

Supervisor Training Using the EAP in Supervision



What is an EAP?



An Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a worksite-based program to assist:

- The work organization in addressing productivity issues
- Employee clients in identifying and resolving personal concerns that may affect job performance



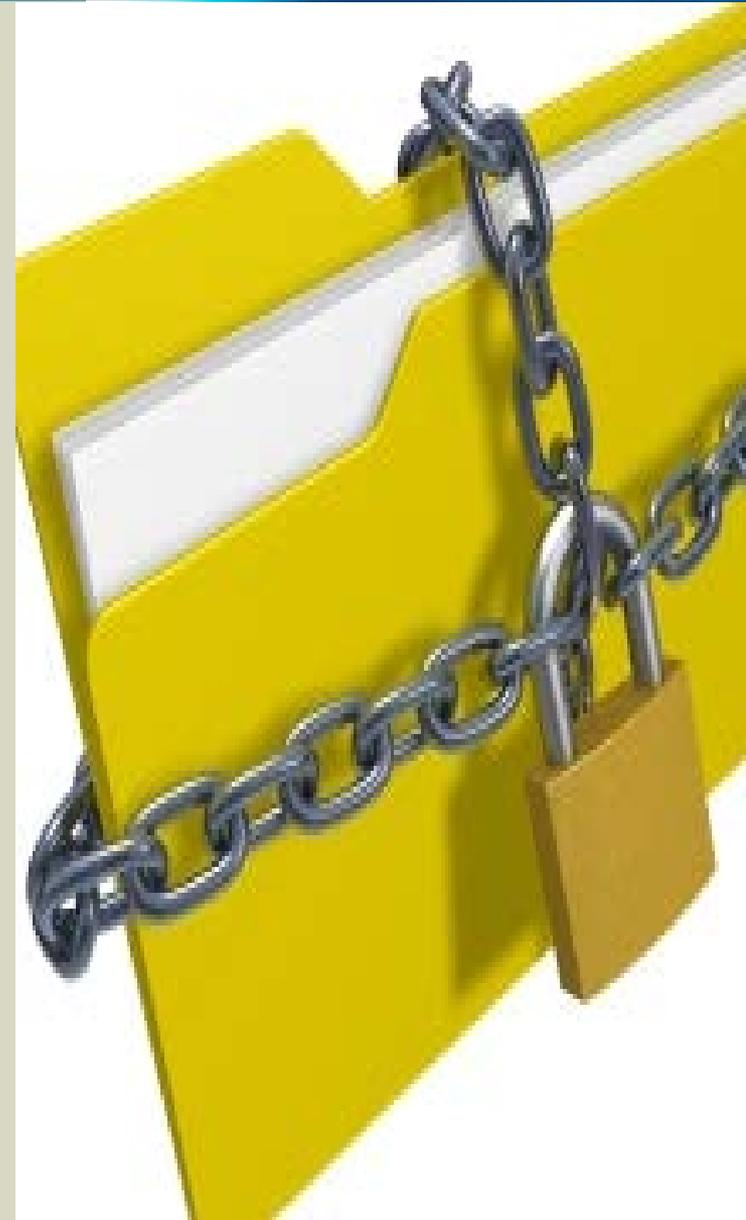
EAP Basics

EAPs are confidential

- Identity is protected by confidentiality laws
- Confidentiality is also assured by the organization's EAP policy

EAPs are without cost to employees/ family members

- Employees are responsible for the cost of services to which they might be referred
- EAPs help them find affordable services

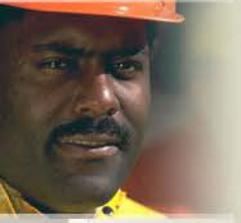


EAP Basics *(cont'd)*

EAPs do not interfere with administrative or supervisory practices

The EAP will not interfere with your job as a supervisor

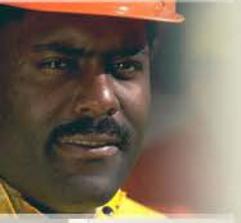
- May offer consulting and coaching help, but will not tell you what type of discipline to use nor direct managerial decisions



It's True

EAPs are not “benefit programs” in the typical sense

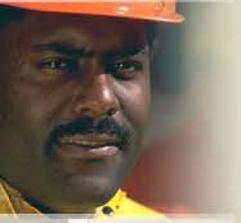
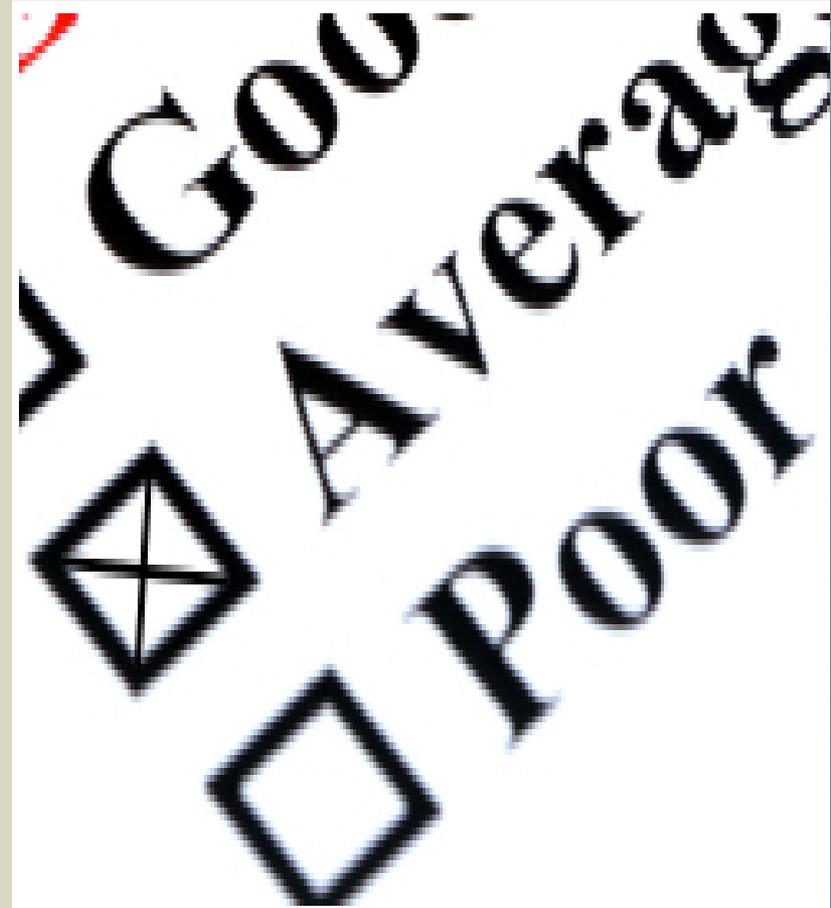
- They are pro-employee and pro-organization management tools that benefit everyone



