, but if someone looks sober and is functional, that’s what matters to me. Where am I going wrong?

A. If you are trained to identify signs and symptoms of an employee who may be under the influence of alcohol or other drugs, it is crucial to follow the guidelines of your drug-free workplace policy. Employees in mid-stage alcoholism, even if their blood alcohol level is relatively high, do not necessarily appear drunk. They are, of course, still at risk for accidents and injuring others. These employees eventually discover maintenance drinking, where they consume alcohol in small amounts to maintain a blood alcohol level that prevents the agitating effects of withdrawal that are noticeable to others. When you do confront your employee, anticipate significant resistance and defensiveness because you have overlooked this problem for so long. So, talk to your HR representative and a CONCERN clinical manager, and request help preparing for a successful, constructive confrontation. Is your resistance to confrontation based on fear? If so, CONCERN will help you overcome this resistance as well.

Q. I referred an employee to CONCERN two years ago. A lot of problems with absenteeism occurred at the time. Things have gone great since then, but suddenly, he is not coming to work. He is missing some days and is late on others. What is my next step—call CONCERN again?

A. Speak with your employee first in a corrective interview and raise your concerns about his missing work. Refer to your documentation. The employee may disclose something personal as to why there are attendance problems, but do not attempt to engage in solutions—that is up to the employee. But do offer resources and support, such as the EAP. Regardless, it is your decision about how you wish to proceed. A formal referral back to CONCERN may result in another two or more years of great work, or based on the history, your organization may have a disciplinary action in mind. Conduct a cost-benefit analysis that weighs returning your employee to a satisfactory level of performance versus an action that would include dismissal. Sometimes the understandable frustration management feels toward relapses leads to decisions not fully in management’s own interest.

Q. My employee is at home recuperating from a back injury. I stay in touch by phone to communicate, offer support, and encourage him to come back. I hear from coworkers that domestic quarreling exists and that he is depressed. Can I refer him to CONCERN?

A. Yes, suggest that he visit the EAP. Last year, a research study now posted at the National Institutes of Health, examined 94 other studies in an attempt to discover what contributes to positive return-to-work results following a worker’s injury. More than half such such injuries were back problems. Also studied were

factors interfering with employees returning to work. Among many factors, the ones that could be influenced from the workplace were return-to-work coordination and multidisciplinary interventions that include the workplace and stakeholders. One type of stakeholder is the supervisor, so your communication and support are impactful. Depression is a factor in why employees do not return to work, so encouraging your employee to visit the EAP and get support is a smart move. Domestic conflict to the extent that it interferes with wellness can also be addressed by the EAP. Source: Search online for “PMC5015229” to locate the research study.

Q. When an employee is discharged from a drug and alcohol treatment program and CONCERN follows up, how does the EAP help the employee in ways that the treatment program cannot?

A. Addiction treatment programs are busy, often underfunded, suffer high staff turnover, and sometimes struggle with management and philosophy inconsistencies. Because they are 24-hour businesses, they also have communication challenges between work shifts. Patient follow-up, if offered, can suffer, and aftercare for up to a year or more for relapse prevention is often more important for long term success than the initial treatment. EAPs know about these struggles, so they closely follow an employee’s post-treatment until follow-up care is assured. EAP counseling support to help bridge the gap between a formal program and aftercare efforts does not interfere with treatment, but is instead welcomed. The EAP uses motivational counseling to encourage better follow-through. Such interventions make EAPs enormously cost-beneficial, especially when relapse and loss of a worker are prevented.

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
www.concern-eap.com