

Drug-Free Workplace

Building Effective  
Teams

Managing Individual  
Performance

Developing  
Supervisory Skills

Improving Meetings

Resolving Conflict

Workplace Diversity

Interviewing Applicants

Developing/Refining  
Mission Statements

Preventing Sexual  
Harassment

Preventing Workplace  
Violence

Developing Strategy

Overcoming Negative  
Attitudes & Behaviors

Confronting Employee  
Performance Issues

Effective Listening

Motivating &  
Empowering Others



The Village Employee Assistance Program  
**Supervisor's Guide**

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*“Seeking help was the best thing I ever did, though very hard. I want you to know how much I appreciate the program.”*

# Introduction

## Welcome to The Village Business Institute's (VBI) Employee Assistance Program

Every supervisor and manager has a profound impact on the health and well-being of individual employees and the organization for which they work. As a manager of people, processes, and priorities, your work directly affects organizational and individual performance, productivity, goals and results. Your job and its responsibilities are key in managing the most important asset for any employer—its employees and the human capital they represent.

Your company has chosen to incorporate an Employee Assistance Program into its organization because it values the well-being of its employees, and to provide you with professional support in maintaining a healthy and productive work environment. Part of our job at VBI is to make your job easier—to be by your side when you encounter one of the many challenges that supervisors and managers are faced with regularly.

The challenges found in today's workplace are considerable:

- At least 10 to 20 percent of any workforce is facing significant personal problems which affect their personal lives and job performance.
- Depression is estimated to cost employers \$44 billion annually.
- Workplace absenteeism causes more than \$65 billion in lost wages annually.
- Rising health care and benefit costs affect employers, employees, and their families.
- The turnover costs for one employee is between 75% and 150% of the cost of their annual salary plus benefits.
- An estimated 500 million workdays are lost annually due to alcoholism.
- Problems related to alcohol and drug abuse cost American businesses roughly \$81 billion in lost productivity yearly.

Fortunately, many of these problems can be resolved by utilizing services provided by VBI. Our goal is to help employers and employees proactively solve issues before they become personal or organizational liabilities.

VBI provides an avenue of help for employees with personal, relationship, financial, or legal problems that are affecting their performance at work. This guide has been developed for your benefit, to help you make the most of the professional services provided by VBI. The guide presents information specific to your role as a supervisor, to provide you with professional support in helping employees and their family members.

As a supervisor, you play an important role in helping your organization successfully use EAP by facilitating access to EAP services for your employees. Promotional materials such as posters, flyers, newsletters, and EAP wallet cards are available to assist you in this. An orientation CD which explains the EAP benefit is also available. Please contact us whenever you need more of these materials.

**For more information,  
go to [www.VillageEAP.com](http://www.VillageEAP.com),  
or call (800) 627-8220.**

*"I was impressed  
with how easy  
this program was  
to use!"*

# What is The Village Business Institute's (VBI) Employee Assistance Program?

The Village Business Institute's (VBI) Employee Assistance Programs is a *confidential, independent service* that provides professional guidance in a variety of areas, such as:

## **Relationship Issues**

Marriage/Couple Conflicts  
Parent/Child Conflicts  
Single Parent Challenges  
Coping with Older Parents  
Children's Issues  
Sexuality Issues  
Two-Career Families  
Co-dependency

## **Drug and Alcohol Abuse**

Kids and Alcohol/Drugs  
Prevention Education  
Assessment/Evaluation  
Post-Treatment Counseling  
Intensive Family Education  
DOT Compliance

## **Workplace Issues**

Workplace Conflict  
Coping with Change  
Job Stress Coping Skills

## **Financial Counseling and Legal Consultation**

Credit Information/Evaluation  
Debt Management  
Budget Counseling and Education  
Compulsive Spending/Gambling  
Bankruptcy Consultation  
Retirement Issues  
Assessment of Legal Problems

## **Emotional Health**

Personal Adjustment Problems  
Emotional Problems  
Depression  
Anxiety  
Suicide Issues  
Guilt, Shame and Self-Esteem Issues  
Compulsive Behaviors

A household is a closely integrated system; anything one member experiences can affect the rest of the system. Therefore, our Employee Assistance Program offers assistance to members of an employee's household. Employees are covered throughout their employment and for 90 days after employment ends.

In-office and web-based counseling services are available to your employees. For more information on how they can personally access services, please see page 28.

*"The commitment of the people  
at The Village makes it easier  
to go in and talk."*

# EAP contract options

Services Provided	EAP Full Service	EAP Performance	EAP Options
<b>Household Aggregate Model:</b> Four sessions per household member. No household will have less than eight sessions. Sessions may be combined by the household and used as they see fit.	✓	✓	✓
Highest confidentiality	✓	✓	✓
Face-to-face counseling	✓	✓	✓
Web-based counseling	✓	✓	✓
Financial counseling	✓	✓	✓
Legal counseling	✓	✓	✓
24/7 crisis counseling	✓	✓	✓
CD evaluations and education	✓	✓	✓
Wellness, education programs	✓	✓	✓
Personal health risk assessment	✓	✓	✓
Nutrition Counseling	✓	✓	✓
Website (unlimited access)	✓	✓	✓
Employee newsletters	Monthly	Monthly	Quarterly
Supervisor newsletters	✓	✓	✓
Posters (hard copy), e-promo	✓	✓	✓
Employee orientation	✓	✓	✓
Supervisor orientation	✓	✓	✓
Unlimited access to Supervisor Helpline	✓	✓	✓
Formal referral for job performance	✓	✓	Purchased separately
Formal referral for DFWP/DOT	✓	✓	Purchased separately
Customized employee and management training—two hours per 100 employees	✓	✓	Purchased separately
E-training	✓	✓	Purchased separately
Consulting	Purchased separately	Purchased separately	Purchased separately
Executive Level Services	Purchased separately	Purchased separately	Purchased separately
Concierge Services	Purchased separately	Purchased separately	Purchased separately
Utilization reports	✓	✓	✓
Crisis Management Services	Covered under training hours	Covered under training hours	✓

# Identifying troubled employees

It is a supervisor's job to ensure that staff are working up to their capacity. This starts with a manager learning how to determine who needs help and the kinds of help needed.

## Marginal Performance

If the performance of an employee is marginal, then find out why. Reasons may include confusion about expectations, lack of skills or knowledge, lack of motivation or commitment, confusing goals, incompetent co-workers, or ineffective systems.

## How to Spot Drug or Alcohol Problems

Employees abusing drugs or alcohol will eventually do poor work. Some early clues of abuse might include lack of alertness, diminished coordination or impaired judgment in decision-making. Other signs are memory lapses, mood swings, anger, apathy, inability to stay on task, abuse of break times, avoidance of co-workers, absenteeism, tardiness, procrastination, inattention to details and extreme sensitivity to criticism.

## Personal Problems

An employee's job can suffer because of personal worries. There may be marital problems, difficulties with children or financial problems. Job-related stress can also cause noticeable changes in an employee.

## When to Step In

If the employee is performing inadequately, appears to be showing signs of drug dependency or is having personal problems that are affecting job performance, then it is time to step in.

- Proceed quickly before the problem magnifies. Observe and document.

- Start with an informal talk about job expectations. Progress with formal performance management as needed.
- Give specific examples of changes that have occurred, such as diminished alertness or increased absenteeism.
- Don't try to diagnose the problem. Instead, maintain focus on job performance and consider using the Formal Supervisor Referral process (see pages 6–11).
- Seek assistance and input from Human Resources and consider a referral to The Village Business Institute's (VBI) Employee Assistance Program. Obtaining help, as an employee, is voluntary in most cases. Satisfactory performance is mandatory.

If the employee's work fails to improve, seek help from VBI and your Human Resources department. Your VBI representative will work with HR or other representatives of your company to help you proceed according to company policy. It is important to be fair and consistent in treating the employee and in accurately documenting important information. Continue to follow up on the problem until there is some resolution.

