



**OHIO EMPLOYEE
ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

Helping and Supporting to Live Well and Serve Well



Understanding OEAP

A resource guide for agency managers,
supervisors and union leaders



Knowing When, Why and How to Use OEAP Services

Using OEAP as a Management Tool

“There are many ways of getting strong; sometimes talking is the best way.” — Unknown



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About the *Understanding OEAP Guide*

The purpose of this guide is to provide a resource tool for assisting managers, supervisors and union representatives in addressing workplace situations, including employee performance issues. This user-friendly guide provides practical information on how to use the Ohio Employee Assistance Program (OEAP) services.

This resource guide identifies challenging topics or situations that managers, supervisors and labor relation representatives may face throughout their workday. Also, it provides steps to help resolve situations quickly and effectively.

We encourage you to use the guide as a quick reference tool, as it offers many helpful tips and techniques.

If you have any questions or concerns that are not directly addressed in this guide, please contact OEAP or your agency Human Resources Office.

Thank you,
The OEAP Team



Our Mission...

To assist employees and their families in resolving personal and work-related problems by providing quality services, support and solutions that enhance the emotional, behavioral health and overall productivity of employees in a confidential and professional manner.

Our Vision...

To provide the highest quality of service that supports the health and well-being of employees and their families.

Our Values...

Our values define who we are. They are the cornerstone of what we believe, and how we work with others and serve others. We believe we are successful when we are helping and supporting others to live well and serve well through the following values.

- **Authenticity:** Being genuine in who we are.
- **Integrity:** Ensuring our work and actions align (walking the talk).
- **Confidentiality:** Demonstrating ethical principles of privacy by protecting the disclosure of personal information.
- **Teamwork:** Working collaboratively to achieve certain goals.
- **Customer Focus:** Understanding, anticipating and servicing clients.

Confidentiality Policy

It is the policy of the Ohio Employee Assistance Program to treat any information and documentation received in the strictest of confidence. All records are stored in a secured file cabinet and room, which are only accessible to OEAP staff. Information contained in the case records will not be released to any requesting party without the client's written consent, except under court order compelling disclosure (ORC 3701.041), as allowed by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) or where life or safety is seriously threatened.

Further, it is OEAP's policy not to acknowledge (i.e., neither confirm nor deny) any employee contact with OEAP without the expressed consent of the client. A written "Authorization for Release of Information" shall be properly executed before information and/or documentation will be shared with a third party.

All clients (walk-in or by telephone) will be informed of the levels of confidentiality and the extent of OEAP's policy prior to offering services. When appropriate, clients will be provided a copy of the policy and be required to sign a written statement of their understanding of the confidentiality policy and exceptions prior to service.



What is OEAP?

The Ohio Employee Assistance Program (OEAP) is an intake, information, referral and support service for state employees and their family members. OEAP is designed to help employees, union representatives, managers and agencies meet the many life challenges while remaining healthy, engaged and productive. OEAP can assist employees in coping with personal problems such as family and parenting issues, alcohol, substance abuse, emotional concerns (e.g., anxiety, anger, grief or depression), as well as provide referral information when an employee may be experiencing legal or financial difficulties. Personal problems can affect your health and well-being as well as your job performance. OEAP assists in resolving these problems. Unresolved problems may result in family disruption, job loss, health problems or even death.

The Role of OEAP

OEAP is available to assist employees or their family members with referrals and other needed information or consultation on various OEAP-related services. OEAP's primary responsibilities include coordinating and monitoring OEAP-related activities with State of Ohio agencies/ institutions, which involve:

- Ensuring training and education offerings are provided upon request;
- Providing telephone consultation to supervisors, employees and union representatives on the OEAP referral process;
- Reviewing, approving and coordinating Participation Agreements;
- Conducting Critical Incident Stress Management services and on-site intervention sessions; and
- Serving as a liaison and consultant to agencies (supervisors, managers and union representatives) on workplace conflict and issues related to agency policies and procedures.

.....
"Nothing gives one so much advantage over another as to remain calm and unruffled under all circumstances."
.....

— Thomas Jefferson





OEAP Services

OEAP provides a spectrum of services ranging from strategic consultation (e.g., organizational transitions and reorganizations) to assisting individual employees and their families with personal difficulties that effect job performance. OEAP provides support, referrals, intake and consultation services and monitors Participation Agreements (when disciplinary in nature), offers training and education and critical incident intervention services.

Who is Eligible for OEAP Services?

