



# solutions

The quickest and best way to contact the EAP is by calling **1-800-222-0364**



## Identifying Performance Issues

Realizing that something serious is going on with one of your team members can be difficult to process. As a supervisor you'll want expert support. This month's *Solutions* newsletter examines:

- Indicators that employee performance issues may stem from something other than just job-related stress
- Ways untreated personal issues—such as substance abuse—can impact your workforce
- Recognizing and appropriately intervening with an employee who may need help

## Take Notice—Take Action

One aspect of your role as a manager is being attentive to the hard work and achievements of your team. But, it's just as important to be aware that personal struggles an employee may be experiencing, including drug or alcohol problems, can inhibit productivity. Here are a few signs that something could be affecting one of your team members:

**Absenteeism:** Employees may take leave without authorization, frequently arrive late or leave early, make repeated requests for days off, or habitually take sick days or too many breaks.

**Impaired job performance:** Deteriorating performance can be evident through more on-the-job mistakes, missed deadlines, poor judgment, or other behaviors that reduce the quality of work or endanger coworkers. Simple jobs might take more time and effort to complete. And, employees may also struggle to remember detailed instructions or complete tasks.

**Declining work relationships:** Attitude changes including hostile or irritable behavior from one employee toward his or her coworkers may indicate some underlying issue.

Although these are certainly signs of problematic behavior, **it's important not to make any assumptions** that this conduct is due to alcohol or other substances. The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is available for advice and support when you feel it's necessary to intervene.

Your EAP can provide consultations and coaching on best practices for dealing with employee issues that can negatively impact work performance. And, your human resources office can help you understand your agency's policies and procedures to which you must adhere.



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## Measuring Loss of Productivity

The impact of diminishing employee performance extends beyond the individual simply failing to meet expectations. Issues such as substance abuse can directly impact business and cause a psychological drain on employees and employers.

### Productivity pitfalls

Preoccupation with outside-of-work stressors can interfere with an employee's attention and concentration. The effects of drug and alcohol use on productivity, for example, can cost employers millions. According to the latest estimate from the National Drug Threat Assessment (NDTA), illegal drug use creates a \$120 million toll on productivity in America.

### Turnover and work avoidance

Workers who excessively drink or take recreational drugs are more likely than non-users to bounce from one employer to another in short periods of

time, according to the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence. The NDTA also reports that users were more prone to miss work for injury or illness, or skip shifts at their jobs.

### Deteriorating morale

When one employee fails to pull his or her weight, coworkers are frequently asked to pick up the slack. This can mean more assignments and longer hours for high-performing team members, which can increase stress and resentment.

Take action to address personal issues that may be affecting job performance with the help of your EAP. Promptly and carefully dealing with these types of difficult situations is necessary to promote a safe, healthy, and productive work environment.



## Crafting an Appropriate Response

Be aware that you can never be completely sure of what's causing an employee's job performance problems. Nonetheless, having a plan for addressing the concern is what's important.

**1. Define behavior:** The first step is documenting your team member's behavior that breaches expectations or workplace protocol.

**2. Seek advice:** You can also always consult with the EAP to prepare for your conference with the employee, or access

management resources at [FOH4You.com](http://FOH4You.com).

**3. Arrange a supportive meeting:** Now it's time to broach the issue with your team member. Focus on the behavioral concerns without mentioning what you suspect may be their cause. Respectfully share your observations and refer him or her to your EAP after explaining how it can help. Note the program is confidential and that using it won't affect one's career path.

When handling sensitive issues in the workplace, your EAP is here to support

you. Management consultation services are always available to supervisors for advice on dealing with these and other workplace concerns. Don't hesitate to call your EAP any time, day or night.

Employee Assistance Program

24 HOURS A DAY

**1-800-222-0364**

(TTY: 1-888-262-7848)

**FOH4You.com**

Services are offered as a **FREE** benefit to you and your family members, and are confidential.