Acentra HEALTH

Volume 27, Issue 1

Solutions

A newsletter designed to support leadership and human resource staff.

Solutions
Volume 27, Issue 1

Acentra HEALTH

The following questions and answers offer practical guidance on common challenges supervisors may encounter in the workplace. Acentra Health, your Employee Assistance Program (EAP), is here to provide confidential support and consultation to managers seeking assistance with a wide range of workplace issues.

When should I be worried about an employee's mental health, especially concerning serious psychological symptoms, given that I am not qualified to diagnose or assess their stability?

As a supervisor, it's important to notice when performance issues may be linked to underlying mental health challenges. While you want to avoid diagnosing or providing advice, your role is to offer support by addressing the impact on work performance, maintaining open communication, and referring the employee to appropriate resources, such as the EAP, to ensure they receive the help they need. Certain behavioral signs often indicate emotional distress. These include a noticeable drop in work quality, missed deadlines, and increased errors. Employees experiencing mental health difficulties may struggle to manage their workloads due to a lack of emotional resources, leading to delays and decreased productivity. You may also observe changes in their attendance, moods, self-control, emotional responses to stress, or even their appearance. If you notice any of these patterns, reminding the employee about the EAP is always a good practice, along with following your organization specific protocols for handling these personnel matters.

I tried to help resolve a dispute between two employees and got very emotional about the issues we were discussing. I wanted to take a neutral position but admit it was difficult. How do managers stay neutral, not pick sides, and demonstrate impartiality?

It is not always easy to maintain composure and objectivity, especially in emotionally charged situations. Adopting a neutral stance is easier when you understand the benefits. It allows you to clearly communicate expectations, actively listen to all parties without bias, and build trust among conflicting employees. When employees feel their concerns are addressed without favoritism, they're more likely to express their grievances, reducing risk to the organization. Your neutrality also helps prevent conflicts for escalating and focuses on finding

Solutions
Volume 27, Issue 1

Acentra HEALTH

solutions rather than getting caught up in the conflict. When employees perceive a supervisor as biased, it undermines your authority and credibility, which can be difficult to restore. To enhance your conflict resolution skills, consider consulting the EAP for best practices. Also offer employees the option to resolve differences through the confidential venue afforded by the EAP.

My employee frequently apologizes for poor performance but shows high productivity after each apology. Unfortunately, it doesn't last. I am finally making an EAP referral. What might be the cause of this sort of behavior?

While only the EAP can provide a definitive assessment, this type of behavior often points to contributing underlying issues. Poor performance could stem from personal distractions or other challenges impeding an employee's ability to sustain high level performance, such as a mental health, physical, or substance use disorder. Apologies may temporarily postpone corrective action, but they can reinforce the cycle of erratic performance. It's crucial to focus on holding the employee to standards that exist for everyone, while offering the EAP as a potential resource to help.

I recently came across a news article about "pink cocaine". I have received drug awareness training, but I haven't heard of this one before. With so many new-sounding drugs, is it important for me to stay updated on these trends?

As a supervisor, staying informed about emerging substance abuse trends is crucial for maintaining your credibility. Employees are more likely to take policies seriously if they see you're aware of current risks and aren't naive about new substances. While it's important to stay knowledgeable for discussions around substance abuse, remember that diagnosing employees is outside your role. "Pink cocaine" isn't actually cocaine. It's typically a mix of ketamine and other substances, sometimes including fentanyl. The powder is often pink due to food coloring and may have flavoring. Users face potential side effects like anxiety, hallucinations, and severe cardiovascular issues. It's commonly used in the club scene, especially among younger individuals. The substance can be ingested as pills, snorted as a powder, or occasionally injected. The combination of hallucinogenic and stimulant effects increases the risk of erratic behavior and loss of control. For more information, visit the National Poison Control Center's website: www.poison.org/articles/pink-cocaine.

Solutions
Volume 27, Issue 1

Acentra HEALTH

One of my employees who is typically outgoing has become really withdrawn. He's had to take time off to deal with legal issues related to a divorce. I heard him telling a coworker that he feels like everything is pointless. What should I do?

If you notice a change in behavior of an employee, it's a good time to talk to them about your observations, express support for their wellbeing, and encourage the use of the EAP for assistance. In this situation, the employee has shared information with a colleague which would indicate that he could be thinking about taking his life. Those at risk of suicide have often experienced a significant stressor or loss – in this case the loss of a relationship, potential custody issues and financial strain. You'd want to meet with him immediately to express your concern and talk to him about using the EAP for support. You would call the EAP and explain the situation and then place the employee on the phone. The counselor would do a full assessment and assist him in scheduling an appointment with a local counselor. When in doubt about what to do, contact the EAP for assistance developing a plan. If at any point you become concerned that he is going to do something immediate, calling 911 is the best option.

Employees Assistance Program

The EAP provides counseling sessions at no cost, as well as a wide variety of services to enhance overall wellbeing and support healthy work/life balance. In addition, the EAP is available to provide meaningful solutions to address the many challenging situations facing those in management roles. Leaders can take advantage of unlimited management consultations and receive guidance and assistance related to employee and team functioning concerns.

The EAP can be accessed anytime. For no-cost, confidential support from a licensed, experienced counselor, call today. You can also access helpful management tips and resources on the website.

Phone: 1.833.539.7285

Website: sowi.mylifeexpert.com

Company Code: SOWI

Solutions is a newsletter for managers, supervisors, and human resource staff eligible for Acentra Health services. Acentra Health EAP services provide assistance and guidance to supervisors dealing with workplace performance issues. This newsletter is intended for general information purposes only and is not intended to replace the counsel or advice of a qualified health professional. Individuals should follow the policies and procedures laid out by their human resource management department concerning use of the EAP. Some articles reprinted with permission from DFA Publishing and Consulting, LLC. *Acentra Health, McLean, VA. All rights reserved.*