



Teamwork

**A manager's guide to making
effective referrals**

Aetna Resources For LivingSM



An employee starts showing up late. A colleague says he feels anxious all the time. A staff member comes smells of alcohol.

It's hard when your employees struggle. You care about them and their problems can affect your whole team. The good news is you're not alone. We have a team of specialized management consultants to help you navigate these kinds of issues.



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Managing the work environment

Associates spend a major part of each day — a good part of their lives, in fact — on the job. And if they work in a supportive, positive environment, they are more likely to feel better about themselves and their work.

Here are some guidelines that can help you build and sustain a positive workplace:

- Keep communications open
- Build effective teams
- Delegate when needed
- Promote problem solving
- Take care of conflict

Keep communications open

Communication happens all the time, but that doesn't mean it's always effective. Be mindful of how you communicate with your staff.

What can you do to become a more successful communicator and maintain open channels with your employees?

- Listen, really listen, when they talk to you.
- Understand and respect different viewpoints.
- Put yourself in the other person's shoes.
- Be open to new ideas.
- Ask questions if you don't understand.
- Use open body language, make eye contact and nod your approval or understanding.
- Don't interrupt the speaker; wait to make your point.

During times of change or uncertainty, effective communications become even more important:

- **Don't allow rumors or half-truths to circulate throughout the work environment.** Rumors are morale killers.
- **Keep your door open during this time for visits.** This may encourage associates to ask questions.
- **Let your employees know,** very clearly, what is expected of them during a time of change.
- **Don't deny that change will have an effect.** For every action, there is a reaction. However, that doesn't mean that things will change for the worse. Change can be highly positive and beneficial for you, your staff and the company.
- **Be honest.** Even if news is less than positive, communicate it clearly and openly once you are permitted to do so.





Build effective teams

Teams can be a great way to foster collaboration, improve relationships and meet goals. However, people on teams bring with them their own ways of thinking and doing. That means teams can also create duplication of effort, cause disharmony and lead to control issues. You want to structure your workplace to encourage teamwork and put it to use for the company.

How can you bring teams together in a way that benefits both team members and the organization?

- **Clarify the vision.** This is critical. Your mission — and your strategies to get there — must be clearly defined so that everyone is on the same page.
- **Inform.** The team goals must be communicated to everyone in the group, at all levels, so that members understand individual and team responsibilities.
- **Make it safe.** Team members should feel that it's okay to speak their minds in a non-threatening way, offer input and make creative suggestions. By making it acceptable for everyone on the team to share their contributions, you can learn new and creative ways of doing things.

- **Appreciate the differences.** Team members bring with them a range of skill sets, experience and knowledge. Recognize these differences and allow employees to share their strengths. It will let you use the talents of the group to the team's advantage.
- **Keep it positive.** When you bring together a group of people, personality issues and finger-pointing can occur. Remind your staff that they're all "in it together." Reinforce the idea that, when things go wrong, it doesn't matter who's responsible. It's up to the team to work together and correct the situation.
- **Keep focused on the goal.** Make sure to monitor team progress to see that individuals don't get caught up on minor details or move off course. It's your job to keep the team on task.

As you learn and practice the skill of delegation, you can motivate associates to willingly seek new opportunities and become more productive.





Referring employees to us

You've got questions. We've got answers.

When it comes to employee issues, you need options. You can find our service to match your management need. We offer three different types of referrals. You can consider three main factors when choosing the referral to best meet your need. Take a look at these questions:

- **Job performance.** Is there a performance issue? If so, how serious is it? Is it creating risk and liability for your organization?
- **Risk of termination.** Is your employee at risk of termination? Where are you in your progressive discipline process? What will happen if your employee fails to follow through with the referral?
- **Information.** How much information do you want from us about your employee? Do you want to know the employee called to schedule an appointment? Or do you want to know what the therapist recommends?