## When the Employee Seeks Help

Give support to any employee who accepts help. If the employee needs to be gone during work hours and that is an option, give assurance that the absence will remain confidential. Ask if help is needed with insurance, sick leave, or personal leave. Such support is critical.

*"Prior to my visit, I was feeling guilty and angry. Now, I feel that my issues are being handled with caring and professional counselors."*

# Supervisor/Human Resource HelpLine

The Village Business Institute's (VBI) Employee Assistance Program offers supervisors constructive ways of dealing with substandard job performance. Our Supervisor/Human Resource HelpLine and Supervisor Referrals provide opportunities to resolve problems in the workplace before more serious actions become necessary.

The VBI Supervisor/Human Resource HelpLine is a professional service that is available to all supervisors, managers, and human resources professionals whose organizations provide the benefits of VBI.

The VBI Supervisor/Human Resource HelpLine is staffed by trained professionals available for consultation on a variety of human resource and workplace issues. Simply call 1-800-627-8220 (toll-free) and ask for the VBI Supervisor/Human Resource HelpLine. You may also contact us via email from the Contact Us form on our website: [www.VillageEAP.com](http://www.VillageEAP.com). You can discuss your situation, problem-solve possible options and solutions, and ask questions.

Some of the issues supervisors have discussed in the past include:

- Constructive Confrontation of Employee Performance Problems
- Hiring and Firing Procedures
- Drug-Free Workplace/Department of Transportation Procedures
- Employee Discipline
- Workplace Harassment Issues
- Job Safety Concerns
- Analyzing, Resolving, and Preventing Workplace Conflicts

We recognize that supervisors often find themselves facing unfamiliar challenges in their roles as managers and work group leaders. The VBI Supervisor/Human Resource HelpLine is available for consultation on any situation you may encounter in the workplace.

**For more information,  
go to [www.VillageEAP.com](http://www.VillageEAP.com),  
or call (800) 627-8220**



*“It was great to have someone to listen to my problems, and help me to resolve them.”*

# Supervisor referrals

Supervisor referrals are a resource for supervisors in addressing employee behaviors in the workplace. If just one of your employees is struggling with work performance issues, others in the group can be affected. Morale problems and job stress occur when one employee is not completing his or her share of the work. Your own stress in dealing with troubled employees can also impact the work group. Referring employees to The Village Business Institute's (VBI) Employee Assistance Program is an option which demonstrates care and concern for employees, and can help establish your own peace of mind in knowing that, as a supervisor, you have made every effort to help. Supervisors can encourage employees to utilize the EAP through informal referrals, and a more formal supervisor referral process is available. Both types of referrals are described below. Please contact VBI staff if you are unsure which type of referral is appropriate.

## Informal Supervisor Referrals

Although personal stress can negatively affect an employee's performance on the job, this may not always be the case. Employees occasionally inform supervisors voluntarily when they are experiencing significant problems or stress in their personal lives, usually with the concern that their personal issues may impact their work behavior at

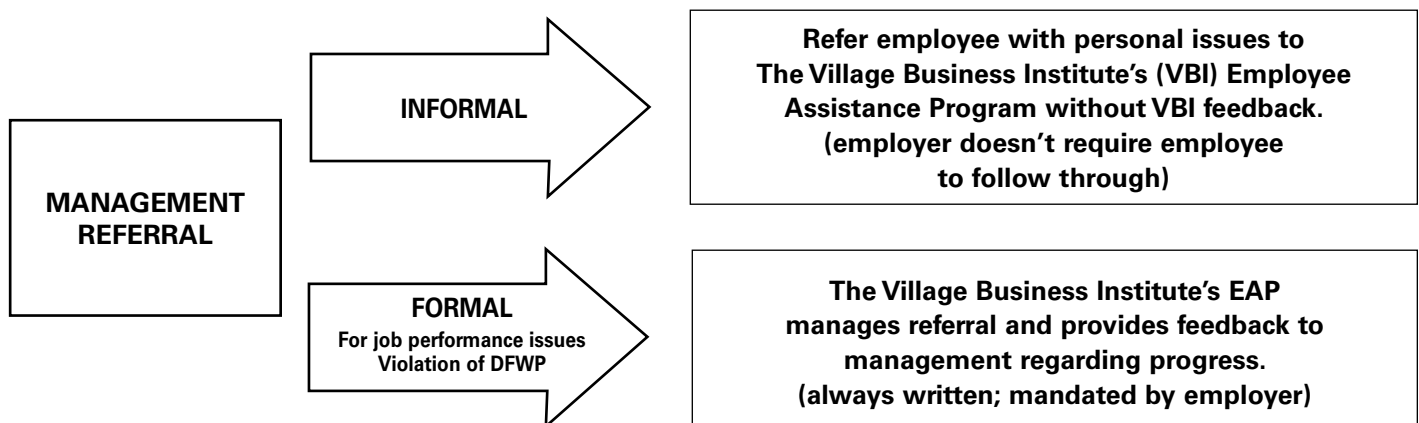
some point in the future. In instances such as these, where employees' present work behavior is unimpaired, informal supervisor referrals to VBI are appropriate. Informal referrals are a proactive approach to avoiding potential difficulties in the workplace when supervisors are made aware of employees' troublesome personal situations.

### The following steps are suggested when making an informal referral to a VBI Employee Assistance Program:

1. Thank the employee for bringing the issue to your attention, and assure them that their work behavior is unimpaired. (If there is impairment, review policies for formal referrals described below or contact VBI for assistance.)
2. Remind the employee of their EAP benefit and encourage them to call 1-800-627-8220 for assistance.