EAPs are not a “safe harbor”

Participation in an EAP does not excuse unsatisfactory job performance

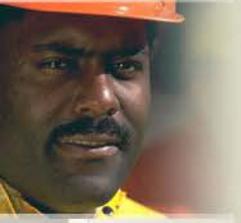
- Your hands are not “tied”
- You are not prohibited from taking action in response to job performance problems



EAPs are Voluntary

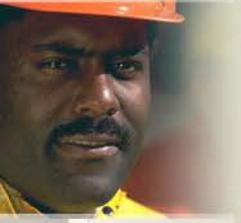
Employees are not “forced” to participate

- Getting angry or telling an employee it is “mandatory” to go to the EAP may harm the program's ability to attract employees and the organization's investment in it; utilization may suffer
- Employees who say, “My supervisor told me I had to come,” are typically less accepting of help



EAPs are Non-Disciplinary

- EAPs cannot dispense, recommend, or recommend against disciplinary action
- An employee cannot have job security, promotional opportunities, or position status jeopardized solely for participating in an EAP



Two Types of EAP Referrals

Self-referral

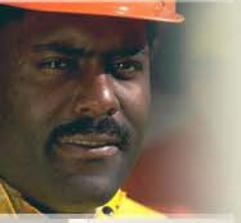
- An employee volunteers to participate in the EAP without being referred by the supervisor

Supervisor referral

- The employee agrees to participate in the EAP after being referred by the supervisor based on job performance problems (attendance, quality of work, behavior, etc.)



It's True

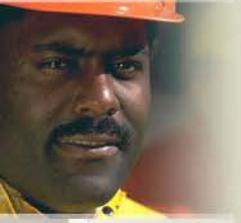


- An EAP may be charged with evaluating an employee who tests positive for drugs or alcohol at work, and then refer him or her to treatment
- The organization may choose to dismiss an employee if he or she does not accept the referral and follow up
 - This is still considered voluntary usage of the EAP, because the employee is being offered an opportunity to be accommodated rather than be dismissed for cause.



Tip

- With an EAP, a supervisor can focus on performance and not feel compelled to get “involved” in employees’ personal problems
- Supervisors should  take advantage and expect employees to take personal responsibility for using resources and accepting help offered by the EAP



EAP Benefits



Helps retain employees,
reduces turnover



- An employee who has been your most troublesome could become one of your most valued with the resolution of a personal problem



Reduces risk of lawsuits

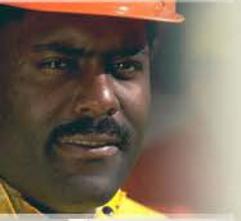
- EAPs make it less likely that employees with performance problems will have to be terminated



EAP Benefits (cont'd)

Helps supervisors remain focused on performance

- You are an expert on performance, not personal problems – an EAP makes it easier for you to do your job 📢
- EAPs also give you an alternative to tolerating poor performance, pleading with your employee to change, or figuring out how to terminate or transfer an employee



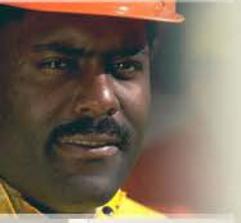
EAP Benefits (cont'd)

EAPs have more experience than any other profession in consulting with supervisors on managing difficult employees 🗨️

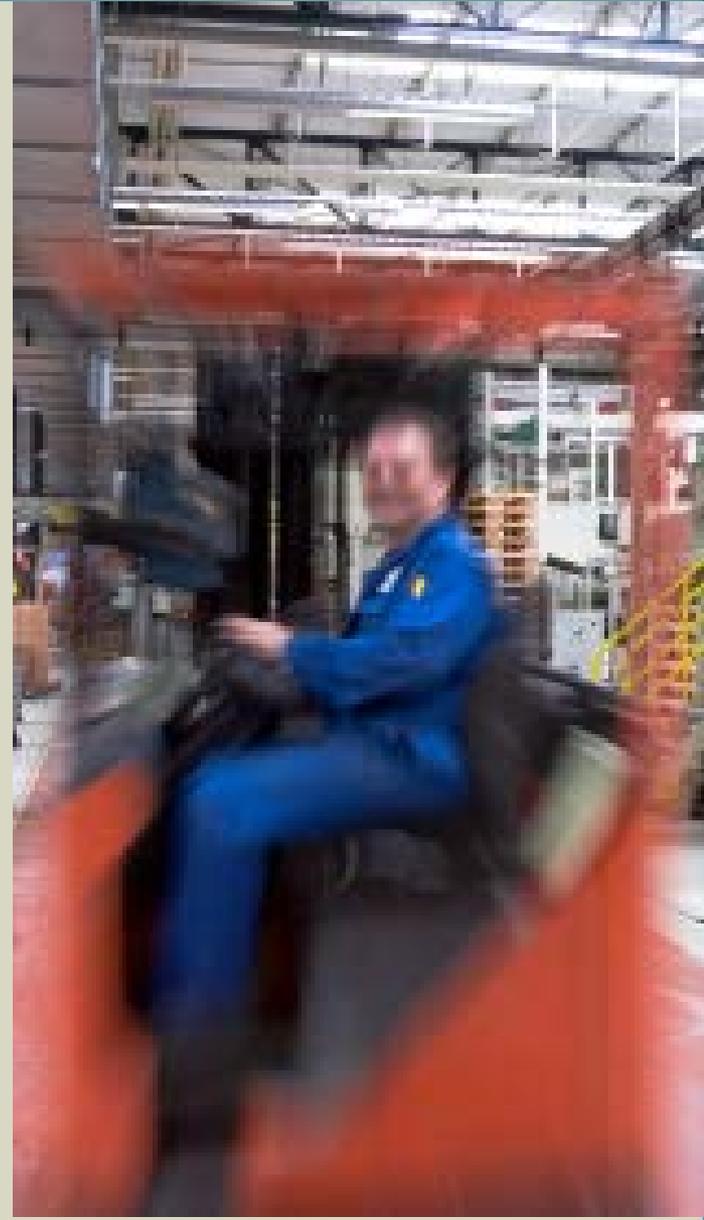
- This experience builds into an extensive base of practical knowledge available within the EAP field



How EAPs Fit into Supervision



- A supervisor referral is appropriate when your employee's performance problems continue despite your attempts to correct them in the normal process of supervision 📢
- Your employee may or may not have a personal problem, but the criteria for a supervisor referral exists – a continuing performance problem



What is a “Troubled” Employee?

