

The Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) Resource Guide

for managers, supervisors and other people leaders



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The EFAP Resource Guide

This easy-to-use handbook offers practical suggestions on how to use the Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP). It identifies challenging scenarios that managers and supervisors may face from time to time, and offers step-by-step advice to help resolve situations quickly and effectively.

Use this guide as a quick reference tool and take advantage of its many helpful tips and techniques.

The following chapters will offer you ways to:

- Master the use of EFAP resources;
- Understand the key challenges that managers and supervisors face;
- Recognize the signs of an employee in trouble;
- Prepare for, and deal with, employee performance issues;
- Deal with other difficult employee-related situations; and
- Use preventative tools to promote a healthy workplace.

Download
My EAP app now at
your device app
store or scan the
QR code.



**Access your EFAP 24/7 by phone,
web or mobile app**

1.844.880.9142
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Support for managers and supervisors

Every day you juggle priorities, deal with deadlines and make decisions for your team

Along with these demands on your time and energy, managers and supervisors are also responsible for providing a healthy and productive workplace for their employees. This can include keeping in touch with employees to ensure that they have the support that they need, and promoting open two-way communication within your workplace.

In fact, managers and supervisors are key to promoting and maintaining a healthy workplace culture. Even a single comment, action or intervention by a manager or supervisor can have a positive impact on the well-being of an entire team. And it's a proven fact that a positive environment leads to higher employee engagement, resilience and retention. It can even lead to improved employee performance, decreased stress levels, and better mental and physical health.

At your fingertips is your EFAP. In addition to the program providing support to your employees for work, health, and life concerns, it is also designed to offer managers, supervisors, and people leaders advice, consultation and resources they need to promote and maintain a healthy working environment.

Take advantage of these tools for managers from your EFAP

Manager Area on workhealthlife.com	This is the online destination for people leaders. Here, managers will find helpful articles, videos, People Leader Guide for download, information about training and development and instant access to confidential Manager Consultations via First Chat.
Manager Consultations	These confidential one-on-one telephonic consultations are available 24/7 for managers. Our counsellors can help with advice and guidance to help you manage the unique and sensitive situations you're facing in the workplace. It could be workplace conflict, how to help a grieving employee or addressing a mental health concern; let us help. Manager Consultations can be accessed in two ways: <ul style="list-style-type: none">By calling the Care Access Centre at 1.844.880.9142By First Chat in the Manager Area workhealthlife.com or My EAP app
Healthy Working newsletter	These quarterly newsletters address topics including how to foster employee engagement, deal with change and recognize mental health challenges. Archived newsletters are available on workhealthlife.com.
Wellness Calendar	This annual calendar can help managers to plan health and wellness initiatives throughout the year. Download it on workhealthlife.com.
Workplace Learning Solutions	Learning and development can help you and your teams succeed. Morneau Shepell offers a wide range of Workplace Learning Solutions on topics such as respect, diversity, change, resiliency and mental health. Contact the Workplace Learning Solutions team at 1.800.461.9722, workplacelearning@morneaushepell.com or submit an online request in the Manager Area on workhealthlife.com. <i>Fee for service.</i>
Workplace Support Program	This group of programs offers your workplace specialized mental health and addiction prevention/intervention services designed to reduce costs for organizations with faster diagnosis, sustainable recovery, and incidence of short and long-term disability. Contact your Morneau Shepell Account Director for more information. <i>Fee for service.</i>

Even in the healthiest environments, managers and supervisors can encounter employees who are faced with personal or work-related problems. Whether the problem is stress, a change in job responsibilities, or a child/elder care issue, the results can include missed time at work, distraction from day-to-day activities or 'presenteeism' (when an employee is at work, but spending their time focusing on non-work related tasks and issues).

Your EFAP can help address these challenges through a full range of support services and a hands-on approach to problem solving that saves you time and energy. Your EFAP can even help you deal with performance problems and tackle the tough situations that you are not quite sure how to handle.

The program is completely confidential within the limits of the law* and can be used at no additional cost, as part of your company's benefit package.