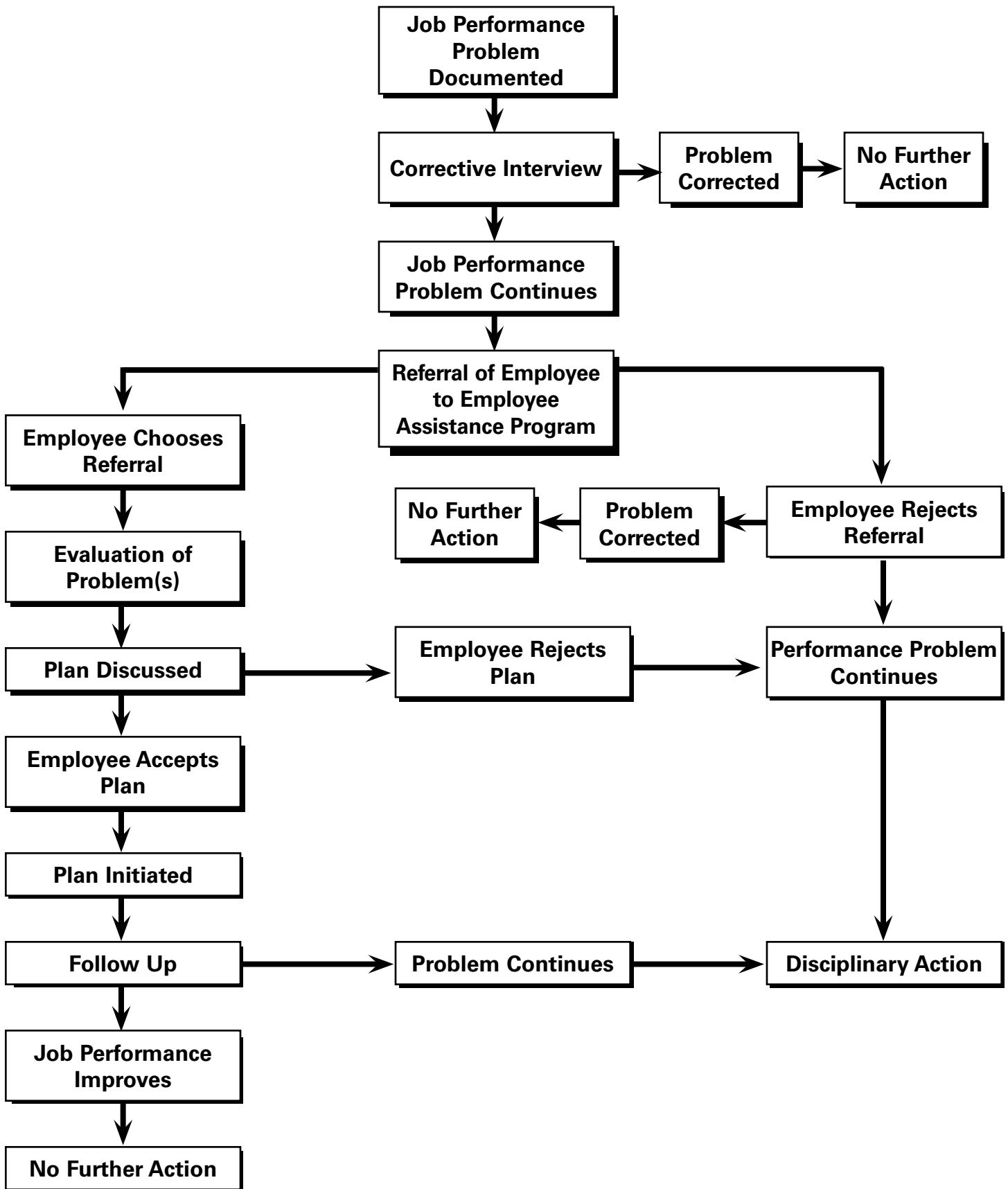
## Formal Supervisor Referrals

When job performance has deteriorated, a formal supervisor referral to VBI may be appropriate. The chart on page 7 demonstrates the use of a formal supervisor referral. See pages 9 and 11 for sample forms. The form on page 9 is used for referrals for job performance. The form on page 11 is to be specifically used for Drug-Free Workplace/ Department of Transportation violations.





# Formal supervisor referral process



# Making a formal supervisor referral for job performance issues

1. Call The Village Business Institute (VBI) Employee Assistance Program before beginning the referral process at **1-800-627-8220**. Ask to speak to a VBI staff member regarding a supervisory referral.
2. Complete the top section of the form with the identifying information requested. Include the date of last employee performance evaluation.
3. Complete the section "REASON FOR REFERRAL" which describes the employee's job performance issues that led to the referral. Include as much information as possible to help our professionals understand the work problem in question.
4. In the section "ADDITIONAL COMMENTS BY REFERRING SUPERVISOR," please document all discussions with the employee regarding the referral issue. It is very important to include information regarding the employee's current status with the company. Include conditions for continued employment, such as the time frame in which you expect to see improvement, and any pending disciplinary action. Attach additional comments if necessary and copies of any relevant documentation (memos to the employee, written warnings, specific policy violations, etc.) which may be helpful to make the counselor aware of the issues at hand and specific performance goals for the employee.
5. **In the section "EMPLOYEE SIGNATURE AND RELEASE OF INFORMATION," have the employee print their name where directed, and sign and date the form in the appropriate blanks.** Be sure to explain this section of the form to the employee, e.g., their signature indicates both their understanding of the situation and allows for the release of information. Information to be released is described in this section of the form. The items listed are the only information which will be released by us back to the employer. No personal information obtained during assessment or treatment will be released. Sign the form in the space designated for "HR/Supervisor Signature." This provides confirmation that you have explained the relevant policies and procedures, and that the employee has indicated their understanding.
6. **The employee is then responsible for contacting VBI to schedule the initial appointment.** The Agreement form on p. 12 clarifies employee responsibilities and should be reviewed with the employee, signed, and sent with the other required forms to VBI.
7. Email to [referral@thevillagefamily.org](mailto:referral@thevillagefamily.org) or fax signed forms to (701) 451-5058 for processing. Upon receipt of the completed form, VBI staff will also sign the form.
8. We will notify you in writing about the status of the referral and the employee's compliance with treatment recommendations. No other information will be released to you without the employee's written consent.

*"My concerns were completely validated.  
I felt very lucky to have such excellent guidance."*

**ATTENTION SUPERVISOR:** A first step in making a successful referral is to call The Village Business Institute's (VBI) Employee Assistance Program at 1-800-627-8220. We'll take you through the process of appropriately referring an employee. Completed forms can be emailed to [referral@thevillagefamily.org](mailto:referral@thevillagefamily.org) or faxed to (701) 451-5058

## FORMAL SUPERVISOR REFERRAL TO VBI FOR JOB PERFORMANCE ISSUES

Employee Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Employee's Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_  
Company Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Primary Contact/Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Ext. \_\_\_\_\_  
Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### REASON(S) FOR REFERRAL

Performance difficulties: (Please check all that apply.)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty working with others | <input type="checkbox"/> Unacceptable quantity of work |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unacceptable quality of work   | <input type="checkbox"/> Communications problems       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Safety violations              | <input type="checkbox"/> Leaving early                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Excessive absenteeism          | <input type="checkbox"/> Punctuality                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____                    |  |

Describe specific behavior changes necessary for improved performance: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### ADDITIONAL COMMENTS BY REFERRING SUPERVISOR

(Supervisor: Attach relevant documentation pertaining to employee job performance)

Above observations have been discussed on previous occasions?  Yes  No

If yes, list date of first discussion: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of second discussion: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe conditions for continued employment, disciplinary action pending, etc.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Employee Signature and Release of Information

By signing below, I \_\_\_\_\_, hereby authorize VBI program staff and the supervisor  
(print name)

listed above to exchange pertinent and relevant information regarding:

1. My not scheduling/scheduling of appointments through VBI.
2. Verification of my attendance at scheduled appointments.
3. Results and recommendations of my counseling or consultation through VBI.
4. Information regarding compliance with recommendations.
5. Program involvement dates and program completion information.

My signature also serves as acknowledgement that the relevant policies and procedures affecting me have been clearly explained to me.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Client/Employee Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

As a supervisor, I have explained the relevant policies and procedures described in this form. The employee has indicated his/her understanding of these issues.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Primary Contact/Supervisor Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
VBI Contact Person's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# Making a formal supervisor referral for drug-free workplace/D.O.T. issues

In addition to performance problems, employees can be referred to The Village Business Institute's (VBI) Employee Assistance Programs as a result of violations of Drug-Free Workplace Policy or Department of Transportation violations, if either of these apply to your company. Procedures for this are listed below.

1. Call VBI before beginning the referral process at **1-800-627-8220**.
2. Complete the top section of the form with the identifying information requested. Include the employee social security number.
3. Indicate if referral represents a violation of your company's Drug-Free Workplace Policy (DFWP) or a violation of D.O.T. rules and regulations. Please forward a copy of your DFWP.
4. For both DFWP and D.O.T. violations, indicate if there was a positive drug screen, the date of the positive screen, and the substance detected in the drug screen. If the violation did not involve a drug screen, please describe the nature of the violation. ***It is very important to include information regarding the employee's current status with the company.*** Indicate the conditions for continued employment. VBI staff can assist you with this.
5. In the section "EMPLOYEE SIGNATURE AND RELEASE OF INFORMATION," **have the employee print their name where directed, and sign and date the form in the appropriate blanks.** Be sure to explain this section of the form to the employee, e.g., their signature indicates both their understanding of the situation and allows for the release of information. Information to be released is described in this section of the form. The items listed are the only information which will be released by us back to the employer. No personal information obtained during assessment or treatment will be released. Sign the form in the space designated for "HR/Supervisor Signature." This provides confirmation that you have explained the relevant policies and procedures, and that the employee has indicated their understanding.
6. **The employee is then responsible for contacting VBI to schedule the initial appointment.** The Agreement form on p. 12 clarifies employee responsibilities and should be reviewed with the employee, signed, and sent with the other required forms to VBI.
7. Email to [referral@thevillagefamily.org](mailto:referral@thevillagefamily.org) or fax signed forms to (701) 451-5058 for processing. Upon receipt of the completed form, VBI staff will also sign the form.
8. We will notify you in writing about the status of the referral and the employee's compliance with treatment recommendations. No other information will be released to you without the employee's written consent.

