

Employees—
Your Most
Valuable
Resource

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Frontline Supervisor



This information is provided by Continuum EAP. If you would like more information on these or other topics, please don't hesitate to contact us.

1135 M Street, Suite 400, Lincoln, NE, 68508 402-476-0186 or 800-755-7636
Fax: 402-476-2757 Email: EAspecialist@4Continuum.com www.4Continuum.com



Online Supervisor Training

Using EAP as a Management Tool

Companies contract with an EAP to assist them in retaining valuable employees. One of the keys to a successful partnership is having supervisors that know how to utilize EAP in effective ways. *Using EAP as a Management Tool* training has the following objectives:

- Providing awareness of EAP services
- Assisting managers/supervisors identify and document employee performance concerns
- Developing effective intervention strategies
- Identifying ways to use EAP as a positive option for employee performance problems

This training can also serve as a step-by-step resource when making a referral due to performance concerns.

How to access the online training program:

Go to: www.4Continuum.com
Click on: "Training" drop down menu
Select: "Online EAP Supervisory Training":
Click on: "Log on to EAP as a Mgmt. Tool" on the right-hand side of the page
Enter: Username (available from your HR department or Continuum)

■ **Our company has many National Guard troops who have returned from overseas. How lenient should supervisors be with these employees? Don't they deserve a break because of their stress and leniency when performance problems arise?**

It is natural to weigh the circumstances of your employees and be lenient as a way of accommodating them. However, unless a specific request is made for a reasonable accommodation, it is generally better to treat employees equally and all as fully capable. Do not assume these employees require different standards for how their performance should be judged. Many employees experience performance problems attributable to traumas and personal issues. Although the stress of war and its toll on the psyche is extraordinary, your employees will benefit most by being held to the same performance standards and work rules as other employees. Most soldiers returning from overseas will tell you they want to be treated no differently than their peers. Remember not to make assumptions or diagnostic conclusions about your employees.

■ **My fellow managers and I have been educated in the signs and symptoms of alcohol abuse on the job, but isn't the most important part of training learning to avoid being manipulated and dispelling misconceptions about alcoholism?**

Knowing the signs, symptoms, and workplace impact of alcohol use is important. However, it's also important that you stay in control of a constructive confrontation with your employee by being on your guard against alcoholic manipulation and well-honed defense mechanisms. That will determine whether you are ultimately successful in making a supervisor referral, a referral for a drug test, or are willing to take action in response to problematic events. Employees affected by addictive diseases rely upon their relationships with others to remain in denial, and to continue believing that they are in control of their alcohol use and an environment that wants to confront them about it. Consult with your employee assistance program provider before meeting with your employee to discuss performance or conduct issues. Doing so will help keep you from being drawn into a subjective discussion that the employee is likely to control.

■ **I know EAPs can help employees return to satisfactory levels of job performance and that this helps the bottom line. But isn't it a stretch to say that EAPs help reduce costs associated with things such as litigation, injuries, or even damaged equipment?**

Employees affected by severe personal problems may experience a wide range of behavioral issues, many of which directly affect the bottom line. However, like an iceberg, other cost benefits exist beneath the surface. Reduced turnover or absenteeism, for example, has secondary cost benefits. The hiring of temporary workers or paying overtime to others to complete work assignments is avoided. When the EAP helps an employee who otherwise would have been terminated, the risk of litigation, legal expenses, paperwork, and lost management time is avoided. A drug addict who enters treatment and recovery may no longer steal materials that are resold for drugs. An employee no longer distracted by a personal crisis may avoid a costly accident. Almost any cost benefit has multiple other cost savings associated with it, and this makes an EAP a great investment.

■ **I have an employee who wants to bring her 8-year-old child to work because she does not feel the child is "safe" at home with an unemployed roommate. I said OK once, but the request has come up again. How can the EAP help? Should I ask why she doesn't trust the roommate?**

It is appropriate to ask why she feels the child is not safe at home because she disclosed her concern, and because the safety of a child is the paramount issue. Ask that your employee phone the EAP to get help for this problem. Bring the issue to the attention of your manager so you aren't operating in isolation trying to address it. There could be a host of reasons why your employee does not want to leave the child at home, some of which may or may not be cause for alarm. The EAP will ask other personal questions necessary to discover the nature of the problem and try to discover what resources are needed to address this issue.