

THE CONTINUUM **EDGE**

INFORMATION FOR LEADERS



What type of drug causes the most problems with attendance?

A: Alcohol is still the number one drug that causes the most attendance problems. Affected employees are not limited to those who suffer from an alcohol use disorder, but include social drinkers who miss work because of hangovers.

But it does not stop there. Those with alcohol use disorders may arrive on time for work but may leave early because of severe agitation and a craving for a drink (withdrawal symptoms), which interfere with their ability to be productive. Some may drink at lunch, outside the workplace, or they may hide alcohol to drink on the job to raise their blood alcohol levels in order to be more functional. This drinking pattern may lead to another form of absenteeism associated with availability, meaning the employee is at work but is incapable of functioning productively or is somewhere at work but unable to be found (present but unavailable).



Q: Years ago, we had supervisor training on how to use the EAP. But now that I have an employee to refer, I'm not sure about what steps to follow, which forms to fill in, and which performance information to provide. It's critical the referral is successful. Should I phone the EAP?

A: Yes, call Continuum EAP. Don't overburden yourself with the details before this call, and consider phoning the EAP anytime you have a referral need or situation that could benefit from consultative help. You were exposed to the general idea and use of an EAP. Although nothing happens at the EAP until a referral is successful, the most

important part of using the EAP is follow-up after the referral. Lack of follow-up undermines any sort of work-performance improvement coaching. Most supervisors fall short on follow-up, so ask Continuum what role you should play after referral to ensure continued progress in the performance area you need satisfied.





- **My employee is telling new co-workers that I am unfair and that they should be careful because I play favorites. Of course, I heard this secondhand, but I think the source is credible. How should I respond?**

A: Addressing this situation is important because it can adversely affect morale. Have a private meeting with this employee to discuss their concerns. Show yourself to be completely open-minded with a desire to resolve the issues. Begin the conversation by expressing your concerns about what you heard. Seek clarity because the secondhand information you received may not be entirely accurate. Listen completely, don't become defensive, and don't interrupt. It is to your advantage to support open communication, and in this regard explain or clarify the matters perceived as favoritism to the employee concerned. Share how you make decisions and any factors that influence your thinking. Emphasize the importance of employees coming to you directly rather than venting in such a way that rumors or gossip result. Ask the employee for input as to how they would like decisions made, actions taken or changes made. Monitor employee communication for a while, and promptly address any similar instances that arise. Document the discussion.

I am a new supervisor, and I would like to start developing leadership skills now rather than discover these on the job. Is there a way to explain to me how I can “think like a leader”?

You can study leadership, but learning on the job is key to success. Some key principles of leadership are worth knowing. The following list is not exhaustive, but it's a good start.

- Begin by having a vision for your role and work unit. It is easier to apply leadership skills when you have goals and imagined outcomes.
- Be aware that employees naturally observe and analyze your behavior. So, be an example for them to follow, rather than having them gossip about you behind closed doors.
- Encourage employees to be proactive and take the initiative, and support them with resources where possible.
- Communicate and foster open and honest communication with each employee, not just the group.
- Discover what each employee aspires to be and achieve in their career. Offer mentorship, coaching and training opportunities.
- Create a supportive and inclusive work environment and intervene quickly in situations that threaten this environment
- Last, but not least, strive for continuous development of yourself.



Interested in additional resources?

Consider attending Continuum's Leadership Academy or visit 4continuum.com and click “MEMBER LOGIN” to access HelpNet, which offers a vast library of supervisor-focused information and trainings.