*"Seeing a counselor and talking about my problems really took a great weight off my shoulders."*

**ATTENTION SUPERVISOR:** A first step in making a successful referral is to call The Village Business Institute's (VBI) Employee Assistance Program at 1-800-627-8220. We'll take you through the process of appropriately referring an employee. Completed forms can be emailed to [referral@thevillagefamily.org](mailto:referral@thevillagefamily.org) or faxed to (701) 451-5058

## FORMAL SUPERVISOR REFERRAL TO VBI FOR DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE / D.O.T. ISSUES

Employee Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Employee's Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

Company Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Contact/Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Ext. \_\_\_\_\_

Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Violation of Drug-Free Workplace Policy (Attach copy of company policy)

Violation of D.O.T. Rules and Regulations

Was there a positive drug screen?  Yes  No

If yes, date of positive drug screen: \_\_\_\_\_

Substance detected in screen: \_\_\_\_\_ Level: \_\_\_\_\_

If no, describe nature of violation: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Conditions for returning to work: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Employee Signature and Release of Information

By signing below, I \_\_\_\_\_ hereby authorize VBI program staff and the supervisor  
(print name)

listed above to exchange pertinent and relevant information regarding:

1. My drug and/or alcohol screening results.
2. Verification of my attendance of mandatory chemical dependency assessment.
3. Results and recommendations of my chemical dependency assessment.
4. Information regarding compliance with assessment recommendations.
5. Program involvement dates and program completion information.

My signature also serves as acknowledgement that the relevant policies and procedures affecting me as a result of a positive drug screen have been clearly explained to me.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Client/Employee Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

As a supervisor, I have explained the relevant policies and procedures described in this form. The employee has indicated his/her understanding of these issues.

\_\_\_\_\_  
HR/Supervisor Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
VBI Contact Person's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

#### *Notice to whomever disclosure is made concerning addiction records:*

This information has been disclosed to you from records protected by the Federal Confidentiality rules (42 CFR, Part 2). The federal rules prohibit you from making further disclosures of this information unless further disclosure is expressly permitted by the written consent of the person to whom it pertains or as otherwise permitted by 42 CFR, Part 2. A general authorization for the release of medical or other information is not sufficient for this purpose. The federal rules restrict any use of the information to criminally investigate or prosecute any alcohol or drug abuse patient.

**ATTENTION SUPERVISOR:** A first step in making a successful referral is to call The Village Business Institute's (VBI) Employee Assistance Program at 1-800-627-8220. We'll take you through the process of appropriately referring an employee. Completed forms can be emailed to [referral@thevillagefamily.org](mailto:referral@thevillagefamily.org) or faxed to (701) 451-5058

## AGREEMENT FORM

Employee Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Employee's Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_  
Company Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Referred By: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

### Employee Signature and Release of Information

By signing below, I \_\_\_\_\_ understand:

- It is my responsibility to contact The Village Business Institute (800-627-8220) to schedule my initial appointment with intake staff
- That I will be moved to a non-compliant status if I have not scheduled the initial appointment within one week of referral
- That my file will be closed with a non-compliant status if I have not scheduled the initial appointment within two weeks of referral
- It is my responsibility to schedule any/all follow-up appointments in a timely manner (usually two weeks)
- This formal referral will continue until my counselor/evaluator and/or my employer say I have reached the goals they have set for me
- My participation and cooperation is expected in this process

\_\_\_\_\_  
Client/Employee Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

*Notice to whomever disclosure is made concerning addiction records:*

This information has been disclosed to you from records protected by the Federal Confidentiality rules (42 CFR, Part 2). The federal rules prohibit you from making further disclosures of this information unless further disclosure is expressly permitted by the written consent of the person to whom it pertains or as otherwise permitted by 42 CFR, Part 2. A general authorization for the release of medical or other information is not sufficient for this purpose. The federal rules restrict any use of the information to criminally investigate or prosecute any alcohol or drug abuse patient.

# Training seminars

Supervisors and employees in any organization face multiple challenges as they strive to create a positive working environment, maintain high levels of work productivity, and find a balance between their work and personal lives.

Successful companies use training and development seminars as a proactive and preventive measure to help employees deal with challenges at work and at home, so they can maintain their productivity and remain committed to their employer.

## Training Formats

The Village Business Institute offers a variety of training formats including on-site sessions, live webinars, and online skill builders. On-site trainings and live webinars are customized to meet your organization's needs. A VBI professional will work with you to tailor sessions to meet your participants' specific needs. Many sessions can be designed as "Lunch and Learns" or one to four hour interactive programs—they can include a combination of lecture, discussion, experiential exercises, and/or visual aids such as PowerPoint and/or handouts.

In order to provide flexible, mobile, and cost-effective training, VBI has launched an online training solution. We provide top-notch courses that are interactive and engaging, and allow individuals to easily access these courses anywhere and anytime.

## Make a Request

To request a seminar (online or in person) for your employees, contact The Village Business Institute's Client Service Supervisor at 1-800-627-8220, or email us at [VBITraining@TheVillageFamily.org](mailto:VBITraining@TheVillageFamily.org).

Please allow at least four to six weeks notice to allow enough time to coordinate and organize an effective training seminar for your organization/team.

## Compliance Training:

- Drug-Free Workplace
- Reasonable Suspicion
- Preventing Harassment
- Handling Harassment Complaints
- Workplace Violence
- Bullying

## Supervisory Training & Development:

- Supervisory Basics
- Leading Effective Teams
- Developing the Leader in You
- Creating a Culture of Accountability
- Navigating Change in Teams & Throughout the Organization
- Motivate & Engage Your Employees
- Constructively Confronting Employee Performance Issues
- Performance Management
- Hiring the Right People
- Supervisor's Guide to the EAP

## Team Training & Development

- Conflict Resolution
- Intergenerational Teams
- Maintaining Personal & Professional Boundaries
- Dealing with Difficult Personalities
- Workplace Diversity Matters for All of Us
- Effective Communication Skills

## Employee Training & Development

- Overcoming Negative Attitudes
- Understanding Your Communication Style
- Serving the Difficult Customer
- Providing Exceptional Customer Service
- Professional Phone Skills & Email Etiquette

## Self-care & Wellness Training & Development

- Stress Management
- Holiday Stress
- Handling Personal Change
- Time Mastery
- Work/Life Balance
- Money Management
- Compassion Fatigue/Burnout
- Employee Orientation to the EAP

*"The presenter did an excellent job, she appeared very well qualified."*

# Observation and feedback

Observing work performance and providing regular feedback is a routine part of performance management. Effective feedback is based on observed and/or verifiable work-related behaviors, actions, statements, and results. This type of observation-based feedback helps employees sustain productivity, develop new skills, and improve performance when necessary.

## Observing Employee Performance

From the standpoint of performance management, observation involves noticing specific facts, events, or behaviors related to work performance and the results of work performance. Observations are the raw data upon which effective performance feedback is based. The purpose of observing employee behavior and the results of work performance is to identify and describe it in order to help the employee be successful and continue to develop his or her skills, knowledge, and experience.

When you make observations about the results of employee performance, the output employees generate and the impact of their work, you gather additional information to make both praise and constructive feedback more effective. Observations are to be the basis for feedback, and may also suggest actions that might be taken to support, develop or improve performance.

Feedback based on observed or verifiable data is more likely to influence employee behavior than feedback that cannot be supported by firsthand information. It is not always possible to observe employees at work, and it is very important to build occasions to observe their performance into your work day. In that way, you create opportunities to understand what they do, to talk with and get feedback from them, to see employees as they perform at their best and to recognize areas in which their performance could be improved.

## Behavioral Feedback

Feedback is influential. During the performance appraisal period, provide feedback about performance regularly. When employees receive feedback that is timely, frequent and specific, they are more likely to understand what is expected of them, to repeat successful performance and to improve their work when necessary.

Feedback describing observed or verifiable behavior and facts is different from feedback which evaluates the person based on assumptions, interpretations, generalizations and judgments about what the behavior or facts mean.