A troubled employee is an employee whose personal problems interfere with:

- Job Performance
- Attendance
- Quality of Work
- Behavior
- Attitude
- Availability



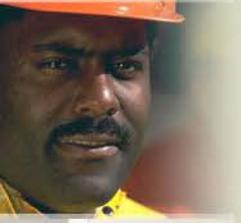
Referring an Employee

- Refer employees early before problems become severe and your relationship with the employee deteriorates
- Don't ignore a developing performance problem 🗣️
- Don't fear that your employee will be insulted by a supervisor referral to the EAP



How to Refer

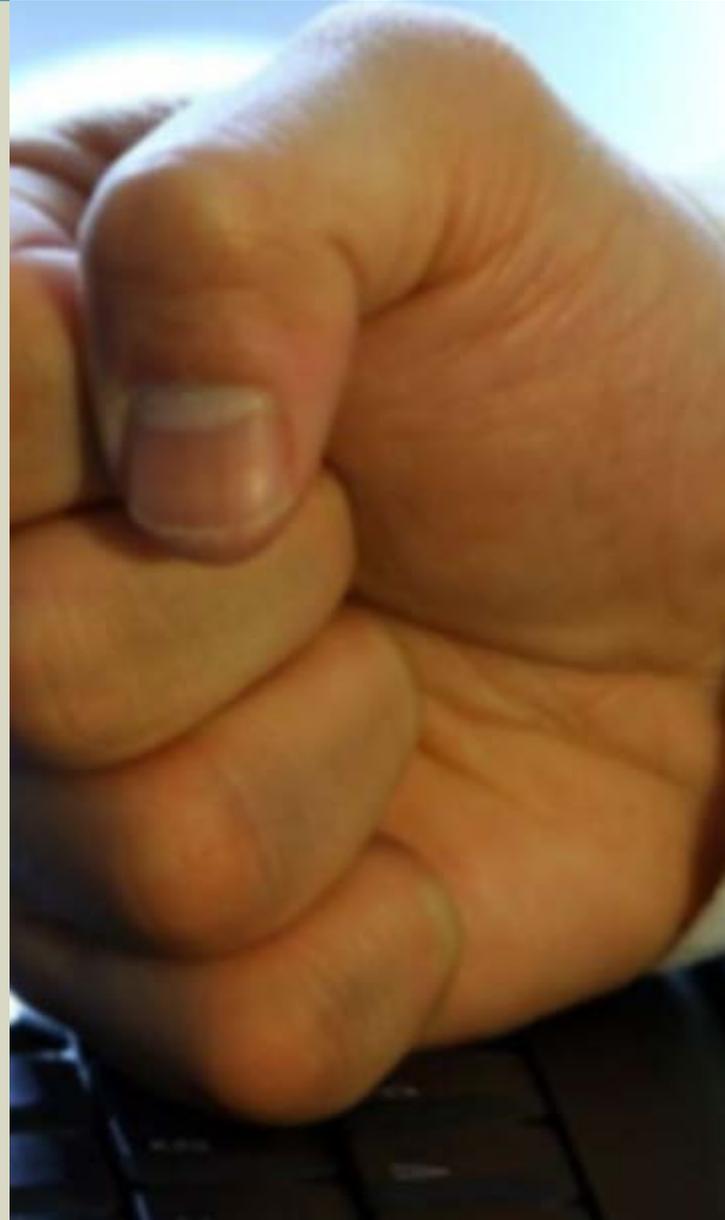
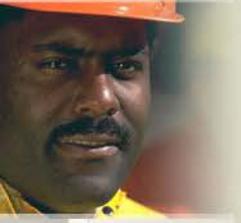
- A supervisor referral is based upon job performance issues, not upon the supervisor's belief in the existence of a personal problem 📢
- The rationale for supervisor referral to the EAP is always based upon legitimate concerns of the employer, i.e. performance problems



When to Refer

Some problems may meet the criteria for immediate referral to the EAP, for example:

- inappropriate behavior 🗣️
- violation of the drug and alcohol policy
- violence
- sexual harassment



When to Refer (cont'd)



Other problems may warrant a strong suggestion of self-referral, for example:

- Being affected by a critical incident
- Death of a coworker, etc.



Encourage an employee to use the EAP as a self-referral if the employee discloses personal problems

- This helps you avoid becoming involved (but is not a supervisor referral)
- 



It's True

- If you enable an employee with a performance problem, a personal problem may grow worse, and it may become more difficult to treat 
- Refer employees early before performance problems, personal problems, and your relationship with your employee grow worse



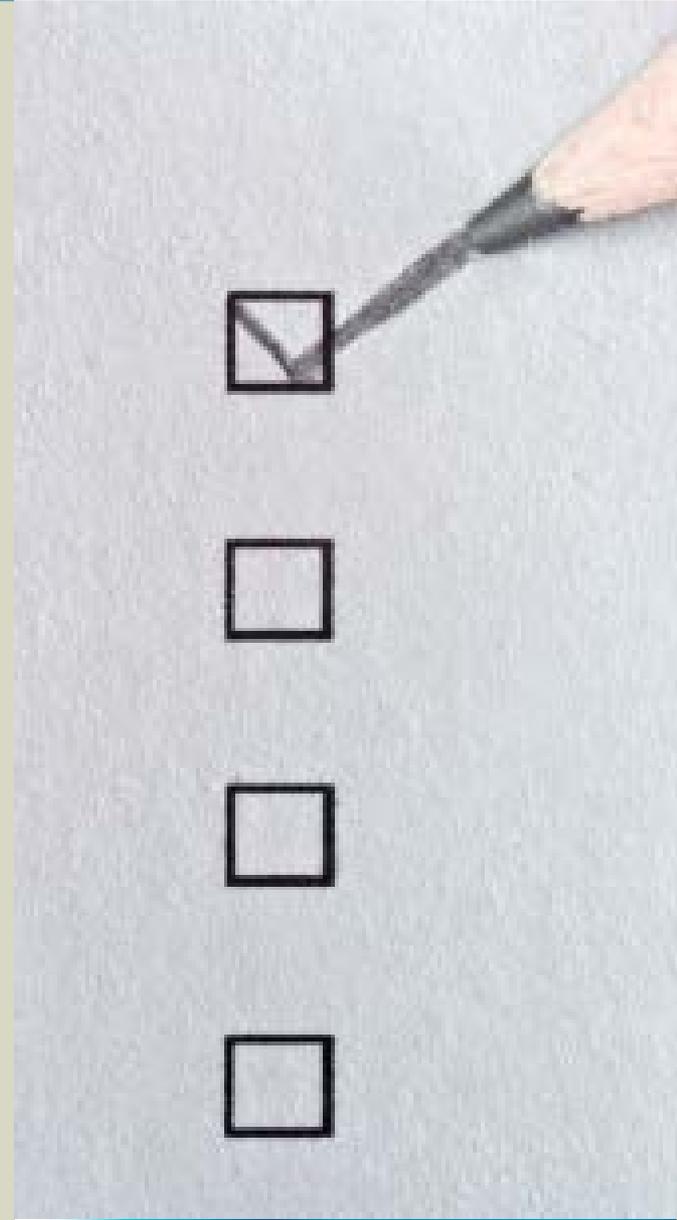
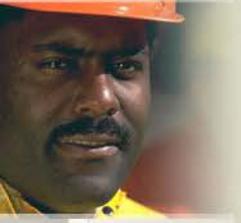
It's True (cont'd)

