



Managing Others is a Balancing Act

Inspiring a team to go forth and conquer demands more than just forging a common purpose – effective leaders must be able to support members on a personal level, too. Supportive leadership of your people is a key factor as to whether they are likely to be effective in, or satisfied with their jobs.

Supervisors, Team Leaders and Managers, have the responsibility of managing, directing and showing support for employees who at times may be experiencing difficulties impacting on their work performance, whether they are of a personal or work related nature.

As a leader, you may observe changes in an employees' behaviour and non-verbal communications that present as possible flags of concern. These can include:

- Sudden shift in performance or reduced quality of work
- Frequent absence from work
- Loss of sense of humour
- Emotional outbursts, including aggression or unusual irritability
- Obvious signs of stress and anxiety
- Difficulty with decision-making and concentration
- Lack of interest in work/life in general
- Erratic behaviour, mood swings or changes
- Conflict with co-workers

Sometimes, particularly in high-trust environments people clearly communicate that they are experiencing difficulties and approach you directly.

Referring to EAP

Approaching an employee to discuss performance issues is one of the most challenging responsibilities of a leader. Many leaders feel apprehensive and unsure about addressing an employee, in relation to the availability of EAP.

Recommending the EAP services to an employee demonstrates your care and concern. It also removes you from the role of counsellor, allowing you to focus on work performance and business.

A sensitive way of broaching the topic of counselling is to ask the employee if they are receiving enough support to manage during this time. You can offer to make a call on their behalf, or provide them with an EAP wallet card or flyer, so they can make a call in their own time. Let them know who the EAP is available to, including whether family members are able to access the service. It may also be appropriate to let them know that the EAP service is confidential and available at no cost to the employee.

As a Manager, Supervisor or Team Leader, you can also contact Converge International at any time for advice on how to approach employees, and the services that can be offered. This is especially helpful in dealing with urgent people-management issues, including critical incidents and distressed employees.