A helping hand	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Suggest the EFAP to employees when you are concerned about well-being or safety• Use the EFAP as an aid to performance management• Offer EFAP support to an employee if he or she expresses concern about a personal or work-related challenge
Insight and clarity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check out online resources including newsletters, articles and tip sheets on a variety of health and wellness topics• Receive information to better understand an employee's situation
Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Call for a management consultation on how to handle sensitive employee issues; you can explore options, brainstorm solutions and work on action plans• Call to receive advice and expertise in areas that you may not specialize in
Learning and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Morneau Shepell offers a wide range of Workplace Learning Solutions that can develop your skills as a manager and those of your team• Popular topics include respect, diversity, change, resiliency and mental health• Contact the Workplace Learning Solutions team at 1.800.461.9722, workplacelearning@morneaushepell.com or submit an online request in the Manager Area on workhealthlife.com. <i>Fee for service.</i>

Your EFAP offers a hands-on approach to problem solving that saves you time and energy.

* Limits of the law include threats of harm to oneself or others, and suspected child abuse.

Talking to employees about the EFAP

There may be times when you feel that an employee could benefit from intervention or assistance, such as when someone has experienced the loss of a loved one, a divorce or separation, an accident or a severe illness. Or perhaps an employee has approached you in confidence about a personal or work-related issue.

This is not an easy situation for anyone, and sometimes it's difficult to resist 'counselling' the employee. But remember that as a people leader, your strongest position is to remind the employee that help is available through the EFAP. This offer of EFAP support will help you maintain professional boundaries while still showing support for the employee.

Your employees can receive help on a variety of issues:

Personal well-being	Relationship issues	Family issues	Substance abuse	Workplace challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Personal stress• Depression• Grief and loss• Anxiety• Aging and midlife issues• Mental health and well-being• Managing anger• Lifestyle and health changes• Crisis situations• Traumatic experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communication• Relationship conflict• Separation/divorce• Domestic abuse• Building healthy relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parenting• Blended families• Extended family relations• Communication• Single parenting• Aging parent concern	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Alcohol• Drugs• Smoking• Gambling• Relapse prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Workplace conflict• Performance issues• Career planning• Violence• Harassment• Work-life balance• Work-related stress• Time management <p>...and more.</p>

If you decide to approach an employee with an offer of EFAP support, remember that it is not just what you say, but how you say it.

- Try general questions such as, “*How are you doing these days?*” or “*Is everything alright?*” to show you care without stepping into personal territory.
- Also, use an even, unexaggerated, natural tone of voice that does not demand a mandatory response. (This approach gives an employee the opportunity to tell you as much as he or she feels comfortable sharing). If the employee identifies a problem, you then have the opportunity to offer EFAP support.
- Have EFAP information (a brochure, wallet card or postcard) readily available and stress that the program is *confidential*. This means no one will ever know that the employee accessed the service, or what he or she discussed.
- Show the employee how to download the EFAP app, My EAP, on their mobile phone. The app is a digital wallet card of the program, providing 24/7 access from anywhere worldwide.
- And finally, remember to treat the employee with dignity and respect. Respect is the foundation of all good interactions; with it, even your most challenging conversations will be successful.

With these few key points in mind, and a gentle approach, you can show your employee the support he or she needs to seek help.

EFAP support can:

- Assess and determine the severity of a situation or problem;
- Detect early signs of a more serious situation;
- Match the employee to the most effective support for his or her issue;
- Investigate potential solutions and outline a treatment action plan; and/or
- Assist the employee to focus on problem-solving.

There may be times when you feel that an employee could benefit from EFAP intervention, such as when someone has experienced the loss of a loved one, a divorce or separation, an accident, or a severe illness.

The early-warning signs of trouble

If you were to chart an employee’s performance and productivity over a period of time, you would find a series of peaks and valleys. You would also find that this is a normal pattern. **It is only when an employee suffers from low productivity over a longer than usual period of time that you need to take action.**

As a manager or supervisor you can help prevent performance decline by spotting and addressing the early-warning signs of an employee in trouble. If you notice a troubling pattern, intervene at the earliest time possible before the problem becomes worse.