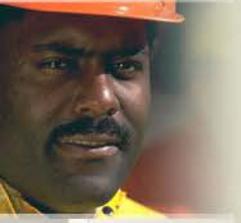


A supervisor referral is a formal step in attempting to correct performance, including:



1. Telling your employee you are making a supervisor referral to the EAP and why
2. Communicating the nature of the performance issues to the EAP in writing
3. Asking the employee to sign a release so you will have information about participation and follow-through with the EAP and its recommendations





Observing Performance ...

Observing Performance

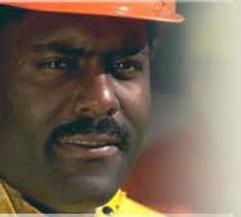
Observing performance is important prior to constructing documentation



- Be alert to a decline or undesirable changes in your employee's performance



Observing Performance (cont'd)



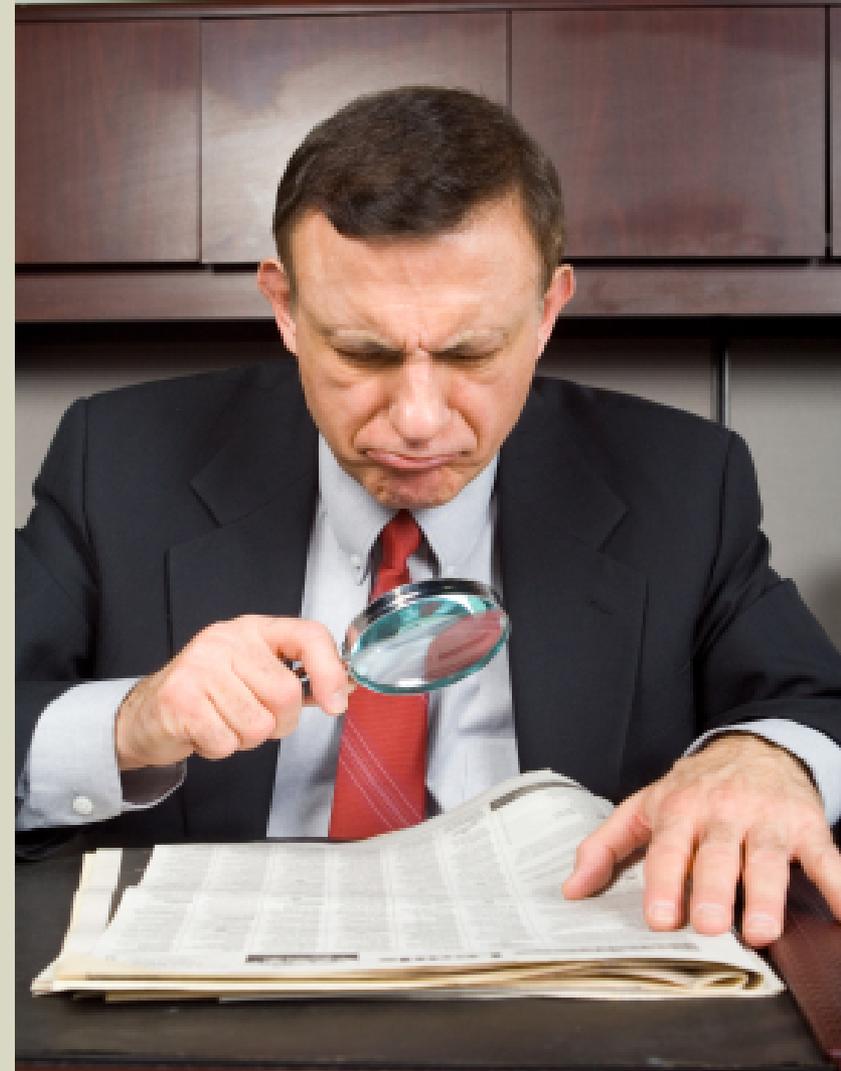
The essential duties, functions, and behavioral expectations of one's position are the legitimate concern of the employer, and are typically evaluated, including:

- Quality of Work 📢
- Attendance and Tardiness
- Conduct and Appearance
- Attitude and Demeanor
- Availability to Perform One's Duties



Do's and Don'ts

- Don't participate in armchair diagnosis of employees
- Do not “analyze” their performance troubles to determine personal causes 🗣️
- Do not “rule out” a personal problem, and unwittingly decide that the EAP could not help the employee



Do's and Don'ts (cont'd)



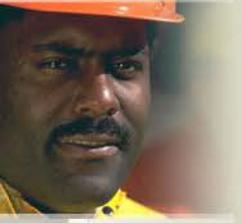
It is okay to ask an employee what is causing a performance problem – this is not acting like an armchair diagnostician

- However, it is important not to **discuss** the personal problem if one is disclosed

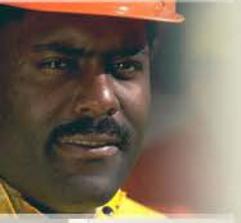


If you know your employee well, it is tempting to analyze behavior and involve yourself in his or her personal problems

- This is a form of enabling, and it reduces the likelihood that your employee will use the EAP



Caution!



