

GO AHEAD ... ASK!

JANUARY 2018



“We have an employee who’s had some performance and attendance issues lately. We’re not really sure what’s going on, but it’s clearly impacting his work. Can we make a referral to our EAP even if we’re not sure it has anything to do with drugs or alcohol?”

While companies often use their Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for alcohol and other drug-related issues, EAP vendors typically have additional services available for a variety of situations. We’re glad to hear you recognize that personal issues can impact someone’s ability to do their job and want to proactively offer some assistance to your employee.



Keep in mind that performance and attendance issues can certainly be a sign of a substance use disorder. With that, consider reviewing the signs and symptoms of reasonable suspicion, preferably with the employee’s direct supervisor, to determine if there are other areas of concern with this employee. If you have the *Working Partners*® policy/program documents, apply your *Reasonable Suspicion Observation Checklist*. Determine if other objective data is available that might warrant a drug and/or alcohol test. If so, follow your policy steps for handling reasonable suspicion, which may include removing the employee from the job.

However, if after reviewing the signs and symptoms of reasonable suspicion you don’t find any additional data, you’ll want to determine what type of EAP referral is appropriate in this situation:

VOLUNTARY: When you confront the employee about his performance, you can acknowledge that work problems can sometimes be caused by personal issues, and suggest he *voluntarily* reach out to your EAP to help rectify the situation. If he chooses to go, services can usually be conveniently arranged to accommodate work schedules and accomplished without your involvement. Remember there should be no corrective action if he chooses not to go, but, of course, he’ll still need to be held accountable for his performance.

MANDATORY: If this employee’s performance issues have been progressive and your previous interventions have not been successful, you may be ready to *mandate* he contact the EAP to address his work-related issues. In this case, you would likely require feedback from the EAP regarding the employee’s attendance and progress, as well as notification of service completion. Be mindful that the employee’s refusal to go or non-compliance with the EAP’s recommendations would likely warrant disciplinary action.

No matter your approach, your EAP can be a powerful tool in resolving work performance issues – whether related to substances or not. Be sure to remind all employees, on a regular basis, about services offered through your EAP. One of the greatest returns on your EAP investment is when you PREVENT personal problems from ever showing up on the job.

If you’re interested in learning more about Employee Assistance Programs, check out [The Role and Value of Employee Assistance Programs \(EAPs\)](#) from GenerationRxWorkplace.com

Working Partners®

7895 Dove Parkway, Canal Winchester, OH 43110 ■ 614.337.8200 or 866.354.3397 (toll-free)

www.WorkingPartners.com ■ Mail@WorkingPartners.com