

## Supporting Your Staff: A Guide for Managers

As a manager, you may need to have difficult conversations with employees facing challenges. Handling these with care helps support staff, maintain performance, and foster a positive workplace. Here are key steps to navigate these situations effectively.



### Recognising Changes in Employees

Be observant of any changes in an employee's behaviour or performance, such as:

- Altered appearance
- Reduced productivity or work quality
- Increased absenteeism
- Disruptive behaviour
- Interpersonal conflicts or concerns about substance use
- If you notice changes, check in with the employee in a private setting and ask if everything is okay.

**Early Intervention Matters:** Addressing concerns early can prevent further performance or behavioural issues. Expressing care and concern helps employees feel supported. However, avoid making assumptions about the cause of their difficulties and respect their privacy if they choose not to discuss the issue.

**Maintaining Confidentiality:** If an employee shares personal information, reassure them that their privacy will be respected. Listen actively, but remember that you are not responsible for solving their personal problems. Avoid offering advice on sensitive matters such as finances or relationships.

**Encouraging Open Communication:** Sharing personal challenges can be difficult for employees. As a manager, being approachable and making time for conversations can build trust and confidence, improving their ability to perform at work.

**Listening for Understanding:** If an employee expresses frustration, anger, or avoidance, try to understand their perspective before discussing solutions. A supportive approach fosters a more constructive conversation.

**Referring Employees to EAP Counselling:** Recognising early warning signs and guiding employees to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a vital management function. Let employees know that EAP services are completely confidential and that Access Wellbeing Services (AWS) does not share details of counselling sessions with the employer.

**Manager Support Line:** AWS provides confidential advice to managers through the Manager Support Line. If you need guidance on referring an employee or managing workplace concerns, you can reach out for support.

To book an appointment with one of our counsellors, call or scan the QR Code



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**Manager-Initiated Referrals:** For workplace-related concerns such as inappropriate conduct, unexplained absences, or performance issues, managers can formally refer employees for counselling.

In this process:

- Managers and employees agree on goals (e.g., conflict resolution, interpersonal skills, or time management).
- Counselling addresses both work and personal factors affecting productivity.
- While personal concerns remain confidential, employees consent to managers receiving feedback on progress toward workplace-related goals.

### How to Refer Employees to EAP

Encourage employees to call 1300 66 77 00 to arrange their own appointments. If they request your assistance in making the call, they must be present to confirm their consent for data protection purposes.

Supporting employees through difficult times enhances well-being and contributes to a stronger, healthier workplace culture.

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