Never send an employee home alone who does not appear to be in control of his or her behavior, or has made suicidal or homicidal threats

- When in doubt, ask the EAP or another designated person within your organization who handles emergencies for guidance, or contact the police
- Know how your organization wants you to respond so you are prepared in the event of such a crisis

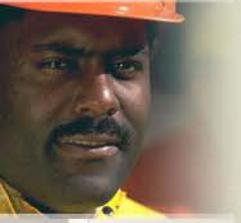


It's True

High tolerance to alcohol is normal for alcoholics – they may appear sober, when in fact they are intoxicated

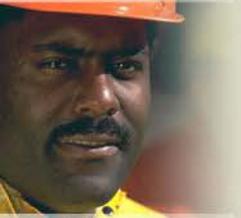
- This leads some people to believe that a person 🗣️ with alcohol on their breath can drive a car or perform other functions





Documentation ...

Documentation



– These principles are easily forgotten or ignored by supervisors, thereby making it difficult for an organization to act on the documentation day's financial receipts."

– Without effective documentation, it is difficult to motivate or guide employees to improve their performance, and difficult to safely administer disciplinary actions without legal risk.

BETTER: "The employee could not enter the amount of daily receipts in the ledger. This caused a delay in reporting the monthly financial performance of the work unit."

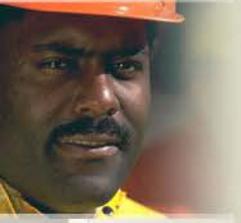


Documentation Issue ...

- Documentation by supervisors is frequently deemed useless if it does not describe performance or behavior issues clearly, but only judges character 🐛
- Effective documentation of behavior, work outcomes, or the impact of behavior on the organization is what makes a response by the organization possible



Documentation (cont'd)



Make documentation open and available for your employee to see
– don't keep a hidden file or secret notes



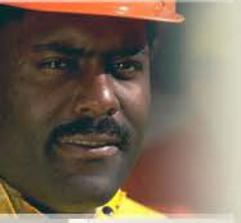
- Letting the employee know what is being documented can motivate change rapidly



Documentation (cont'd)

Record positive information about your employee when documenting job performance problems

- This will help you  appear as an objective supervisor if your documentation is ever questioned during appeals, grievances, or legal proceedings



What to Document

Document:

- Discussions
- Encounters
- Actions
- Steps taken with employees 🗣️

Also document verbal warnings and conferences

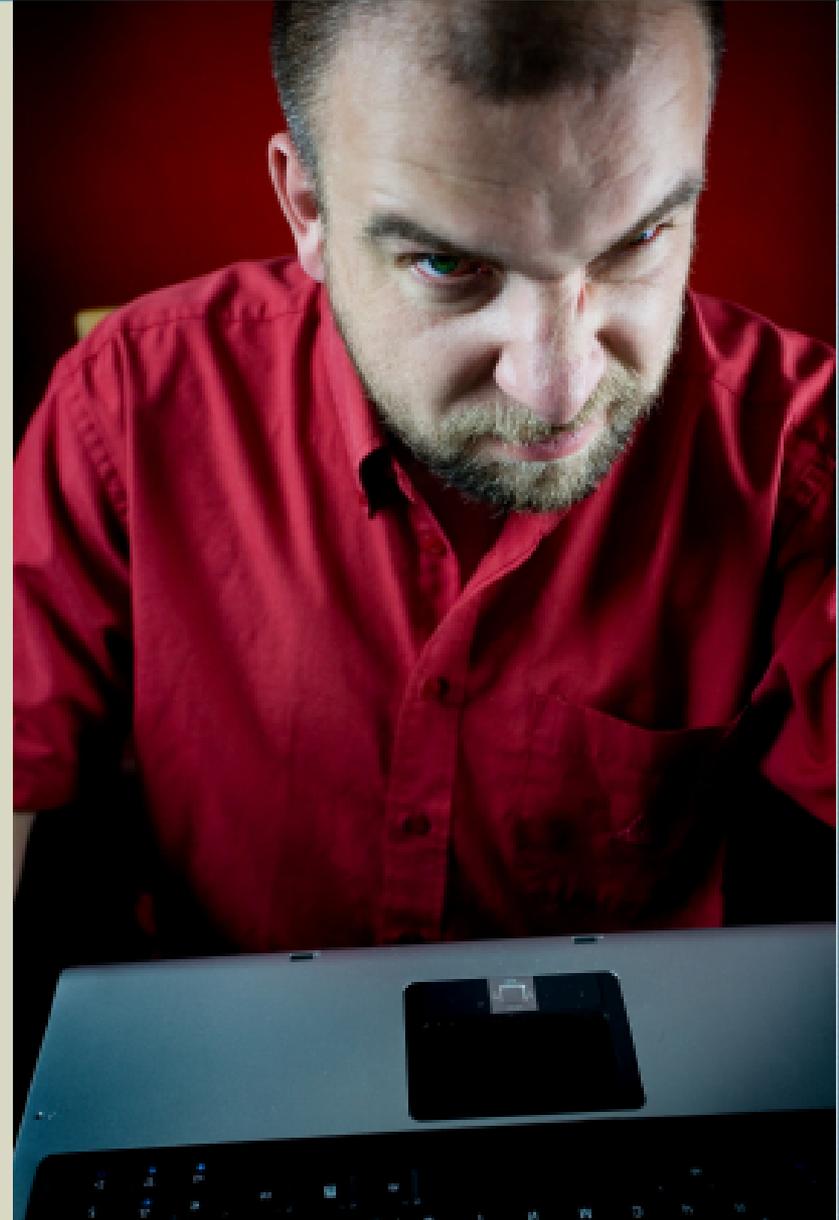
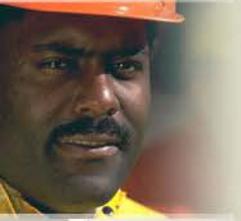
Use a list to help you identify what can be documented



How to Document

Avoid emotional or subjective language when constructing documentation

- THINK: Am I using language in my documentation that is measurable and “describes,” not “interprets” unacceptable behavior?



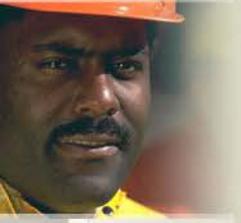
In Case of a Transfer...