Help with tough decisions

If you've gone through these questions, you can always call our management resource consultants. Based on your employee's specific issue and your organization's policies, we'll recommend one of the following referral options:

- 1. Informal referral.** An informal referral is a great option when you want to provide support to an employee. This choice is best when your employee is performing well. Your employee chooses whether to call us and we don't provide you with any follow-up information.
- 2. Formal referral.** If your employee's performance is declining, a formal referral may be a good choice. You may want to refer him or her to us as part of your corrective action plan. In this case, you strongly suggest the employee use our services to address his or her performance problems. You will need to have your employee sign a release of information in order to confirm he or she called us and scheduled an appointment.
- 3. Mandatory referral.** In cases where an employee is at risk of termination, you may want to consider a mandatory referral. That means you receive updates about your employee's compliance and follow through with our recommendations. Employees who fail to follow through with the referral are at risk of losing their jobs.
- 4. Don't worry.** You don't have to know which referral is best for you right away. We're here to help walk you through this, every step of the way. Our management resource consultants are licensed professionals with specialties in workplace issues ranging from substance abuse to workplace violence.





Chances are, you've got other resources to help you support your employees during difficult times. We suggest you consult your policy, Human Resources and your legal department before making a formal referral to us.

Steps to take when making a formal referral

1. Review your policies.
2. Document the performance issue. We suggest using objective language. For example, instead of writing "Bob is lazy," write, "Bob hasn't completed his assigned work."
3. Consult with Human Resources about your employee's performance issue.
4. Begin using your performance improvement system.
5. Call and consult with one of our management resource consultants.
6. Meet with your employee to explain the management referral. Outline your expectations around the employee's follow through and future work performance.
7. Have your employee sign a management referral form. This form will have been sent to you by our consultant after you call for a consultation. It serves as the release of information, letting us talk to you about your employee's follow-up.

8. Give your employee the management consultant's contact information. Set a deadline for the employee to call us. Allow your employee to make this call in a private setting.
9. Fax the management referral form to your management consultant. You may want to include other documentation, such as disciplinary letters or memos.
10. Let your management consultant know how often you want feedback on your employee's compliance. Your consultant may ask you for information on how your employee is performing. This information may be shared with our clinician to help with counseling sessions.
11. Continue documenting your employee's performance.

We're here for you and your employees. Call us to learn more about our referral process.





Reasonable suspicion

As a manager, your responsibilities include monitoring your team's job performance, addressing performance problems and ensuring job tasks are completed. The single most important quality you possess as a manager is your ability to create an efficient and safe workplace.

But substance misuse can impact the safety of your workplace. We'll walk you through how to recognize, document and address these cases.

There are six steps in making a reasonable suspicion decision:

- 1. Recognition:** Use the reasonable suspicion page of this document to recognize the signs and symptoms that could indicate alcohol and/or substance use.
- 2. Documentation:** Record your observations. Be objective. Using a checklist will help you to stay objective.
- 3. Consultation:** Speak with the appropriate people in your organization according to your policies and procedures. Consider speaking with one of our management resource consultants (MRCs) to help you determine whether there's a reasonable suspicion that your employee has violated your substance use policy.
- 4. Plan of action:** Work with HR or your company's designated person to develop an appropriate action plan. Our MRCs can also help you with this plan. This may include: removal from safety-sensitive functions, a reasonable suspicion drug test, suspension or administrative leave, a management referral, etc.
- 5. Meet with employee:** Be prepared to discuss your factual observations, policies and procedures that pertain to substance use in the workplace, clear expectations for the employee going forward and the potential consequences for not following company policies and procedures.
- 6. Support and supervise:** Continue to support the employee. But make sure you hold him/her accountable to maintain a safe work environment for all employees.

Note: Reasonable suspicion drug and alcohol testing may involve federal, state or local laws. So be sure to consult with your legal representative and other professionals before taking action.





Observation and recognition

Use this worksheet to help guide your decisions. Always consult with your organization's Human Resources, Legal department and other professionals to properly apply your reasonable suspicion drug/alcohol testing policy.