Behaviour patterns that are early-warning signs may include:	Patterns in short and long-term performance decline may include:	Patterns in absenteeism may include:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Withdrawal, isolation or avoidance;▪ Tardiness;▪ High and low mood swings;▪ Irritability and impatience;▪ Relationship issues or conflict with others;▪ Anxiety, fearfulness or lack of confidence;▪ Confusion, reduced concentration or forgetfulness;▪ Overreactions to negative feedback;▪ Complaints of unexplained aches and pains;▪ Frequent physical illnesses such as colds, influenza, headaches; and/or▪ A high rate of accidents on or off the job.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Missed deadlines;▪ Reduced quality of work and frequent mistakes;▪ Lowered efficiency in turnaround time;▪ Difficulty recalling instructions;▪ Erratic work patterns;▪ Coming/returning to work in an unacceptable condition;▪ Increased excuses for under-performance; and/or▪ Mistakes due to inattention or poor judgement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Frequent unscheduled short-term absences;▪ Frequent Monday and/or Friday absences;▪ Peculiar, and increasingly improbable, explanations for absences;▪ Excessive tardiness and leaving early; and/or▪ Continued absences from the work area, e.g. long coffee breaks.

Performance management

Performance management

In simple terms, performance management is about setting productive and supportive standards for change when an employee is not meeting the requirements of the job. It's about communicating:

- what needs to change;
- the expectations for change; and
- the time lines for change.

Why performance decline happens

Performance decline occurs for a variety of reasons. Common causes include coworker conflict, job burnout, personal illnesses or major lifestyle changes.

Managing situations like these can be difficult but it's necessary; if an employee's low productivity is left unresolved, an organization can experience increased benefit costs (including prescription drug claims, and short and long-term disability) and decreased customer service levels. You could also run the risk of losing the employee altogether and having to recruit, hire, and train a replacement.

If you think an employee's performance is suffering because of a personal or work-related problem, there are some basic guidelines that you can follow to help you through the performance management process. Remember that there are no 'quick fixes' for an underperforming employee; it will take time, planning and patience.

The reasons for performance decline may vary. Common causes include coworker conflict, job burnout, personal illnesses or major lifestyle changes.

Performance management—a *four-step action plan*

Contact your Human Resources department for additional support at any stage.

STEP 1: Preparing for the meeting

Before you meet with an employee, it's important to observe and document results that demonstrate the job performance issue.

Draft an agenda for your meeting and keep your agenda fact-based and focused on workplace performance. This will help you stay focused on key concerns you need to raise during the meeting.

If you think that you need additional support preparing for, holding or following up on the meeting, speak to your Human Resources department as appropriate.

Use the points below as a guide to preparing an agenda:

- Determine the purpose: clearly identify why you are meeting.
- Identify the benefit of the meeting to the employee and list why it is important to him or her.
- List an employee's positive contributions to demonstrate that he or she is valued.
- List the areas of performance or behavioural concerns.
- List concrete examples of a specific performance or behavioural concern.
- Identify expected improvements and time frames for change.
- Allow time for the employee to confirm his or her understanding of what has been discussed.
- Create an action plan.

Remember to document performance issues that you, as a manager or supervisor, have witnessed or experienced. Third-party information or hearsay should be investigated before being put on the agenda.

STEP 2: The meeting

Although you are now prepared for the meeting, keep in mind that the employee may not be – initially you may face resistance. Use the points below as a guide to the meeting:

- Share the employee's positive contributions to the organization at the start of the meeting.
- Express concern that the employee's performance is not what it used to be or what is expected.
- Avoid labelling, diagnosing or making assumptions such as "I think you may be depressed," even if you suspect a personal situation may be affecting the employee.
- Encourage the employee to recognize that something may be affecting his or her performance. Begin with "I've noticed that..." and provide an example of a performance or behavioural concern. Then discuss the impact that this has had on the employee's ability to meet the requirements of the job.
- In some cases, it is appropriate to ask the employee to consider if a personal or work-related problem is contributing to his or her performance problem. (Note: if the employee identifies a personal or work-related problem at this time, move on to step three before continuing with the points below).
- Involve the employee by asking for his or her suggestions in addressing/improving the situation as it relates to work performance.
- Listen to the employee's concerns and perspective.
- Outline and document the need for change, what changes are expected, the time frames for change, and the possible consequences of inaction.
- Ask the employee if he or she clearly understands the areas of performance difficulty, what changes are expected, and the time frame required for change.

Remember to let the employee know that he or she is valued, and that the purpose of the meeting is to provide support and direction for his or her success.

STEP 3: Offering EFAP support

If the employee identifies a personal or work-related problem during the meeting, remember to listen and acknowledge what the employee is saying. You then have the opportunity to combine the performance discussion with an offer of support through the EFAP.