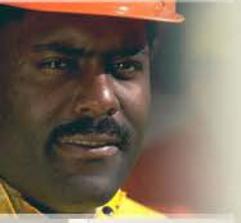
- An employee may transfer to another part of the organization when having difficulty with performance – possibly to avoid consequences
- This is sometimes called 📣 “making a geographic cure”
- Consider whether circumstances make it appropriate or helpful to transfer documentation to the new supervisor



It's True

- You may think or feel that an employee's performance is irresponsible, dishonest etc., but be sure to document the performance issue clearly
- Stay away from emotions and judgments in your documentation in lieu of the facts





Constructive Confrontation...

Constructive Confrontation

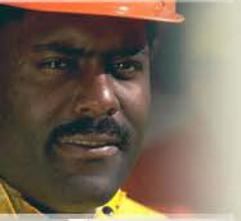
It's about success!

- Discussing performance problems usually leads to self-correction

Chronic personal problems will come back ...



- Self-correction may only last a few days or weeks;
- Urgency may contribute to control over symptoms.



How Employees Respond



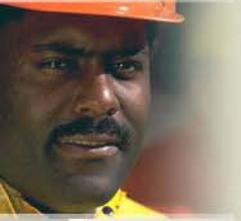
- Employees may get help for personal problems immediately without your knowing it.



- Others try harder to use willpower while remaining in denial that a personal problem exists.

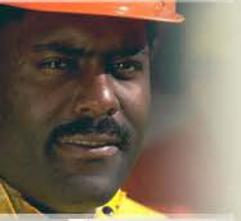


- Some employees will never seek help without the possibility, or certainty of disciplinary action.



Common Misconceptions

- An employee does not have to “want help” before a referral to the EAP can work
- The requirement of 🗣️ of “wanting” help first, before one can be helped, is a myth about the helping process



Steps in Confrontation

Be direct and formal in your discussion with your employee

Ask why performance problems are continuing, and what the employee believes is wrong



- If personal, recommend the EAP
- If work-related, consider an appropriate intervention or response

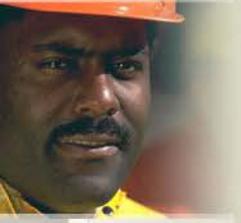


Steps in Confrontation (cont'd)

Confronting your employee immediately after a performance-related incident is helpful

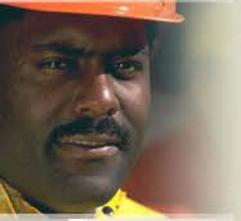
- Reduces denial
- Facilitates a constructive meeting that will motivate your employee

State your observations and use your documentation in your corrective interview



Steps in Confrontation (cont'd)

- Make an agreement with your employee that specifies “what” and “when” improvements in performance will be forthcoming 📢
- Schedule a date for a follow-up meeting



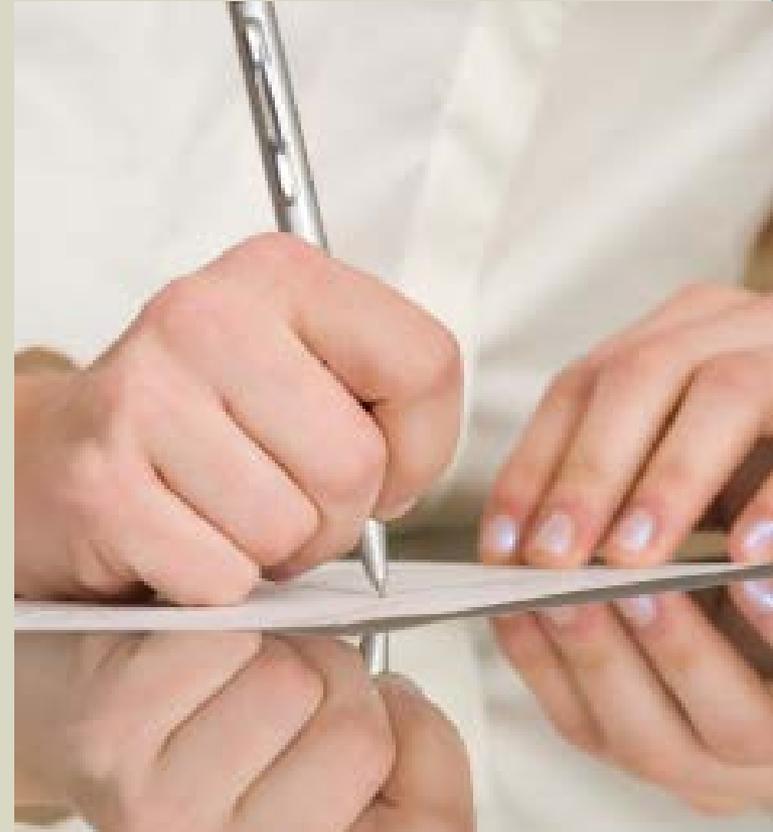
Outline for a Corrective Letter



1. Statement of specific concern about job performance problem:

- Quality of work, attendance, availability, conduct, behavior 📢
- Include specifics: what happened, when, dates, times, etc.

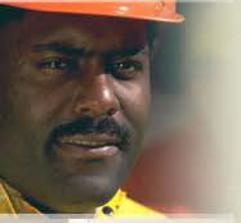
2. Remind employee about prior conversations or discussions concerning performance issues, and when these occurred



Outline for a Corrective Letter

(cont'd)

3. Statement of specific negative impact or consequences for the performance problem(s) stated in #1
4. Statement of what changes are required and when these changes should occur
5. Statement of possible consequences, administrative actions, or disciplinary steps if problems continue



Outline for a Corrective Letter

(cont'd)

6. Statement asking employee to speak with you to clarify anything in corrective memo relative to changes requested in paragraph #3
7. Statement of support and value – mention positive performance elements of employee (what is done well, skills, etc.) but emphasize need for change
 - Mention resources available to help employee with correcting problem, if applicable



Outline for a Corrective Letter

(cont'd)

8. Statement recommending employee contact the EAP based upon the job performance problem(s) in case a personal problem is contributing to the performance problems

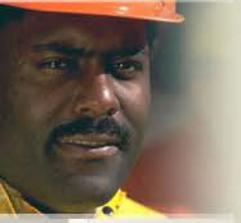
- DO NOT ALLUDE TO  YOUR BELIEFS ABOUT THE EXISTENCE OF A PERSONAL PROBLEM
- Insert the name and phone number of the EA professional to whom you spoke – will facilitate follow-through



Outline for a Corrective Letter

(cont'd)

9. Supervisor's plan for follow-up
 - Provide date when this will occur
 - Be specific about when you will speak with the employee again to see how things are going
10. Thank the employee  for his or her attention to the matter and end on a positive note
11. Send a copy to the next level supervisor, as necessary; send or fax a copy to the EAP



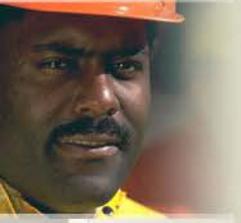


Referral to the EAP ...

