

Assistance Program

LEADERSHIP TOOLKIT

By Leaders. For Leaders.



RESOURCES FOR MANAGERS

Your Assistance Program (AP) offers resources for managers and supervisors to promote employee engagement, manage performance, and assist in referrals for employees' personal issues.

MIIA | Nonprofit
Locally based
Member driven
Serving Massachusetts communities since 1982



“All of the great leaders have had one characteristic in common: it was the willingness to confront unequivocally the major anxiety of their people in their time. This, and not much else, is the essence of leadership.”

- John Kenneth Galbraith, economist and diplomat

OUR MANAGEMENT RESOURCES
ARE DESIGNED TO HELP ADDRESS
EMPLOYEE ISSUES, OVERCOME
CHALLENGING SITUATIONS, AND
PROVIDE CLINICAL EXPERTISE
WHEN NEEDED.



Your Account Manager is your guide and is available to assist you.

ACCOUNT MANAGER: Michael Stuart

PHONE: 1-508-650-6841

E-MAIL: michael.stuart@allonehealth.com

Access your Assistance Program on-demand 24/7.

WEBSITE: myassistanceprogram.com/miia-eap/

TOOLKIT CONTENTS

In this toolkit you will find a variety of information on the leadership resources available to you through your Assistance Program. This comprehensive guide includes:

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**GUIDANCE FROM
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
SPECIALISTS
STARTS WITH A
CONVERSATION.**

MANAGEMENT CONSULTATION

Human Resource professionals and leaders face challenging and unpredictable workplace behaviors. Management Consultation is a collaboration between you and your Account Manager. The Account Manager will review your unique situation and apply clinical and organizational knowledge to address employee productivity, performance, conduct and behavioral risk issues. Using your familiarity with the employee's job performance history as well as your understanding of the workplace culture and policies, you and the Account Manager will determine the next steps to address the performance issues using the Assistance Program's services.

WE HELP YOU:

1. Gain a greater understanding of human behavior that can impede organizational performance.
2. Review options to facilitate solutions including:
 - Referring an employee to the Assistance Program. See Suggested (Informal) Referrals, p.7-8 or Supervisor (Formal) Referrals, p. 9.
 - Establishing an action plan for managers or HR professionals that include specific strategies.
 - Customizing a training to address the areas where skill development is needed.
 - Considering specialty services: conflict resolution intervention, executive coaching, team building, etc.

Your Assistance Program is a partner to support your most precious asset: ***your people!*** To initiate a management consult, simply contact your Account Manager or call intake and ask to be connected.

JOB COACHING & CONSTRUCTIVE CONFRONTATION



When your observations and documentation indicate that a performance problem exists, you should discuss the issues with the employee sooner rather than later. Start with an initial coaching session in a private location that allows for uninterrupted discussion. Establish a time frame to check back with each other. Make sure the employee understands the consequences if the job performance problem persists. Next, wait a reasonable period to allow for change.



Observe and document both improvements and continued problems during this period. If the problem is sufficiently resolved, communicate this to the employee. If not, consider updating Human Resources on your efforts, if appropriate. Keep in mind that problems are more easily resolved with early intervention.

FOLLOW-UP

If your efforts have not yielded an improvement in the employee's performance or behavior, consider making a Supervisor Referral. Contact the Assistance Program first, then inform the employee about the process. Be sure to explain that the Assistance Program is confidential. Management is informed of contact with the Assistance Program and compliance with recommendations once a signed Release of Information is obtained. See Supervisor (Formal) Referrals, p. 9, for details on forwarding the completed referral to the Assistance Program. You should continue to observe and document performance, positive and negative.

SUGGESTED (INFORMAL) REFERRALS

THE SIMPLEST TOOL IN YOUR LEADERSHIP TOOLKIT.

An Informal referral is as simple as it sounds. It's really just a conversation with the employee, letting them know that you are concerned about them and reminding them about how the Assistance Program (AP) can help.

WHY ARE SUPERVISORS BEST POSITIONED TO ENCOURAGE VOLUNTARY USE OF THE AP?