- If the problem disclosed is work-related, communicate to the employee that you are available to support him or her on work-related issues. Also, if appropriate, suggest contact with the EFAP as an additional source of support.

As a manager or supervisor please note that when an employee accesses for work-related issues, the EFAP must remain neutral and can not advocate on behalf of the employee.

- If the problem disclosed is personal, suggest contact with the EFAP without further discussing the employee's specific situation. This will direct the employee to the most appropriate resources for help, and it will also help you set appropriate boundaries with the employee. It's important for you to help the employee understand that you do not have the expertise to problem-solve personal issues.

Have an EFAP brochure, wallet card or postcard, readily available and ensure that the employee understands that the program is voluntary and confidential.

It's important for you to remind the employee that your performance feedback is limited to his or her on-the-job performance and not any personal problem that has surfaced in the meeting.

STEP 4: Follow-up

At the close of your meeting, write down an action plan, and schedule a follow-up meeting to review goals and progress. This will also provide you with a future opportunity to deal with any obstacles or stumbling blocks.

Much of your follow-up plan will depend on your company's performance management practices.

Timing for follow-up will also depend on each specific situation. For example, chronic absenteeism may require a two-week follow-up period, whereas a one-month follow-up may be more appropriate for an employee exhibiting occasional inappropriate behaviour.

During the follow-up meeting, acknowledge improvements to help motivate the employee. If there are additional changes necessary, you may need to reassess some improvement time frames.

Also let the employee know that your door is always open should he or she wish to have further discussions prior to the scheduled follow-up meeting.

The best support you can provide your employee is consistent feedback and realistic expectations.

Keep in mind that the EFAP can complement, but not replace effective supervisory practices or disciplinary procedures. If you need further support or consultation in dealing with a difficult employee-related issue, consult with Human Resources. You can also contact your EFAP to receive a management consultation.

How to manage workplace stress

Stress can have both positive and negative effects. A positive level of stress can provide people with the energy and motivation to accomplish their goals. But when people perceive a conflict between the demands of their job, and the amount of control that they feel they have over meeting those demands, they experience negative stress.

As a manager, you can watch for indicators of negative workplace stress. Symptoms to look for may include:

Physical indicators	Complaints of headaches, indigestion, fatigue, insomnia, frequent illness, chest pain, shortness of breath, high blood pressure, muscle aches.
Emotional indicators	Mood swings, signs of anxiety, irritability, defensiveness, anger, hypersensitivity, lethargy or depression, expressing feelings of helplessness, emotional outbursts.
Behavioural indicators	Overeating/loss of appetite, increased alcohol or drug use, isolation, impatience, poor performance, poor hygiene, changes in relationships.

So how can you help reduce job stress?

Balance workloads and set realistic time lines – This means adjusting priorities and encouraging your team to check in with you before workloads become unmanageable. It's also important to communicate why a time line is important. Employees are much more willing to communicate potential challenges, and problem solve solutions, when they understand the 'bigger picture.'

Encourage breaks away from the office if possible – This is an excellent way to help employees reenergize. Encourage activities such as a walk outside, eating lunch as a team, stretching or deep breathing.

Take advantage of when an individual performs at his or her best – Some people are most alert at the crack of dawn, other people work best late in the day. Take advantage of peak performance times to accomplish challenging tasks.

Communicate frequently during times of change or uncertainty – Reconnecting on a regular basis with employees to keep them updated and informed will help reduce your employees' anxiety and stress levels.

Encourage EFAP access – Professionals experienced in stress management can provide confidential help.

Invest in workplace learning – Engage your team with a workshop or seminar to help them develop resiliency and thrive under pressure. Contact the Workplace Learning Solutions team at 1.800.461.9722, workplacelearning@morneaushepell.com or submit an online request in the Manager Area on workhealthlife.com. *Fee for service.*

Preventing workplace conflict

The key to preventing workplace conflict is to recognize that different people have different styles in dealing with situations as they occur. Each time an individual interacts with another, his or her perception of the interaction is unique. It's also natural for an individual to respond both intellectually and emotionally.

When this interaction results in conflict, most individuals will pinpoint the cause as being rooted in an action or an event that has occurred. But in reality the cause of the conflict is the individual's interpretation of, or emotional response to, the action or event.