Referral to the EAP

If possible, consult with the EAP prior to making a supervisor referral,

- Without written information, the EA professional is at a disadvantage. 🗨️
- Interview may be less effective because the employee is not forthcoming about his/her problems



Referral to the EAP (cont'd)

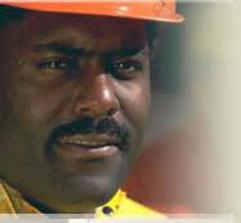
Tell your employee that you are making a supervisor referral to the EAP, and that you are basing the referral on performance problems

- Be specific, tell your employee that you have made the EAP aware of the performance issues



Reference your documentation and past discussions with your employee

- These should not be a surprise
- Appear supportive, not angry
- Act hopeful, not cynical



Referral to the EAP (cont'd)



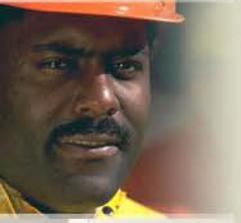
Remind the employee that the EAP is confidential



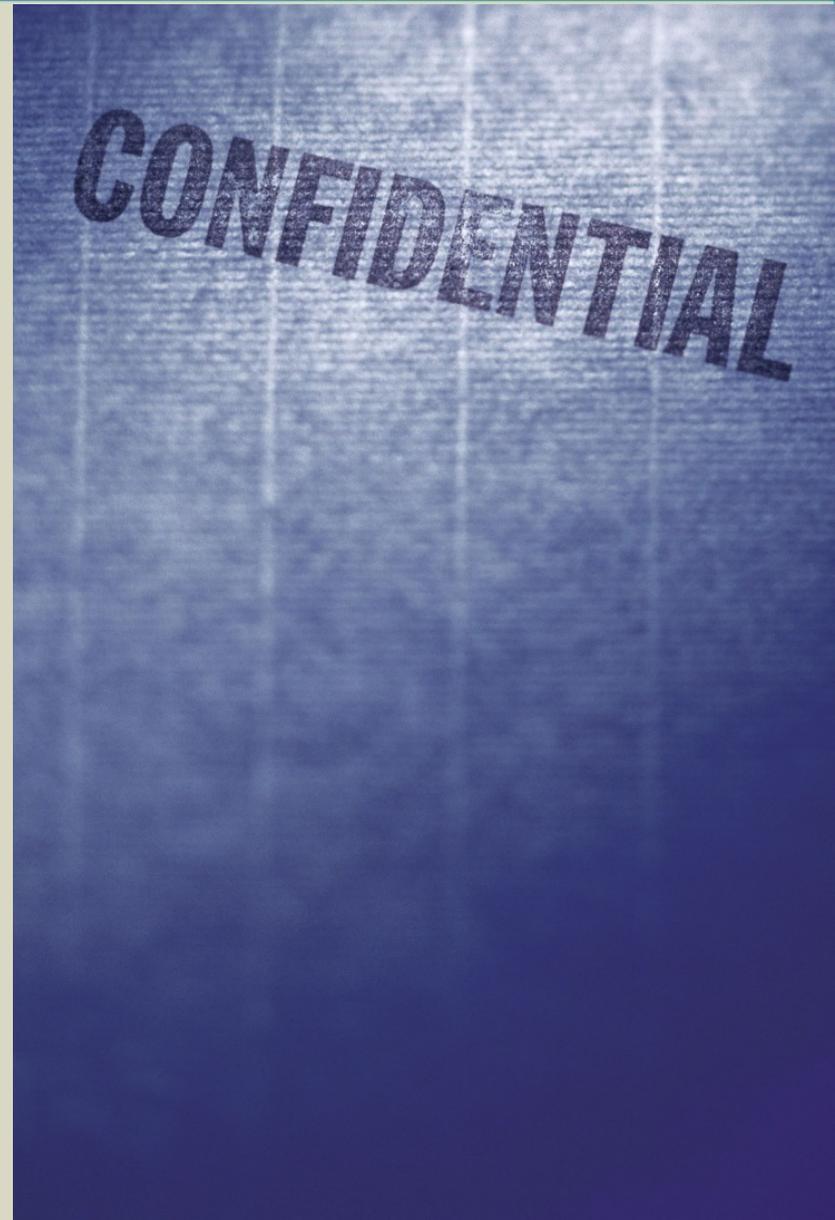
- Ask your employee to sign a release



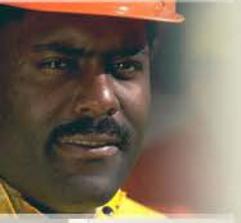
- Tell the employee that the EAP will not provide personal information 



- Ask the employee if he or she will accept the referral



Referral to the EAP (cont'd)



Let the employee know that participation in an EAP cannot result in loss of promotional opportunities or jeopardize one's job security

If your employee does not accept an EAP referral, remind the employee that he or she could be subject to disciplinary action if performance problems continue

- Do not threaten disciplinary action you will not or cannot carry out



It's True

Do not discuss the referral of your employee with others, especially coworkers

- You must be cautious about improper disclosure of your employee's personal information

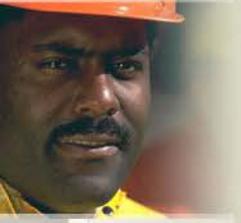


Do not place information in a personnel file about the employee's participation in the EAP

Such actions can contribute to the perception that the EAP is not a safe source of help



Tip



- After referring your employee, expect the EAP to confirm attendance and agreement to follow through with its recommendations
- Do not expect to receive  personal information about your employee
- If the EAP does not call you, then you should call the EAP