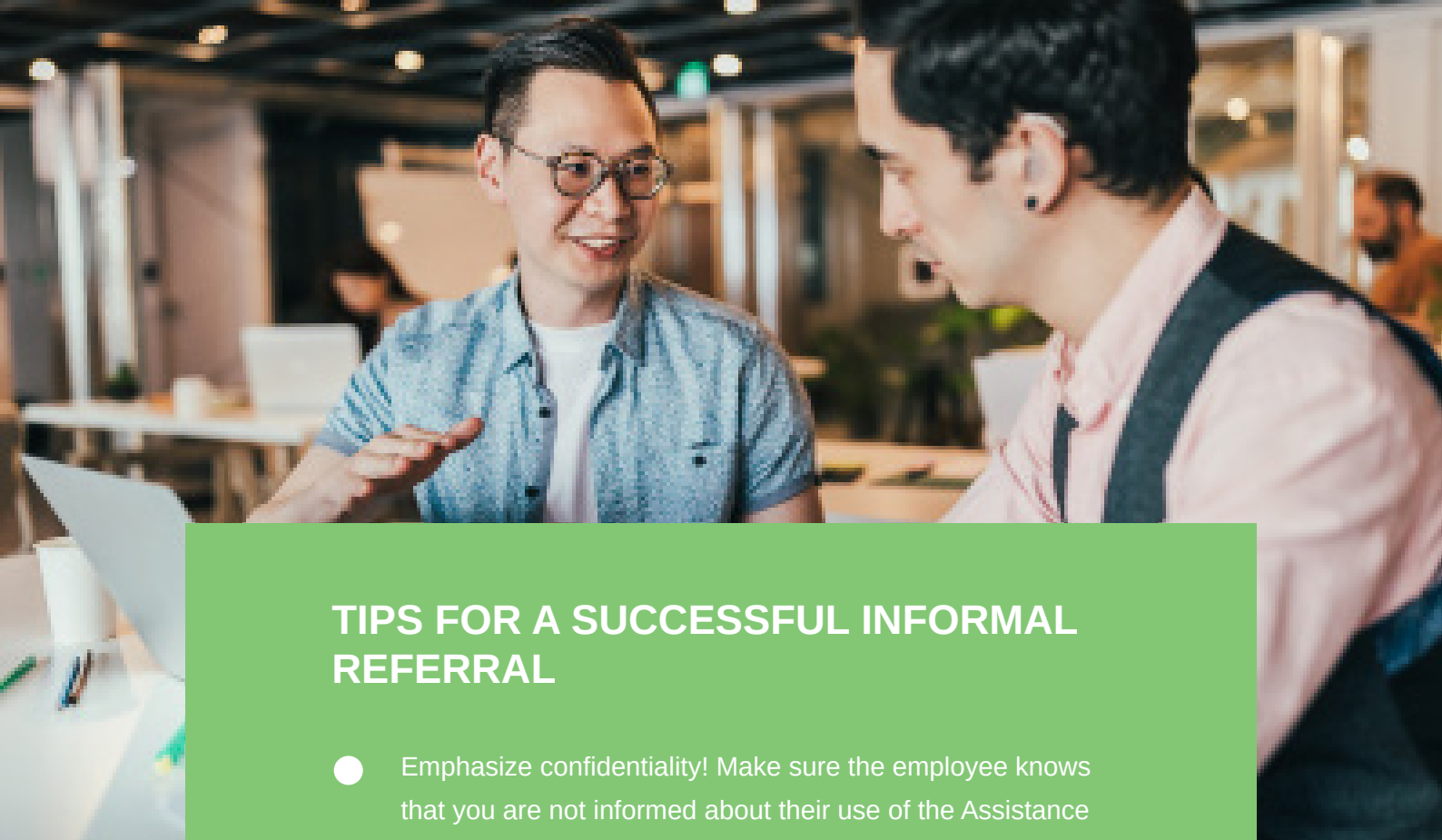


AWARENESS

Often the supervisor is the first to know when something of a personal nature is impacting the employee. Supervisors know the employee's leave records, work habits, job conduct, appearance, and likely a fair amount about their personal situation.

INFLUENCE

Supervisors are well-positioned to encourage their employee to do something about a problem. A person who may not listen to family and friends will frequently make changes when the workplace intervenes.



TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL INFORMAL REFERRAL

- Emphasize confidentiality! Make sure the employee knows that you are not informed about their use of the Assistance Program. You are simply reminding them that this resource is available.
- Continue to observe and document signs of improvement or deterioration of performance.
- If you observe a continuation of the problematic behavior or performance, have a follow-up conversation. This is a good time to consider a Supervisor (Formal) Referral, p. 9. If you are unsure whether a supervisor referral would be helpful at this time, call your Account Manager for a Management Consultation.

Self-referrals are voluntary. They occur when a member contacts the Assistance Program on their own initiative. In this situation, the Assistance Program does not provide any specific or identifying information about the client to the supervisor or employer.

Self-referrals are important to a successful program because they allow the employee to address personal problems and prevent them from becoming bigger issues that impact the workplace.

SUPERVISOR (FORMAL) REFERRALS

Sometimes, despite a supervisor's best efforts, performance or workplace behavior problems persist. When this occurs, an individual can be directed to the Assistance Program (AP) with a Supervisor Referral. This means that the AP will assess the individual and make referrals or recommendations to address whatever personal issues may be contributing to the individual's behavior problems.

If an individual chooses NOT to follow through with the Supervisor Referral, the supervisor should document the refusal and emphasize to the individual that any future performance or behavioral issues may result in disciplinary or corrective action in accordance with company policy.

For more serious workplace infractions, such as active substance abuse, threats of violence, or gross disregard for company safety procedures, consult with your Human Resources or Business Agent and the Assistance Program to determine the best course of action.

WHY MAKE A SUPERVISOR REFERRAL?

1. To retain a good individual whose personal issues may be interfering with their job performance and/or behavior.
2. To provide an alternative to either enabling poor performance or termination.
3. To provide help for those who may not seek it on their own.

HOW TO MAKE A SUPERVISOR REFERRAL:

Contact the AP and provide the following information:

1. Individual's name and job title.
2. Description and duration of the performance problem/unacceptable workplace behaviors.
3. Status of job (warning, probation, leave of absence, etc.)