Employees currently employed by the State of Ohio and their dependent family members as well as retired employees are eligible for services.

How Can OEAP Services be Obtained?

Services can be obtained through telephone consultation, intake, referral or on-site consultation. Also, there are many self-help resources on the OEAP website.

Telephone Consultation

When a person contacts OEAP, the initial contact does not commit the caller to do anything and the caller may contact OEAP as often as needed. Also, a concerned co-worker, supervisor or union representative may contact OEAP regarding an employee who may need assistance. OEAP consultants will not contact the person, but will assist the caller regarding how to motivate or encourage the person in need to initiate contact. OEAP consultants are generally prohibited from initiating contact with an employee who has not personally requested services. The supervisor, manager or union representative may initiate a call to OEAP and provide background information. OEAP may initiate contact with an employee if it is believed that the employee may harm themselves or others.

Intake Process

When a person contacts OEAP, the OEAP consultant will perform the following intake functions:

- Make every effort to understand the full scope of the problem identified and any other contributing factors that may be helpful;
- Determine the impact or severity of the issue involving the person's life as well as their job performance. Ask questions to determine if the person is in immediate crisis (life threatening) and if the person's job is at risk of termination;
- Provide support, understanding and encouragement to the caller.

The caller is not required to continue with any recommendation offered by an OEAP consultant.



Referral Process

Although the majority of OEAP clients seek assistance on their own, many would not do so without the support or encouragement of a co-worker or family member. Supervisors, co-workers, union representatives or peers may consider recommending OEAP's services to individuals who are struggling with a personal or work-related problem. In addition, supervisors and union representatives may help to facilitate an informal recommendation through one of the following options:

- Provide an OEAP brochure and encourage the employee to contact an OEAP consultant;
- Offer to assist the employee in placing the initial call or request the employee's permission to schedule an appointment for him or her;
- Arrange an employee's work schedule to accommodate an OEAP appointment.

When the employee is having personal or work-related problems, call an OEAP consultant toll free at 1.800.221.6327, or in Central Ohio, 614.644.8545, for confidential assistance. An OEAP consultant will discuss the issue and, if necessary, provide the employee with counseling referrals to a licensed clinician, psychologist or substance abuse provider.

There is no cost associated with contacting OEAP. If a referral is made, the employee or employee's dependent may be responsible for a co-payment. For State of Ohio employees covered by the state's health plan, mental health services are provided by a network of behavioral health providers.

If an employee is not covered by the state health plan, the employee can still contact OEAP for assistance. OEAP staff will help with a referral through other insurance plans or will identify community-based resources.

On-site Consultation

If supervisors need assistance to address the ever-changing dynamics of the workplace, OEAP can provide on-site services to minimize the adverse impact of a traumatic situation. OEAP will respond to requests for on-site management consultations.

OEAP assists with situations, such as:

- Crisis response and intervention to traumatic events in the workplace;
- Improving individual and team performance through training, evaluation and coaching;
- Reducing workplace problems through training on topics such as mental health concerns, stress management and conflict in the workplace;
- Helping to manage the impact of organizational change such as downsizing, transitions and office relocations.



Managing Employee Performance

How to Handle Performance Issues

First, the supervisor must understand that performance management is about establishing productive and supportive standards for ensuring employees are meeting the requirements of the job. It involves communicating:

- Job expectations;
- What needs to change or improve in job performance;
- When change needs to take place.

There are circumstances when an employee needs to improve aspects of their job performance. For example, if an employee continuously has difficulty performing his/her job duties and assignments, these are issues that must be addressed by the supervisor immediately.



Are There Resources Available to Assist in the Early Intervention of Problems?

Supervisors, managers and union representatives typically are not trained clinical experts in human behavior. For these reasons, the supervisor and union representative should not attempt to diagnose an employee's personal problem. However, using the work-related skills and expertise of a supervisor or union representative can be helpful in identifying a situation that may require early intervention resources for assisting employees.

Supervisors and union representative can be helpful by intervening early and proactively assisting the employee in addressing personal problems. As the supervisor or union representative observe, they should take action. Early intervention may involve using OEAP before it becomes necessary to take disciplinary action. OEAP encourages early intervention through means such as:

- Distribution of brochures, posters, magnets, note pads, etc.;
- Newsletters and annual reports;
- Health and wellness fairs;
- On-site group discussions;
- New employee orientations;
- Supervisors providing employee awareness of OEAP services;
- Education and trainings offered by OEAP;
- Self-help resources via the OEAP website.