Some guidelines for providing behavioral feedback:

1. Behavioral feedback is to be based on specific, observable, and verifiable data and information, and delivered as close to the event or behavior as possible.

*I noticed that you arrived at 8:30 on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday rather than at 8:00.*

2. After describing your observations to the employee, ask for his or her input before you decide what the behavior means. For example, you may observe that an employee has been arriving late over a period of days. Before you decide the employee is being irresponsible, get more information. You may find there is a valid reason for the behavior or there are other factors which have contributed to your understanding.

*I'd like to talk with you about the reasons for your late arrival.*



## Observation and feedback *continued*

3. Discuss the impact of the performance or its consequences, but never make threats or promises of promotion. When an employee understands the impact of their performance, he or she will know why it is important.

*As a result, other staff had to leave their work to cover our service desk.*

Communicate by your words, body language and tone of voice that your intention is to be helpful when giving feedback. The goal of feedback is to reinforce or redirect performance so the employee can be successful.

Feedback about performance in need of improvement is best delivered in private to avoid embarrassment to the employee. Some people are also embarrassed when feedback about successful performance is given in front of others. Feedback is more effective when you know and respect the preferences of your employees.



Notes you make or records you keep about employee performance are best phrased in behavioral terms. Avoid statements that would imply subjective judgment or prejudice about the employee's personality, character, or motives. Encourage your employees to keep records of their own accomplishments.

It is recommended performance managers and employees exchange performance-related information throughout the review cycle. At these discussions, take the time to discuss accomplishments, needs for further training, and any problems or concerns. This practice will ensure that you address issues promptly and foster a problem-solving atmosphere in the workplace.

*“I felt VBI gave me honest advice that could help me, not just what I wanted to hear.”*

# Documenting Performance Problems

Addressing employee work performance problems is one of the most challenging responsibilities of being a supervisor. If you observe a decline in performance, it's important to keep a formal record of your concerns. Documentation is a useful tool that will help you to:

- Focus on the facts in an objective manner.
- Identify a possible pattern of behavior.
- Identify key problems.
- Determine when to address your concerns with the employee.
- Prepare for and conduct an effective constructive confrontation meeting.
- Help the employee recognize the problem and its severity by presenting the work performance decline in a factual, non-judgmental manner.

Listed below are suggested guidelines for documenting performance concerns. Also check with your human resources department for any specific company procedures.

- Be specific, fair, and consistent.
- Provide actual observations, not opinions.
- Include examples of good work, as well as inadequate performance.
- Update records regularly, and keep them confidential.
- Focus on performance, not personal problems.
- Provide information that shows a pattern over time.

When preparing your documentation, use this list to ensure completeness and accuracy.

- Indicate the dates, times and locations of performance problems.
- Record each incident while it is fresh in your memory.
- Record the behavior exhibited by the employee and the action you took.
- Describe all people or work groups involved.
- List specific performance standards or regulations violated.
- Record the consequences of the action or behavior on the employees' overall work performance and on the operation of the work group.
- Be objective—record observations, not impressions.



# Constructive Confrontation

As a supervisor, you are responsible for maintaining the productivity of your employees. When the productivity of an employee doesn't meet standards, it is your job to correct the situation. Confronting an employee whose work performance is declining is not easy. The "constructive confrontation" techniques outlined below will help you improve the quality and results of the interactions you have with your employees.

## Identifying the Cause

In many cases, declining work performance is directly related to an employee's problems outside the office. By watching for the following changes in an employee's behavior, you may notice a personal problem exists.

- On more than one occasion, the employee arrives at work or returns to work in an obviously impaired condition.
- Employee is frequently absent, returns late from lunch, leaves workstation without reason, makes many trips to the restroom.
- Personality changes (argumentative, quiet, unusually sensitive, borrows money, etc.).
- An increase in the employee's accident rate, both on and off the job. Quality of work suffers (late assignments, errors, bad judgment, erratic work patterns, customer complaints).
- Change in circle of friends, or the employee suddenly seems to have no friends.
- Employee refuses to follow company policy.

In other cases, an employee's decreased performance is due to job-related issues. Before talking with the employee, explore job-related issues that may be affecting your employee's ability to meet your expectations. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Is the employee unclear about job expectations?
- Is the assigned job too difficult for the employee?

- Did you give the employee the proper tools and environment to complete the project?
- Are you, as the manager, contributing to your employee's inability to perform the job adequately?

Regardless of the cause, personal problems or job-related issues, you must deal with poor job performance at once. Covering for the employee by handling his or her assignments or passing them onto others will not make the problem go away. You'll be doing yourself, your company and the employee a favor by confronting the issues as soon as they arise.

## Preparing to Confront an Employee

One of the worst mistakes managers make is going into a performance meeting unprepared. Take the following steps in preparing for the meeting.

1. Prepare a written document listing the employee's specific performance problems. Include dates, times, specific numbers in regard to absenteeism and tardiness, and specific examples of accidents or complaints.
2. Outline your objectives. Determine specific objectives for the employee to accomplish and the date you will meet to further review performance.
3. Organize information into easily referenced notes. It is easy to get sidetracked during a tension-filled meeting. Having notes will help you stay on track and keep you focused on your objective.
4. Anticipate the employee's reaction. Managers generally know their employees well enough to predict their reactions. Are they likely to be aggressive, defensive, or non-communicative?
5. Set the time and location of the meeting. Schedule the meeting as close to the performance issue as possible. Hold the meeting in a neutral, non-threatening location where you will not be disturbed by noise, phone calls, or other interruptions.

# Constructive Confrontation *continued*

## Conducting the Meeting

Polishing up on your communication skills will help make the interaction easier for both you and the employee. As a supervisor, you can have a “destructive confrontation” or “constructive confrontation.” Destructive confrontation results in little action, no action, or negative action.

Constructive confrontation, on the other hand, results in a positive action where both parties leave the meeting with a clear understanding of what they are expected to do. Here are some guidelines for conducting a constructive confrontation.

**Set the tone.** Establish control immediately by expressing a confident tone of voice. Make eye contact with the employee, maintain confident body posture, and avoid small talk.

**State the facts.** Read the list of documented performance problems. Provide specific examples of absenteeism, tardiness, complaints, or other productivity or performance issues. If the employee has had good performance in the past, acknowledge it. “I know you have the potential to be successful in this position because you have been in the past. You need to come back to that.”

**Encourage the employee to respond.** Ask open-ended questions to get more than a “yes” or “no” answer. “Tell me about...” “What is it at work that gets in the way?” Rephrase employee’s statements, i.e., “Let me see if I got this right...?”

**Keep the discussion focused.** If the employee tries to sidetrack an issue, acknowledge their comment, but immediately bring the discussion back under your control. “That’s interesting, but we are here to talk about ...”

**Discuss solutions.** Cover your list of specific objectives. Ask for the employee’s input. For example, “What suggestions do you have for improving the situation?” Explain disciplinary procedures if they don’t improve the situation. Remember it is your job to ensure that your employees do the work they were hired to do.

**Get a commitment.** Directly ask the employee if he/she is willing to accomplish the objectives. “From now on, can I count on you to ...?”

**Set up the next meeting.** Advise the employee of the next performance review. Setting up another meeting will help assure that the employee feels accountable for their actions.

**End on a constructive note.** Offer sincere encouragement that the problems can be worked out. For example, “I know you have it in you because I’ve seen it before.” For most managers, confronting employees regarding performance issues is the hardest part of the job. As difficult as it is, learning to constructively confront performance issues can be the best thing you do for your employees. Most employees know when they aren’t living up to expectations and live in fear of “being caught.” Addressing the issue immediately with openness, honesty and respect can help alleviate the stress employees are experiencing when not meeting performance standards. Allow them to focus on getting back on track.



# Progressive discipline

Progressive discipline is the process of using increasingly stricter steps or measures when an employee fails to correct a problem after being given a reasonable opportunity to do so. The underlying principle of sound progressive discipline is to use the least strict action that you believe is necessary to correct the undesirable situation. Increase the strictness of the action only if the condition is not corrected. This is not about being punitive. It is about providing support and consequences to assist in modifying behavior.

