

# Workplace Supervisor

November 2018

## Testimonials

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

*"I am very glad that the Clinical Manager is there to help our organization. She is thorough, caring, and completes follow-ups in a timely manner."*

*"The Clinical Manager was excellent and I truly value her partnership finding onsite resources in a short timeframe. Her professionalism and responsiveness were incredibly valuable in this situation."*

*"Thank you to our Clinical Manager! Our organization is very lucky to have a partnership with EAP, and her personally."*

*"One of the most helpful customer service experiences I've had!"*



## FAQs for Managing Employees

### It's True! You Are What You Eat

We know that eating a balanced diet is vital to physical health and wellbeing. But did you also know that good nutrition may also affect productivity? When we think about workplace performance, we rarely give much consideration to food. But, as it turns out, food has a direct impact on our cognitive performance, which is why a poor choice at lunch can impact an entire day. Help your employees understand the importance of nutrition and how it may also play a role in the management and prevention of certain mental health problems, such as depression and anxiety. Here are a few brain-healthy tips: 1) Stay hydrated and eat regularly. Dehydration and skipping meals can cause fatigue and contribute to mood swings. 2) Less sugar, more whole grains. Whole grains are more filling and generally have a lower glycemic index than sugary processed foods. 3) Eat a wide variety of foods. The more varied your diet, the more likely you are to get all the nutrients you need. 4) Include fish. Fatty fish like salmon, mackerel, herring, sardines and albacore tuna are high in healthy fatty acids found to improve thinking and memory. 5) Feed your gut. Foods with live cultures like kefir, sauerkraut, and yogurt feed the good bacteria that live in the gut and help keep our immune systems in check. 6) Healthy fats. Swap butter for healthy fats like olive oil. Trans fats can damage the brain and arteries. For more information about physical and mental wellbeing, suggest they check out our Mental Wellness Resource Center at [employees.concern-eap.com/mental-wellness](https://employees.concern-eap.com/mental-wellness)

**Q.** When employees are in conflict, it can disrupt workflow and group harmony, but should supervisors intervene in every instance? Can you offer guidelines for deciding when to take control of a situation and step in?

**A.** Most supervisors know conflict is normal in the workplace and responding to conflict is part of a supervisor's job, but there are important guidelines. It is not necessary to intervene in every conflict; on the contrary, it is usually better to leave employees alone and let them work it out. If supervisors involved themselves in every conflict, they would likely create more of them because it would send a message that employees need not cooperate, compromise, or work out power struggles with each other and instead let you work it out. These are relationship skills that can be undermined by the authority possessed by a manager. A better tactic is monitoring what is taking place. So, when should

you intervene? Intervene when the issues pose some sort of larger risk to the organization as in the case of harassment, discrimination, or potential for violence. Hold employees responsible for resolving conflicts. Never let them perpetuate. Concern can be a resource for supervisors, offering management consultations. When conflicts remain unresolved or are problematically ongoing, you can decide to seek resolution by referring employees for additional help by calling Concern.

**Q.** When counseling employees, what are the most common mistakes that supervisors make that undermine their goal of getting above-satisfactory performance from employees.

**A.** Managers often forget the importance of effective communication and remaining proactive. These are the fundamental mistakes. This is the starting point for preventing performance problems. Poor communication typically leads to late interventions after a crisis of performance already exists. Good communication means periodically reviewing and clarifying expectations and discussing performance problems. Beyond these things, many supervisors do not have employees communicate their own understanding of what precisely must be done to meet acceptable standards. At the same time, supervisors often do not discuss what outstanding performance looks like and how it is measured. When outstanding performance is clearly outlined, most employees will keep it in mind, and if they don't seek this level of performance, are inspired to perform well above standard. Busy supervisors sometimes step in too late, whereas acting early would save them enormous stress. Late intervention may find that the relationship with the employee has deteriorated, and this further compounds the difficulty of correcting performance.

**Q.** I have an open-door policy. I let my employees know they can come to me at any time to share concerns or problems. I rarely get visitors, so this is a sign that everything is going well, correct?

**A.** Well, maybe. An open-door policy encouraging workers to visit and discuss issues and concerns requires more than simply a door swung open. You must also have a psychologically safe workplace. A psychologically safe workplace naturally encourages employees to reach out and take advantage of what you are offering (a confidential safe place to discuss your issues). They do so because they are confident they will not be rejected or punished for admitting a mistake, bringing a complaint, asking a question, or offering a new idea. Help employees feel respected, accepted, and comfortable at all times. Model this to others. The bottom line is: How you interact with employees outside your office will determine whether they will walk through your open door later.

**Q.** One of my employees has a teenaged child who was caught selling marijuana in school. I learned about this from another employee. The father of the teen is an excellent worker. Should I leave this issue alone, not say anything, or mention Concern as a resource?

**A.** In a private conversation, let your employee know that you have learned of his child's problem. Mention Concern and say that the professionals there can offer several types of support helpful to the family, including referral to expert resources in the community, help for understanding unique issues associated with parenting a teenager with a drug use problem, follow-up, support, and education. This can be a rocky road that involves relapse, parenting challenges, and crises requiring the support of experts that the EAP can help locate.

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**