As a manager or supervisor you can help prevent workplace conflict by helping members of your team clarify their individual perceptions and communicate more clearly with one another.

Encourage your employees to:

- **Apply active listening** to better understand a situation. This includes open questioning, gentle probing, paraphrasing to let the other person know they're listening carefully and 'checking in' to see if they've understood correctly;
- **Use I messages** such as "I sense" or "I feel" and "I think," rather than accusatory messages such as "You said" or "You never";
- **Avoid assuming** or attributing motives to another person, or interpreting disagreement as a personal attack;
- **Reframe and summarize** at the close of a conversation to clarify their understanding of what another person has said; and
- **Remember that only they have control** over their feelings and emotions when interacting with others.

If a conflict situation should arise between employees, remember to:

- **Contact your Human Resources department** if you think that you need support managing the situation and to review the organization's policy and procedure;
- **Acknowledge the situation**, don't ignore it in the hope that it will go away on its own;
- **Gather all the information you can** from employees involved in the disagreement before you try to settle the dispute – you will need to understand all sides (and perceptions) of the situation;
- **Focus on the issues**, not the individuals; and
- **Refer individual employees to the EFAP** if you feel they could benefit from additional consultation and advice.
- **Invest in workplace learning.** Engage your team with a workshop or seminar to help them develop better communication and conflict management skills. Contact the Workplace Learning Solutions team at 1.800.461.9722, workplacelearning@morneaushepell.com or submit an online request in the Manager Area on workhealthlife.com. Fee for service.

By understanding some of the key – and most problematic – sources of workplace conflict, you can intervene early and avoid more serious issues.

How to respond to critical incidents

Critical incidents can include:

- Workplace accidents;
- The death of a colleague;
- The death of an employee’s family member or significant other;
- Serious or terminal illnesses;
- Major downsizing/restructuring;
- Theft or robbery;
- Bomb threat;
- A health epidemic; and/or
- An environmental disaster.

The first few minutes after a trauma are critical for determining injuries and taking appropriate action. It’s also a critical time for managers and supervisors to observe employee reactions and reach out to any affected staff. Keep in mind that there are a wide range of reactions that people may experience.

The first and most profound reaction is often the effect of being physically shocked. When the physical shock begins to wear off, people often experience secondary reactions, which can produce a variety of behavioural changes in employees.

Effects from a traumatic incident can include:

Physical shock	Chest pains, dizzy spells, headaches, heart palpitations, lack of energy, neck or back pain, restlessness, insomnia/nightmares.
Emotional reactions	Mood swings, difficulty concentrating, paranoia, hyper-alertness, depression.
Behavioural reactions	Daydreaming, decreased work quality, forgetfulness, reluctance to go back to work, repetition of tasks already done.

If you experience a traumatic event at work, follow these tips:

- **Remain calm.** Someone needs to take charge and that will require a certain amount of stable behaviour during what sometimes can be a chaotic time.
- **Call 911**, if appropriate, and contact security. Follow your company’s emergency protocol.
- **Notify Human Resources** of the event and review possible support services available, including your EFAP.
- **Assess the need for on-site group counselling.** On-site debriefing services are available through your EFAP.
- **Be available to listen** to what your staff needs to talk about. This is important to begin the recovery process.
- **Try not to minimize the trauma** in an attempt to make staff feel better. The best thing you can do is offer support.
- **Recognize that you are not immune** to the trauma. You may require your own support in time.
- **Offer your staff foods** that will re-hydrate and replace vitamins and minerals. Try fruits, fruit juices, vegetables and water.

How to address substance abuse

Substance abuse is characterized by an individual’s repeated use of a substance(s) despite having negative physical, social, interpersonal or legal experiences, related to the effects of the substance itself.

If substance abuse is not treated, odds are that the dependency will increase and contribute to lost productivity, poor decision-making, unnecessary sick leave and possible accidents.

The signs of substance abuse are not always clear, however common indicators may include:

Physical indicators	Smell of alcohol, weight loss, injuries, blood-shot or glazed eyes, poor grooming or dishevelled appearance, frequent illness, fatigue or stomach problems, uncoordinated movements.
Emotional indicators	Mood swings, difficulty concentrating, expressing feelings of paranoia or depression, hyper-alertness.
Behaviour indicators	Withdrawal, hostility, unreliability, absenteeism, tardiness, relationship conflicts, slurred speech, lack of inhibition.