Some guidelines to consider are:

- **Before considering corrective action, thoroughly investigate the situation.** This includes obtaining the employee's explanation or response prior to administering corrective action.
- **Document the process and results of your investigation.** This can be as simple as noting that you reviewed the calendar and employee's assignments for the previous week and then looked at the completion of the assignments. A simple statement that "the following assignments were not completed" documents the results. If the basis for the potential corrective action is more serious, e.g., allegations of harassment, then a more complete investigation should be conducted.
- **It is acceptable to repeat a step if you feel that it will correct the problem.** For example, perhaps you gave an individual a warning letter the last time the situation occurred. You may choose to give the person another warning letter. This may be the case if some time has passed since it was last necessary to address the issue and the situation has

only recently reappeared. It may also be the case where you believe that the employee misunderstood the original process or you feel there is value in doing it again in a clearer fashion. If repeating the step works, the situation has been resolved without unnecessary escalation. However, be aware that an employee may be led to believe that nothing worse will happen if you continually repeat a step. If repeating a step does not resolve the problem, you can then move on to a more serious corrective action step.

- **The goal is to modify the unacceptable behavior or improve the performance.** Punishment is not the goal. Some organizations prefer to refer to the process as "progressive corrective action" to avoid the connotations of punishment in the term "discipline."
- **The personnel policy should not create a rigid set of steps nor an inflexible rule that all steps must be followed before terminating an employee.** The circumstances of each case and your judgment as to the least severe action that is necessary to correct the situation will help determine which step to use.

*"This is a good program that really takes time in trying to help."*

# Terminations

## Reducing the Odds of a Lawsuit

It's an unsavory task, but the fact is, at some point you may be required to help HR break the news that a problem employee is being dismissed from a position. Of course, you'll have factored in—and documented—various business reasons for your decision, such as low productivity, misconduct, inaccuracy, excessive absenteeism or budget cuts. But even then, can you be certain you've taken every precaution to shield your firm from wrongful termination lawsuits?

Put the odds in your favor by asking yourself the following questions before delivering the news to employees.

**Ask:** *Will the employee be totally surprised by the news?*

**Reason:** Employees who believe they are being ushered out the door without being given a chance to improve, or to explain their side of the story, are more likely to sue for wrongful termination.

**Remedy:** If you notice a consistent problem with a worker's performance, first talk to the person about what he or she specifically needs to do to improve. If the person's job is on the line—spell it out in clear terms.

**Ask:** *Have I followed company rules for terminations?*

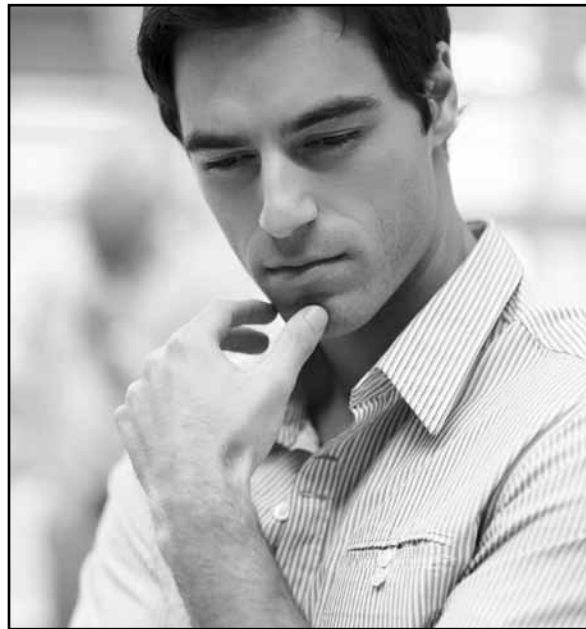
**Reason:** Employees who believe they've been fired without the benefit of progressive discipline or warnings may drag your firm into court.

**Remedy:** Talk to HR and brush up on personnel policies for termination before taking further action. Then make sure the discipline is administered according to your firm's own rules.

**Ask:** *Is the discipline fair and consistent with how similarly-situated employees have been treated?*

**Reason:** You may find yourself in a legal battle if the employee can prove someone else was only given a written warning for the same infraction.

**Remedy:** Discuss with HR how similar matters have been handled in the past. Look for documentation that proves you've handled past situations in the same way.



# Handling legal issues in supervision

1. An employee with chronic attendance problems just called in to say he would be out for three days due to the flu. Does he get Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) protection from corrective action for the absence?

*It depends on several things. Does your business meet the threshold for FMLA requirements? How long has the employee worked for the company? Has he used up his FMLA leave already? Does his case of the flu (symptoms, treatment and health provider care) meet the definition of "serious health condition?"*

2. You just walked past the break room and overheard a female employee telling an off-color joke to a group of male employees. Do you need to worry about sexual harassment issues?

*You might. A single joke is not generally found to create a "hostile work environment," but you may want to consider whether this incident is part of a pattern of workplace conduct that is inconsistent with your company values.*

3. You fired an employee last week after the employee was absent for four days without calling in. Today he stopped in with a doctor's note stating that his absence was due to a disability. Do you have to reinstate him?

*If company "no call, no show" policies have been consistently enforced in the past, it is unlikely you would have to reinstate this employee. However, you will need to investigate whether there had been any pre-termination notice to the organization of a disability and whether there are any unmet employer obligations under disability discrimination laws.*

Do you ever get the feeling that supervising people in today's workplace is like navigating a legal minefield? Many supervisors are concerned that daily business decisions regarding employees will backfire into a legal problem. Terminations, corrective

actions, leave decisions and even daily supervisory tasks like directing employees on correct work attire and attitude on the job have been the source of legal challenges by disgruntled employees.

Part of the reason for supervisor concern is the variety and complexity of state and federal regulations that govern the workplace. Compliance with various federal and state regulations can be time consuming and sometimes confusing for supervisors.

Another source of supervisory concern involves compliance with the many laws that make discriminatory conduct unlawful. These include state and federal laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of gender, age, race, religion, disability, labor affiliations, sexual orientation, or other protected categories. Supervisors who are confident they acted without discrimination often lack confidence that investigations, disciplinary actions and day-to-day decisions regarding employees will pass legal review if an employee makes a complaint of discrimination.

The laws themselves give limited practical guidance for supervisors on how to deal with day-to-day issues. Some of the laws have supporting regulations developed by agencies such as the Department of Labor and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. While these regulations include detailed recommendations of how to comply with the nondiscrimination laws, many times, the courts who eventually decide employee legal complaints, are not required to apply the regulations as if they were law. As a result of legal interpretation issues, much of the practical guidance to supervisors on compliance with the law is developed by lawyers and human resources professionals

*"Excellent as always.  
I will refer to VBI  
at every opportunity."*

## Handling legal issues *continued*

who review existing court decisions along with any regulatory guidance provided by agencies. The professionals attempt to meld the sometimes differing points of view into practical guidance. Even these practical guidelines do not cover every situation.

There are no guarantees that a particular course of action will always prevent employee lawsuits, but there are good practices and habits you can adopt to minimize the likelihood you will have unexpected legal challenges to your supervisory actions:

**Accept that legal compliance is necessary to your success as a supervisor.** Understanding regulations and legal requirements may be a chore at times, but it is a necessary part of the supervisory role. Just as it is part of your job to protect company assets such as equipment, it is part of your job to protect the company from liability.

**Actively support a culture of respect and professionalism in the workplace.** Managers and supervisors need to lead by example to set the workplace tone of respect for co-workers. Lawsuits happen when people perceive that they have not been treated with respect and dignity. When respect is part of the organization's culture, fewer legal issues arise.

**Understand and implement appropriate policies.** If you don't understand a policy, the employees you supervise probably won't either. Ask questions. Get clarity. Apply policies consistently.