Reasonable suspicion decisions need to be based on observations that are:

- Specific
- Factual
- Current
- Easy to explain

Your decision must be about the employee's:

- Appearance
- Behavior
- Speech
- Body odors

Document and take action according to company policy if you suspect or think an employee:

- Is presently under the influence
- Is not safe to perform his/her job duties
- Is behaving in a uncharacteristic manner
- Has behavior that leads you to believe there is a good cause for reasonable suspicion

It would benefit you to review all your company's materials on a drug-free workplace before taking action. If possible, get a second or third observer from management.

1. Write down your sensory observations to support your suspicions.
2. Make notes about what you:
 - See
 - Hear
 - Smell
3. Record what you observe about the employee's condition or actions? Remember to be specific and factual only. Do not offer opinions or conclusions about what you observe.
4. Consult with Human Resources and other professionals in your organization to discuss your observations.





Acute situations vs. chronic patterns

How do you know there's a potential substance use concern? Your employee's actions are your best guide.

What is an acute reasonable-suspicion situation?

Sometimes a person's behavior will suddenly change. This may signal there's a problem or substance use issue.

Immediate work behaviors to be concerned about include:

- Sudden falls or injures
- Immediate problem with functioning
- Obvious safety rule violations
- Sudden drop in quality/quantity of production
- Troubled interactions with others (something different from the norm)
- Unusual tardiness to work
- Clumsy movements
- Alcoholic smell on breath
- Possible constricted pupils
- Sleepy or dazed condition
- Slowed reaction rate
- Slurred speech
- Hyper-excitability, restlessness
- Dilated pupils
- Increased heart rate and blood pressure
- Irregular heartbeat

- Flushed skin or heavy sweating
- Rapid breathing
- Confused behavior
- Lack of focus
- Sudden change in mood
- Depressed or anxious mood
- Lack of energy
- Upset stomach, nausea and vomiting
- Slowed or troubled breathing
- Decrease in breathing rate
- Dried out mouth or drooling
- Unsteady body movements
- Altered sense of reality
- Slow and garbled speech
- Distorted perception of space and time

Ask yourself

- Does this person appear ill?
- Can she/he safely do the work today?
- Are these symptoms unusual for this person?
- Has something happened on the job that might explain this unusual behavior?

Please note that there may be many other explanations for any or all of the above behaviors. Be sure to consult with your organization's Human Resources department and other professionals to assess your observations.





What is a chronic work-performance condition?

In some cases, the employee's behavior changes gradually. You may not even be aware of it at the time. But after some months, you know something is different. You begin to be more concerned about a pattern of behavior. These can include:

- More frequent falls
- Repeated incidents of almost injuring self or others
- More common accidents and near accidents
- Increased tardiness
- More sick days being used, especially Monday absences after Friday paychecks
- Decreased reliability
- Physical functioning changes
- Physical appearance changes
- Strained relationships with others, complaints from subordinates and co-workers
- Increased money problems — borrowing from co-workers, evictions, other financial disasters
- Poor attitude
- Poor or erratic performance (there may be some improvement spikes, but it gradually worsens over time)
- Increased frequency of hangover symptoms
- Greater use of drug culture jargon
- Secretive behavior, such as disappearing from work area
- Withdrawn behavior — avoiding “straight” (non-using) workers or change in peer group at work
- Forgetful, indecisive and erratic judgment
- Impulsive and temperamental behavior
- Poor hygiene
- Jittery movements, hand tremors, hyper-excitability
- Increased carelessness
- Tired presentation or sleeping on the job
- Slowed reactions
- Increased fatigue
- Delayed decision making (not as sharp as used to be)
- Confused behavior and lack of concentration or memory loss
- Challenged when forced to learn new tasks
- Unusual clothing choices (wearing long sleeves during hot months or sunglasses indoors or at night)

Please note that there may be many other explanations for any or all of the above behaviors. Be sure to consult with your organization's Human Resources department and other professionals to assess your observations.