If you suspect a substance abuse problem with one of your employees, below are a few suggestions to follow:

- **Contact Human Resources.** Review and familiarize yourself with your organization’s policies and procedures on this issue.
- **Document the behaviour in your own record.** This means performance issues, such as missed deadlines, quality of work, and the physical, emotional and behavioural indicators.
- **Consult with your EFAP.** An expert can help you address this sensitive issue with the employee and also help develop work-related strategies to deal with the problem.
- **Remember that only a trained clinician or health professional can formally assess the problem.** Although the signs are there, there may be other explanations for the employee’s physical, emotional or behavioural symptoms.
- **Meet with the employee.** Consult with Human Resources and also review the four-step action plan outlined under “Performance management” in this guide. If you decide to meet with the employee yourself, remember to avoid ‘labelling’ and focus your discussion on the employee’s work-related performance or behaviour.

Your workplace can take a proactive approach to recognizing and managing substance abuse and mental health concerns with our Workplace Learning Solutions, including these workshops: Substance abuse and Mental health in the workplace. We also offer a Substance Abuse Program and Relapse Prevention Program within our suite of Workplace Support Programs. *Fee for service.* Contact your Account Director or call us at 1.800.461.9722 to learn more.

How to deal with workplace violence

Workplace violence can take the form of:

- Aggressive or intimidating behaviour;
- Abusive language, swearing, shouting;
- Hand gestures or physical motions;
- Throwing objects; destroying property;
- Disturbing phone calls;
- Robbery or vandalism;
- Carrying or displaying a weapon as a threat;
- Any form of physical assault; and/or
- Threats of harm.

'Workplace violence' is any threatening behaviour, harassment, bullying or intimidation. It can include menacing body language, verbal comments, written statements or expressions that communicate a direct or indirect threat of physical or emotional harm to another.

Responding to incidents of workplace violence can seem like a daunting task especially if you are the target of aggression. Below are a few suggestions that may help:

- If an employee reports an incident of aggression or violence, contact Human Resources immediately; if you believe that there is an existing threat to an employee's well-being, notify security immediately.
- If you are faced with an employee who has become violent, it is important to try to remain calm. Continue to communicate with the individual evenly and confidently. Direct any other personnel to leave the scene of the confrontation. If you can, call 911 and/or security, and notify Human Resources. If you cannot make the calls yourself, instruct another employee to do so. Do not attempt to get the violent offender to leave by force.
- Make sure to document the facts of any incident. You or Human Resources may want to consult with the organization's legal counsel. You can also contact your EFAP to receive help on how to support victims, and deal with perpetrators in an appropriate and informed manner.

As a manager or supervisor you can also be proactive. Try to:

- **Openly encourage** employees to report incidents;
- **Address** rude or bullying behaviour as soon as it happens;
- **Review** company workplace violence policies and procedures with new staff and periodically with your entire team;
- **Promote** a 'zero tolerance' policy toward hostilities at work; and
- **Foster** a work environment that is characterized by respect.

Your workplace can take a proactive approach to help prevent workplace violence with Workplace Learning Solutions including these workshops: Respect in the workplace, Workplace violence prevention and Diversity in the workplace. Contact the Workplace Learning Solutions team at 1.800.461.9722, workplacelearning@morneaushepell.com or submit an online request in the Manager Area on workhealthlife.com. *Fee for service.*

'Workplace violence' is any threatening behaviour, harassment, bullying or intimidation.

How to handle domestic violence

While it may be called 'domestic' this kind of violence can sometimes spill over into the workplace. It can also cause increased absenteeism and decreased productivity. Women are the most frequent victims, but men can also suffer from this form of violence.

If you observe signs that indicate domestic violence and you want to approach the employee with an offer of EFAP support, here are a few tips that may help:

- Talk with the employee in a private setting about what you have observed. For example, "I noticed the bruises you had last week and you seem to be upset and anxious lately." Offer your support and concern. Avoid diagnosing the situation by saying something potentially confrontational like "I think you may be in an abusive relationship."
- If the employee does not disclose any problem, do not pursue the discussion further – it is important that the individual self-disclose his or her situation. However, do point out that the EFAP is available for assistance, have literature on hand for the employee, and emphasize the program's confidentiality. Keep in mind that embarrassment and fear often make it difficult for victims of domestic violence to reach out for help. If you feel that the employee's well-being is at risk, call your EFAP for a consultation on how to manage this situation.
- If the employee discloses a problem with violence in the home, give support, but avoid well-meaning advice or engaging in on-the-spot problem solving. The employee needs professional support to address his or her situation. Refer the employee to the EFAP.