**Follow your organization's procedures for disciplinary actions including seeking appropriate consultation.** If you aren't sure about something, ask human resources or senior management. If it is an action that has a potential for legal liability, the organization may choose to seek legal counsel before proceeding.

**Maintain appropriate documentation of all employee corrective actions.** Don't just focus on carefully documenting actions

involving employees you think may be trouble down the road. Consistent and effective application of company policies is best demonstrated by good documentation in all employee actions, not just the actions involving a particular employee.

**Seek out and attend training on legal and regulatory issues.** Training on sexual harassment prevention, drug-free workplace, diversity, and employment law-related matters equips you to better do your job. The Village Business Institute can help your organization identify training needs and can provide training on a variety of issues.



*"I never thought counseling would be so helpful, nor did I think I would ever require it."*



# Substance abuse

An estimated 21.5 million Americans are current illicit drug users. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) reported that 70 percent of illicit drug users in the United States are employed (2012). That's 14.6 million people. The chances are good that your organization employs one of these workers.

## How Drugs/Alcohol can Affect Your Work Environment

Employees who use drugs can be costly to your company, both financially and emotionally. Frequent absences, high illness rates, low morale, increased accidents, and low productivity are just some of the problems associated with substance abuse. These issues affect everyone, from the employee, to co-workers, to management, to customers. Consider these numbers:

- Problems related to alcohol and drug abuse cost American businesses roughly \$81 billion in lost productivity in just one year.
- Studies have shown that substance-abusing employees function at about 67 percent of their capacity.
- Up to 40 percent of industrial fatalities and 47 percent of industrial injuries can be linked to alcohol use and alcoholism.
- Employees who use drugs are 3.6 times more likely to be involved in a workplace accident and 5 times more likely to file a workers' compensation claim.
- An estimated 500 million workdays are lost annually due to alcoholism.
- Employees who use drugs are 2.2 times more likely to request early dismissal or time off, 2.5 times more likely to have absences of eight days or more, and 3 times more likely to be late for work.
- Illicit drug users are more than twice as likely than those who do not use drugs to have changed employers three or more times in the past year.
- Employees who use drugs cost their employers about twice as much in medical claims as do non-drug-using employees.

## The Legal Side of Employee Substance Abuse

It's your job as a manager to keep an eagle eye out for drug and alcohol abuse among your employees. If a problem is discovered, how you handle the situation could get you and your company called on the legal carpet. Will you know what steps to take to avoid legal liability?

Edwin Sleeman cut his finger while on the job and, as per company policy, had to submit to a drug test. The test came back positive for marijuana. Manager Nelson Quibb had Sleeman sign a last-chance agreement, stating that he must participate in a drug and alcohol treatment program as well as submit to random drug testing for the next 12 months. Also, the agreement made it clear that if any of the tests came back positive, Sleeman would be terminated.

Months later, Sleeman again tested positive for marijuana, and Quibb fired him. But Sleeman didn't take his termination lying down. He took the company to court. His lawsuit included charges of race discrimination, invasion of privacy, and wrongful discharge. Sleeman, who was white, claimed that black employees were treated more leniently under the company's drug and alcohol policy. But an appeals court found no evidence to support any of Sleeman's claims.

*Said the court:* At least one black employee was also required to sign a last chance agreement for a positive drug test and was also fired for violating it. Sleeman's invasion of privacy claim also fell short because only the company nurse and Human Resources manager knew of the results of his tests, and they had a legitimate need to know. Plus, since Sleeman was an at-will employee, the company could have discharged him whether or not he was given a drug test or signed the agreement.

*"I think this was one of the best sessions I've attended. Thank you."*

# Substance abuse *continued*

## Managing a Department Free from Alcohol and Drugs

A manager has four main responsibilities when it comes to keeping their department drug/alcohol free. You must:

1. Fully understand your company's drug/alcohol policy.
2. Be able to explain the policy to employees.
3. Familiarize yourself with the signs of drug/alcohol problems.
4. Know how to properly address the situation should a problem be discovered.

## The Importance of Policy

Knowing your company's drug and alcohol policy inside and out is the first step in preventing substance abuse from infecting your department. If you do not have a copy, get one from your employer immediately. Review it carefully to make sure you understand the clauses. Make certain you know what is permitted and prohibited and the consequences for violating any part of the policy.

## Putting the Policy into Practice

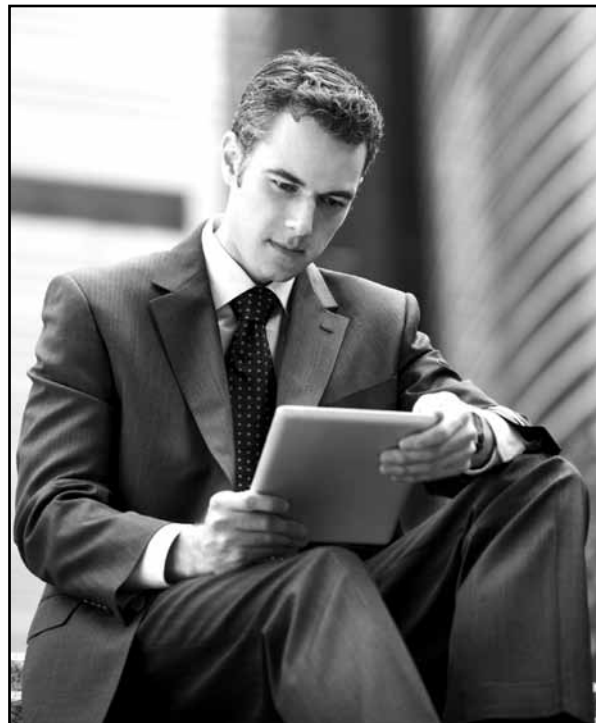
Every employee needs to be aware of your company's drug and alcohol policy. But handing out copies in a handbook isn't enough. You have to be prepared to explain every aspect of it. Most employees will have questions concerning the policy. Your best bet is to have your answers ready beforehand. Here are some of the most common questions employees ask:

- Are over-the-counter or prescription drugs permitted?
- Am I allowed to drink alcohol on my lunch hour or when entertaining clients?
- What actions will be taken if the policy is violated?
- Will treatment or counseling be available?
- Does insurance cover drug/alcohol treatment/rehabilitation?
- Does the company perform drug tests?

If your company requires that employees be tested for drug and alcohol use, you can expect questions like the following:

- How often will I be tested?
- Is testing random?
- How accurate are the results?
- What will happen if I refuse to take the test?
- What actions will be taken if a test comes out positive?
- Will the results remain confidential?

If your policy does not cover these questions, go to your employer and ask for the answers. The more you know, the more comfortable you will be when addressing employee concerns.



*"I would recommend VBI to anyone in need of services."*

# Substance abuse *continued*

## Be Aware of the Signs

Although you should not attempt to diagnose an employee's alcohol or drug problem, you should know the signs to watch out for. Keep in mind that these signs can be attributed to personal problems other than substance abuse as well.

- Poor attendance
- Abrupt decrease in quality and/or quantity of work
- Increased disciplinary problems
- Unusual outbursts or problems controlling temper
- Deterioration in physical appearance/grooming
- Constantly borrowing money/asking for advances
- Secretive behavior
- Sudden change in attitude
- Wearing long-sleeves/long pants even in hot weather or refusal to wear shorts/short-sleeves
- Wearing sunglasses indoors or other inappropriate places
- Associating with individuals known to be involved with, or to have problems with, drugs or alcohol
- Theft of company or co-worker property

## Taking Action

If an employee is exhibiting one or more of the above signs, you need to assess the situation. Evaluating the employee's performance is a good place to start. Be sure to document all performance problems. Once you determine improvement is needed, you can set the wheels in motion.

**Schedule a meeting with the employee to discuss the problems he/she is having.** Be sure to set it up at a time and place where you will be less likely to encounter distractions. Treat the employee with respect and give him/her the chance to explain. Let him/her know your door is always open, and he/she can discuss problems and concerns with you without fear or embarrassment. Stress that the meeting will be held in confidence.