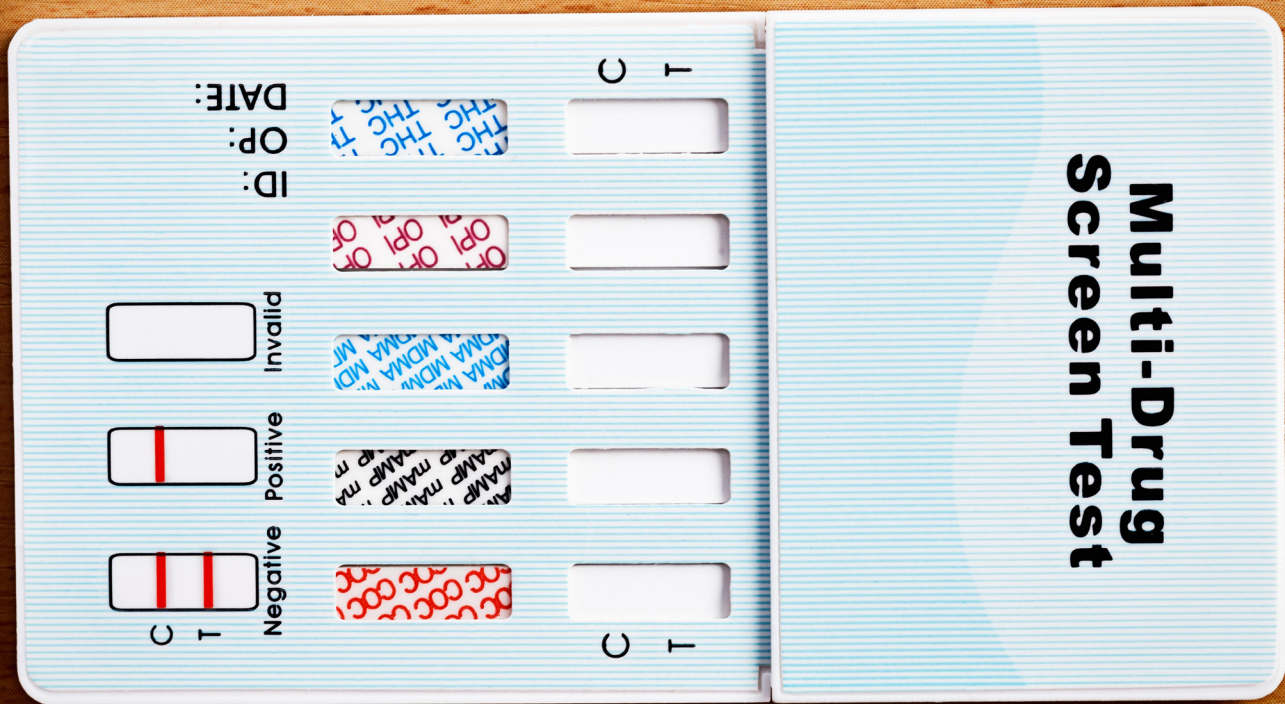
SUBSTANCE ABUSE / IMPAIRMENT

The following signs and symptoms are potential red flags that may indicate something is wrong. An individual may be under the influence or they may be experiencing a medical problem; either way, it is important to follow up and investigate. Remember, it is not your job to diagnose someone's substance abuse issue; however, it is your job to note changes in an individual and to act accordingly. Keep in mind that you are looking for significant changes from the norm.

Has the individual shown the following changes?

- ACCIDENTS**
Errors with equipment related to impaired judgment, slow reflexes, or inattention to surroundings
- ODD SPEECH PATTERNS**
Shouting, repetitive, rambling, confused or slurred speech
- POOR COORDINATION**
Unsteady gait, swaying, staggering, slow movement or poor balance
- ATTENTION/FOCUS**
Easily distracted, disoriented, unable to concentrate on the task at hand
- MOODINESS**
Frequent and/or aggressive mood swings, unusually quiet, withdrawn, lashing out in frustration, argumentative, euphoric, suddenly talkative
- APPEARANCE**
Disheveled, unkempt, unclean
- PERFORMANCE**
A decrease in the accuracy, quantity or quality of the job performance; tardiness; no-call or no-shows for work; excessive absences





AFTER SIGNS OF IMPAIRMENT

If you observe any of signs of impairment in the workplace, you have reasonable suspicion.

Consult your company substance abuse policy which should allow for the following best practices:

1. Have the employee tested for drugs and alcohol as soon as possible. It's the responsible and safe thing to do.
2. Get a second witness to the reasonable suspicion and subsequent discussion with the employee.
3. Document, document, document.

RESULTS

POSITIVE RESULT

If the result of the test is positive, reach out to your Assistance Program (AP) and initiate a Supervisor Referral. We will do our best to get the employee healthy and back to work as quickly as possible.

NEGATIVE RESULT

If the result of the test is negative, reach out to your AP for a Management Consultation. There is probably a reason for the symptoms you observed. A negative result does not mean the employee does not need help. An informal referral may be in order.

DISCUSSING YOUR CONCERNS

Prepare to discuss your concerns by considering how the employee might react. Get ready for excuses or an emotional reaction. Avoid “rescuing” the employee by removing the natural consequences of their actions. That sends a message to the employee and others that policy isn’t consistently enforced, which will create a bigger set of problems later on.

Clearly explain your concerns to the employee, referring back to policy as much as possible. It’s a good idea to prepare notes to ensure you cover the important points in the discussion. Notes also help you to maintain focus, especially if the employee responds in anger or tears. For many workers, if policy violations occurred, they’ve been expecting negative consequences. If you can, present your concerns and convey your goal in helping them to keep their jobs and improve performance. Most will acknowledge the situation and “buy in” to the process.

REFERRING TO THE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

A manager or supervisor is sometimes unable to help people with their personal problems. Use that as an opportunity to refer that person to the Assistance Program. Managers should contact the Assistance Program first to open an Organization Consultation with the details on the reason for the referral, as well as the employee’s length of service, duties and job status. This allows the Assistance Program to prepare for the employee’s call and schedule an assessment.

When you meet with the employee, remind them that this is a confidential program that does not convey personal details about the employee and their situation.

DOCUMENTING SUBSTANCE ABUSE / IMPAIRMENT

As a manager, once you’ve noticed signs of possible impairment, it is important to document your observations, describing only what you’ve actually seen.

Focus on workplace behavior or job performance and make sure to keep documentation:

01

FACTUAL AND SPECIFIC

Information should include verifiable facts that relate specifically to the observations.