As a manager or supervisor you can also:

- **Contact Human Resources** to discuss the situation if there is a clear or potential threat to the employee while at work, or to the workplace in general. This might involve notifying security of the situation or temporarily moving the employee to a more secure location;
- **Contact the EFAP** to discuss concerns, available resources and ways to support the employee;
- **Approach** the employee to let him or her know you are available to discuss work-related issues; and
- **Show respect** for the employee's decisions and privacy.

Possible signs of domestic violence may include:

- Changes in mannerisms or work performance;
- Preoccupation or lack of concentration;
- Unexplained absences;
- Harassing phone calls received in the workplace;
- Nervous or jittery behaviour; and/or
- Bruises or injuries that are either unexplained or have improbable explanations.

Other sensitive issues

For other sensitive issues, contact your EFAP to discuss available resources and the best way to support either an individual employee, or your team. Your EFAP can provide management consultations on a variety of concerns including:

- Serious illness;
- Eating disorders;
- Career changes;
- Cross-cultural communication;
- Personal hygiene issues;
- Expression of suicidal thoughts;
- Harassment;
- Difficult personalities;
- Inappropriate or atypical behaviour;
- Medical conditions;
- Fragile or emotionally sensitive employees; and/or
- Concerning behaviour or appearance.

For other sensitive issues, contact your EFAP to discuss available resources and the best way to support either an individual employee, or your team.

Promoting a healthy workplace

A healthy workplace provides employees with structure, a sense of self-worth, motivation, and the means to achieve satisfaction from the work that they do.

As a manager, one of the greatest contributions that you can make to the success of your team is to promote a positive employee-manager working relationship. Studies show that the employee-manager relationship has the greatest impact on the morale of employees, and cultivates a healthy working environment that can actually influence greater employee engagement and improved performance.

By understanding that employees learn in – and respond to – environments where they feel supported and empowered to achieve, you can promote a healthy working environment. Below are a few suggestions:

A healthy workplace culture includes:

- Support for work-life balance;
- Employee input into decision-making;
- Leadership support for health and wellness;
- Role clarity, feedback, and clear performance expectations; and
- An environment of mutual respect.

- **Recognize a job well done.** Employees respond best to informal and timely recognition of their efforts. Take time to recognize individual employees immediately after a ‘job well done.’ This will increase their sense of value in relation to the organization and the job that they perform.
- **Generate employee input and feedback.** Employee involvement is an excellent team-building tool. Arrange for meetings on a regular basis to encourage brainstorming sessions where employees feel free to offer their perspective.
- **Communicate and relay information.** Employees look to their managers and supervisors to get the key information they need about their job, the developments that are taking place within their organization, and how these developments affect them. Keep your employees ‘in the loop’ by offering them regular updates on organizational objectives and priorities.
- **Promote work-life balance.** In the pursuit of job success, many employees neglect their family, personal health and well-being. This imbalance leads to increased stress, job dissatisfaction and eventually burnout. Help your employees work smarter by watching for signs of job stress, and encourage a balance between the demands of work and home.
- **Provide new opportunities.** Most employees relish the challenge of learning or applying a new skill. Try offering special projects to individual team members that ‘stretch’ their ability and offer them a chance to try something new.
- **Encourage access to the EFAP.** Professionals can provide confidential help and support for a variety of personal and work-related challenges.
- **Invest in Workplace Learning Solutions.** Learning and development can help you, your team and entire organization succeed. Morneau Shepell offers a wide range of Workplace Learning Solutions on topics such as respect, diversity, change, resiliency and mental health. Contact the Workplace Learning Solutions team at 1.800.461.9722, workplacelearning@morneaushepell.com or submit an online request in the Manager Area on workhealthlife.com. *Fee for service.*

For a better understanding of how the workplace can impact your employees’ physical health and well-being, talk to your Human Resources department or EFAP.



Let us help you lead

Access your Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) 24/7 for a confidential manager consultation for help with sensitive employee or workplace issues.

1.844.880.9142

TTY: 1.877.338.0275

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