**Recommend that the employee contact The Village Business Institute's (VBI) Employee Assistance Program.** Be sure not to accuse the employee of having a substance abuse problem. Explain that it is a service the company provides to help employees resolve any problems and get back on track. Talk to your employer about when and how to refer employees to VBI and the procedures you will need to take.

**Review your drug and alcohol policy.** Take a look at how similar situations were handled in the past to make sure you discipline consistently. Again, document everything. This will be your defense should your decisions get dragged into court.

*"[The] counselor really seems like he wants to help, he really cares."*

# Helping the abused employee

Knowing the impact of abuse on work performance and developing policies to make your workplace free from harassment and assaultive behaviors are important steps in preventing and dealing with abuse. But, the real test comes when employees show up in your office bruised and battered and tell you they are afraid to go home.

It is important to have some practical ways of responding to the needs of abused employees. Your response needs to take into consideration the situation at hand and stay focused on the primary goal of safety. This may mean putting aside your own preconceived ideas about abuse. Although the majority of victims are female, it is not uncommon for males to be victims of abuse. In short, both the victims and perpetrators of abuse come in all shapes, sizes, genders, religions, cultures, and professions. The first thing to do to effectively help abused employees is to not become judgmental when they admit to being abused.

The following guidelines will help you assist abused employees. Employees will present their own set of circumstances so you will need to use your discretion on how and when recommendations are implemented.

- When employees tell you they are being abused, resist the immediate temptation to minimize or fix the problem. Rather, focus on listening and asking questions that will help you get more information about the situation. The information you get will likely be very helpful in providing for their safety and determining if a safety threat exists for other employees.
- In cases where an employee admits to having recently been sexually or physically assaulted and has not already sought medical attention, make arrangements for him/her to get to an emergency room (ER) for an evaluation. If necessary, approve time off, make arrangements for someone to cover the job, and provide for safe transport to an ER.
- If you suspect that an employee is being abused (i.e. bruises, black eyes, red marks, comments to co-workers, etc.) hold a private meeting with the individual. State your concerns, listen to responses, and indicate your desire to help him/her be safe and able to perform the job.
- In situations where an employee is not at immediate risk of further abuse (i.e. already in a safe house, restraining order in place, perpetrator in jail etc.) and there are no apparent job performance issues, an informal referral to The Village Business Institute's (VBI) Employee Assistance Program may suffice. Indicate to the employee that EAP counselors work with victims of abuse and can help. Provide the EAP phone number (800) 627-8220 to make it easy to make contact.

*"I would recommend  
VBI to all of my family  
and friends."*

# Helping the abused employee *continued*

- In situations where an employee is not at immediate risk of further abuse, but job performance issues could be attributed to being in an abusive situation (i.e. absenteeism, safety violations, difficulty attending to work, etc.), it may be necessary for you to make a formal referral to VBI. Remember the referral can only speak to, and be based on, job performance issues.
- When an employee indicates he/she is at risk of further abuse or unsure of safety, it may be necessary to take some or all of the following steps:
  1. Call a shelter and make arrangements for the employee and/or other family members to have a safe place to stay. Call your county social services or local police department for the phone numbers of local shelters.
  2. If employee's emergency contact person is not the abuse perpetrator, contact that person. This person may be able to provide for or help make arrangements for the employee's safety.
  3. In any situation where there is imminent risk of harm to an abused employee, their family, and/or co-workers, contact the sheriff's department immediately.
  4. Remain in contact with the employee and make arrangements to ensure safety at the work site (i.e. offer flexible work hours to reduce perpetrator's ability to pattern behavior, provide security escorts to their car or other transportation, don't allow perpetrator on company property, give time off to attend court hearings or go to counseling, etc.).
  5. Regardless of the particular situation, remind the abused employee of The Village Business Institute's (VBI) Employee Assistance Program benefit and the availability of free help.

It is also very important to take care of yourself. As a manager, HR professional or supervisor, you may begin to feel the strain. The risk of "vicarious traumatization" leading to physical and emotional stress reactions can and does happen to managers and supervisors who have to deal with the trauma experienced by their employees. The Supervisor HelpLine, Crisis Management Services, Counseling Services, and Executive Coaching are all tools managers and supervisors can use to help cope with distressing situations.



*"My counselor did a wonderful job and I will recommend her to others."*

# It's as easy as 1, 2, 3

## *For Personal Services:*

### **1. Make the Call**

When you decide you would like to see a counselor using The Village Business Institute's (VBI) Employee Assistance Program, or you simply would like more information about services available, call us at 1-800-627-8220. Calling VBI gives you one-point access to appointments wherever you are located, after-hours crisis counselors, and management consultation for supervisors. In addition to in-office counseling, we also provide web-based counseling.

### **2. Schedule an Appointment**

When you call VBI during regular business hours, an operator will answer your call. Identify yourself as having a VBI Employee Assistance Program. You will then be connected with an intake person. This person will gather the information necessary to schedule an appointment. In some cases, we will be able to schedule your appointment immediately. In other cases, we will end the call and contact appropriate providers to find an available appointment that best meets your needs. We will then call you back with the date, time and location of your session.

### **3. Visit with Counselor**

Unless you are having a web-based session or have completed paperwork online, please get to your first appointment 10 to 15 minutes early.

When you've completed the paperwork, you'll meet with a counselor. If you decide you want to continue, you can schedule appointments directly with your counselor as long as you have seen them, through VBI, in the last 90 days.

## **After Business Hours**

Our regular office hours are 8 A.M.–9 P.M., Central Standard Time (CST), Monday, Tuesday and Thursday and 8 A.M.–5 P.M. CST Wednesday and Friday. After these hours, an automated system answers calls to VBI. You can leave a message and we'll return your call the next business day. If you have an urgent need to speak to a counselor, call the same number, 1-800-627-8220, and stay on the line. The system will automatically connect you with a counseling professional. These counselors are specially trained to address the critical needs that sometimes occur after the regular workday.

## **Confidentiality for the Individual Client**

When you see a VBI counselor, our policy is that VBI employees will not discuss any information (including identity) about our clients with any non-VBI staff, unless we have your written authorization. It is in our best interest to abide by the highest possible standards. Our success hinges on your confidence that VBI respects individual privacy and adheres to the highest possible standards of confidentiality. In addition to our own internal policies, your VBI counselor is bound by ethical and legal standards set by the professional organizations they belong to and their licensing bodies. Whether they are in private practice, group practice or at a medical center, they are obligated to provide the same level of confidentiality as we do at VBI. The only information we share with your employer is "utilization reports" showing total numbers of people seeking services through the VBI benefit. Those reports do not indicate who is seeking services—all the data is grouped together as a total for all employees.

## It's as easy as 1, 2, 3 *continued*

The following are the only circumstances under which we will share any information you discuss with your VBI counselor:

- If you authorize us to verify that we have seen you or are working with you, we can arrange to pass that information on to whomever you designate. You will have to sign a release of information before we will communicate the information.
- Counselors and health care professionals are obligated, by state and federal law, to break confidentiality if there is a clear threat of harm to you or someone else, if we become aware of child abuse or neglect, or if we have to comply with a court order. That's it. Under no other circumstances will we provide information about you to anyone else. Your counseling sessions are truly a safe place for you to talk and work toward solutions for your personal problems.

### **Technology and Confidentiality**

If you ever reach voice mail during business hours and do not want to leave a message, you can push "0" to return to our operator. Any crisis, message or concern can be redirected by the operator. If you are comfortable leaving a message, please do so and we'll get back to you. You may not be aware we are trying to reach you because we will not leave a message on an answering machine or voice mail unless you have told us it is okay to do so. We also have a block on our phone so VBI will not come up on Caller I.D. Confidentiality is the key to all the work we do here at VBI.

*"[I liked] the comfort  
I felt in dealing with  
everyone—as emotional  
as I was."*





**Employee Assistance Program**  
**1-800-627-8220**

[www.VillageEAP.com](http://www.VillageEAP.com)  
[www.TheVBI.com](http://www.TheVBI.com)