03

OBJECTIVE

Information should not show any bias towards or against the employee.

02

TIMELY

The employee should be quickly notified of any concerns you have.

04

DISCUSSED AND REVIEWED

If it was significant enough to document, it should be discussed with the employee.

JOB PERFORMANCE AND BEHAVIOR

The following is a general guide for dealing with performance problems and making a Supervisor Referral to the Assistance Program. While the basic steps are to observe, document, job coach, and follow up, you should also consider your organization's administrative policies and procedures. A Management Consultation (p. 5) is typically done prior to initiating the Supervisor Referral process.

DOCUMENTING PERFORMANCE OBSERVATIONS

After observing inadequate performance, document observable, verifiable facts. Good documentation is:

01

SPECIFIC

Avoid generalizations and include who was involved, what happened, when and where it occurred and whether there were any witnesses.

03

OBJECTIVE

Avoid personal opinion and base documentation on verifiable facts.

02

TIMELY

Address with the employee soon after the incident has occurred.

04

CAREFUL

Even-handed, consistent application of reasonable rules.



OBSERVE PERFORMANCE

Effective supervision involves identifying a performance problem or behavioral issue that is impacting the workplace, not diagnosing a personal problem. When identifying and documenting impaired job performance or inappropriate behavior, focus on a pattern of performance and behaviors, which are observable signs or behaviors that may indicate a decline in job performance. Look for changes in behavior or ability. Take note of when this pattern began. Clarify if this is a misunderstanding of policy/job duties or if the problems are due to a lack of skills or training.

PATTERN OF PERFORMANCE	EXAMPLES AND DESCRIPTIONS
ABSENTEEISM / PRESENTEEISM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unauthorized / excessive leave • Monday and Friday absences • Excessive tardiness / leaving early • Peculiar excuses for absences or poor performance • Frequently absent from work station • Long breaks • Frequent personal use of phone / internet
ACCIDENTS / SAFETY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequent accidents on the job • Frequent accidents off the job but impacting work performance • Lack of concern for the safety of others / safety procedures • Frequent personal use of phone / internet
COGNITIVE PROBLEMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easily distracted • Requires repeated instruction • Poor memory • Easily confused • Jobs take an excess of time to complete • Observable difficulty with concentration • Difficulty recalling instructions, details, etc. • Increasing difficulty with complex assignments • Difficulty recalling or explaining own mistakes
INCONSISTENT WORK PATTERNS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternating periods of very high and very low productivity
PERFORMANCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequently misses deadlines • Slow to complete tasks • Frequent mistakes • Inefficient use of resources / materials • DUI / DWI
WORK RELATIONSHIP DIFFICULTIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overreacts to real or imagined criticism • Mood swings / morale fluctuates • Complaints from co-workers • Unreasonable resentments • Avoids others / others avoid them

WORKPLACE TRAUMA RESPONSE



Your Assistance Program provides support when traumatic events happen at the workplace.

Debriefings are structured group meetings that provide a forum for participants to process thoughts, reactions, and feelings resulting from a traumatic incident. Debriefings are typically scheduled within 24 to 72 hours after an incident.

Debriefing sessions aim to:

- Provide an opportunity for education, venting, and support
- Prepare participants about the symptoms they might experience
- Provide ready access to Assistance Program services for employees in need
- Screen employees who may be experiencing more severe forms of a post-traumatic stress reaction and refer them to the appropriate resources

DEBRIEFING BEST PRACTICES

Debriefings usually last 1 to 2 hours and are best conducted with 3 to 30 participants. All employees affected by the incident should be encouraged to **voluntarily** attend and participate. The debriefing will be facilitated by the Assistance Program counselor who will provide written information about post-traumatic stress to each participant.

After the debriefing, the counselor may be available to meet individually with employees. Debriefing rules include an expectation of confidentiality for all participants. Family members of the victim should not be included because their presence can make it more difficult for observers of the incident to talk freely. Separate meetings with family members can also be arranged.

When it is not possible to create a group, it is recommended that the counselor meet individually with affected employees. The counselor will consult with management about on-going needs. Occasionally, follow-up meetings are useful to provide additional assistance to those who continue to be affected. If symptoms persist, employees and family members are encouraged to seek outside counseling.