Substances: types, effects and withdrawal symptoms

Type	Possible effects	Effects of overdose	Withdrawal symptoms
ALCOHOL: Beer, wine, distilled spirits	Impaired coordination, judgement, perception, comprehension and concentration; drunken behavior with odor of alcohol	Loss of coordination; inability to react; sleepiness; aggression; liver, heart and brain damage; possible death	Anxiety, headache, upset stomach, shaking, tremors, sweating, possible death
CANNABIS: Marijuana, tetrahydrocannabinol, hashish oil	Euphoria; relaxed inhibitions; increased appetite; disoriented behavior	Fatigue; paranoia; possible psychosis	Irritability, nausea, sleep problems, restlessness, stomach pain
DEPRESSANTS: Chloral hydrate; barbiturates; glutethimide; methaqualone, benzodiazepines, other	Slurred speech; disorientation; drunken behavior without odor of alcohol	Shallow breathing; cold, clammy skin; dilated pupils; weak and rapid pulse; coma; possible death	Anxiety; insomnia; seizures, restlessness, dizziness, psychosis
HALLUCINOGENS: LSD, mescaline, peyote, amphetamine variants, phencyclidine analogs, bath salts, ecstasy, etc.	Illusions; hallucinations; poor perception of time and distance	Longer, more intense "trip" episodes; psychosis; possible death	Flashbacks, depression, aggression, psychosis, stomach problems, poor coordination
NARCOTIC: Opioids, morphine, codeine, heroin, hydromorphone, meperidine, methadone, other narcotics	Euphoria; drowsiness; respiratory depression; constricted pupils; nausea	Slow shallow breathing; clamminess; convulsions; coma; possible death	Muscle pain, upset stomach, sweating, restlessness, anxiety, depression, yawning, insomnia
STIMULANTS: Cocaine, amphetamines, phenmetrazin, methylphenidate, other stimulants	Increased alertness; excitation; euphoria; increased pulse rate and blood pressure; insomnia; loss of appetite	Agitation; increased body temperature; hallucinations; convulsions; possible death	Runny nose, appetite changes, muscle pain, paranoia, confusion, shaking, sweating



Next steps

If there is no basis for a test, review the employee's performance issues. And remind the employee about the organization's policies and option to self-report.

If there is a basis for a test AND your company policy allows for reasonable suspicion drug/alcohol testing, you should take the appropriate steps. Scrupulously follow your organization's reasonable suspicion drug/alcohol testing policy. Involving your company's Human Resources, Legal and other advisors as dictated by such policy. This may include instructions to:

- **Remove** the employee immediately from any safety position
- **Discuss** observed behaviors with the employee
- **Arrange** "for cause" drug testing (per your company policy)
- **Drive** or have the employee driven to a clinic
- **Alert** Human Resources
- **Contact** our Organizational Risk Management Center to consult with a MRC
- **Consult** with Human Resources
- **Hold** a private meeting — always respect confidentiality
- **Communicate** the employee's value to you and the company
- **Be specific** about the problems and expectations concerning job performance
- **Listen** to the employee
- **Communicate** specific consequences if there is a lack of improvement
- **Refer** to us per your company procedures

Tips on documentation

The key to a successful employee meeting is effective, thorough and non-judgmental documentation. Use all of the tools at your disposal:

1. Training material on a drug-free workplace
2. Checklists and worksheets such as this one
3. Company policy and procedure manual
4. Witnesses
5. Job descriptions
6. Consultation with an MRC

Be wary of enabling

Please note that "supervisory enabling" (avoiding the confrontation because you feel uncomfortable or hate to get someone in trouble) doesn't help the employee who is in trouble. Often, the employer's confrontation provides motivation to get help.

Components of enabling:

- Minimizing
- Letting it slide
- Picking up the slack
- Ignoring the problem
- Making excuses for the employee



Organizational Risk Management Center

Remember that our Organizational Risk Management Center has qualified MRCs. These consultants can help you address reasonable suspicion and safety concerns.

To access any of the management services described in this brochure, call our dedicated management services line.

MRCs are available to help you navigate employee performance concerns. Help is just a phone call away.

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