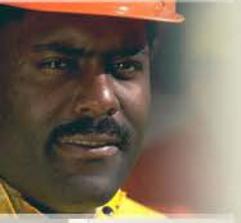
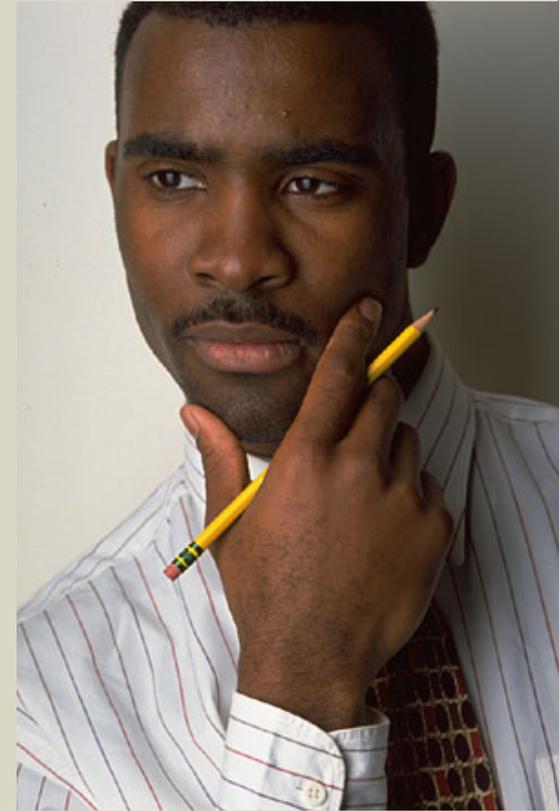


Tip (cont'd)

If the EAP cannot communicate with you about your employee, the employee may not have gone to the EAP, or may not have signed a release

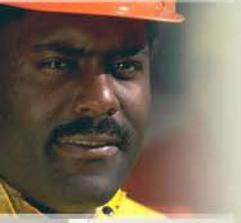


- Continue to focus on job performance and act accordingly
- Do not become frustrated with the EAP, or believe your “hands are tied” and that you can’t act



After the Referral

- Monitoring your employee after making a referral to the EAP reinforces progress in improving performance
- It also helps your employee remain motivated and participate in treatment or counseling recommended by the EAP

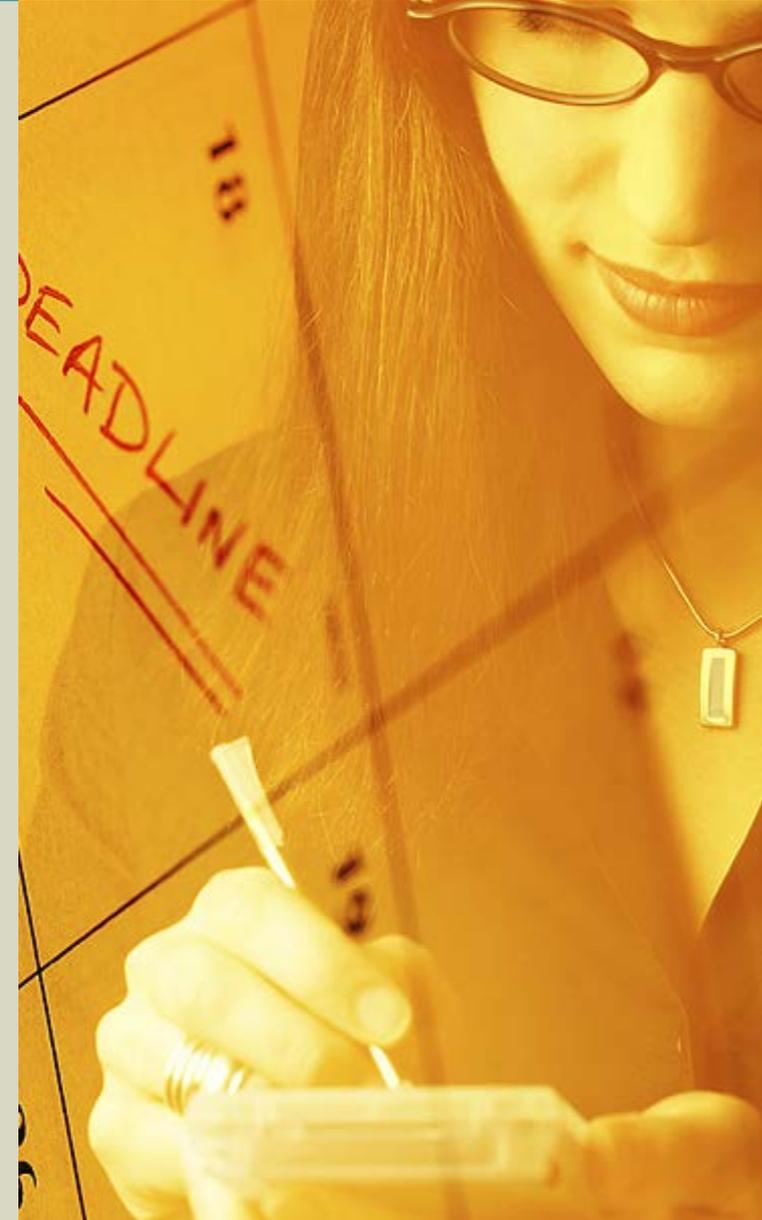


Monitoring Steps

Decide upon a date and time to meet and discuss progress in improving performance

- Do not discuss the employee's personal issues
- Arranging several follow-up dates and times in the future provides a constructive sense of urgency to follow through and improve performance

Expect the EAP to call you if your employee misses follow-up appointments or stops following through with its recommendations (usually precedes a return to job performance problems)

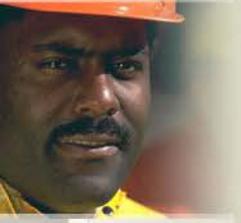


Monitoring Steps (cont'd)

If performance problems return, notify the EAP

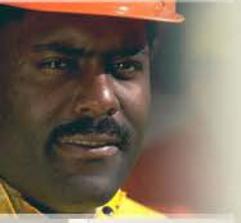
- Consider what disciplinary or administrative actions are appropriate
- Consider whether there has been a general trend toward improvement 📈

Praise your employee for improving performance, but be mindful of any return of performance problems



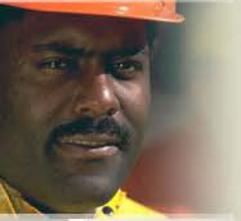
It's True

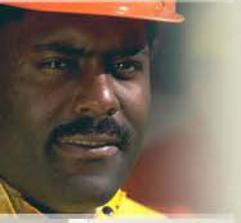
- If your employee was treated for alcoholism or an addictive disease, you may be aware of it
- Remember that a relapse (a return to drinking or using drugs) is possible 📢
- Relapse does not mean failure, but intervention must be quick and certain
- A referral back to the EAP is necessary in the event of relapse or a return to performance problems



Tip

- Refer to your organization's policies or agreement with your employee (if possible)
- If in doubt about what to do, note the general trend in improvement of your employee's performance 📈
- Don't forget to ask for help, either from the EAP or your HR representative





End