Remember, the earlier the intervention, the greater the chance there is to help an employee alleviate further problems in the workplace. Being a supervisor, manager or union representative, your role in supporting retention of employees is a vital factor. Using the above information can reduce problems and potentially avoid the implementation of disciplinary actions.

Why Employees Experience a Decline in Job Performance

Employees experience a performance decline for various reasons. Some of the more common reasons may include:

- Co-worker conflict;
- Job burnout;
- Personal illness;
- Major lifestyle changes or family issues.

All of these are real situations that can be difficult to manage. If performance issues such as low productivity are not addressed, they can result in other problems for the organization.

Patterns of Declining Job Performance

There are various kinds of personal problems that may affect an employee's job performance. Signs of personal problems may be easy to identify, especially when an employee reports to work intoxicated; displays marked deterioration in personal grooming, dress or appearance; has frequent crying spells; is constantly fatigued; and/or shows atypical irritability. In other instances, the signs may be subtle, such as a gradual decline in the quality of work or incidents of uncharacteristic tardiness. When these signs are present, it may indicate that the employee may be personally troubled or disturbed and this can impact job performance.

Such problems are much like the "tip of the iceberg." These warning signs may indicate that the employee could be experiencing other serious problems. It is the supervisor's responsibility to identify and address employee job performance problems and issues. However, do not attempt to diagnose the underlying causes. This is when the supervisor needs to contact or refer the employee to OEAP for professional assistance.

When an employee's performance declines and the person continues to exhibit performance issues either because of personal or work-related problems, the supervisor should seek assistance from the agency's human resources office, labor relations office or OEAP to obtain some basic guidance on how to handle the performance issue. The chart on the following page describes the signs of a troubled employee with declining job performance.



Signs of a Troubled Employee

Poor Attendance

- Increased absenteeism/tardiness
- Early departures or unexplained disappearances from work area
- Increased unscheduled absences

Deteriorating Performance

- Decrease in productivity
- Difficulty completing tasks or meeting deadlines
- Erratic work pattern
- Errors in judgment, increased mistakes, carelessness
- Inconsistent work quality

Conduct and/or interactions with others

- Accidents/safety issues
- Frequent personal calls
- Interpersonal conflict
- Resistance to change
- Threats/workplace violence
- Overreaction to normal criticism by peers or others
- Sudden mood change, uncooperative attitude

Underlying Personal Problems

- Substance abuse
- Anger/stress
- Domestic violence
- Grief and loss
- Financial/legal problems
- Marital/family problems





Steps for Managing Performance Issues

Action Plan to Assist in Managing Performance Issues

Step 1 Preparing for the discussion	Step 2 Holding the discussion	Step 3 Offering OEAP assistance	Step 4 Following up
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior to meeting with the employee, observe and document results that demonstrate the job performance issue. • Draft an agenda for the meeting focusing on the employee's job performance. • Consult with human resources or labor relations, if necessary. 	<p>Use the points below to guide the meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the employee's positive contributions. • Let the employee know that he/she is valued, and the purpose of the meeting is to provide support and direction for future success. • Express concern about the employee's performance. • Avoid labeling or making assumptions. • Help the employee to recognize something may be affecting his or her performance. • Involve the employee by asking for suggestions. • Listen to the employee's concerns and perspective. • Outline and document what needs to change and what is expected; provide time frames for change. • Make sure the employee clearly understands the areas of declining performance, changes expected and time frames. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the employee identifies a personal or work-related problem, it is important to listen and acknowledge what the employee is expressing. • If the employee discloses a work-related problem, communicate to the employee that you will support him or her on the issue. Also, suggest contacting OEAP as an additional resource of support. • If the employee discloses a personal problem, suggest that he/she contact OEAP, without further discussion. • Offer the employee an OEAP brochure to ensure the employee understands that the program is voluntary and confidential. • Remind the employee that your performance feedback is limited to his/her on-the-job performance and does not include feedback on personal issues that may surface during the meeting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When closing the meeting, be sure to write out an action plan and schedule a follow-up meeting to review goals and progress. • Your follow-up plan should align with your agency's performance management practices. • Timing for follow-up will depend on each specific situation. For example, inappropriate behavior may require a follow-up. • During the follow-up meetings, remember to acknowledge improvements to help motivate the employee or reassess improvements. • Provide consistent feedback and set realistic expectations. • Keep in mind, OEAP is a complement to your action plan, not a replacement for addressing performance issues or disciplinary issues.

Remember to document performance issues as a supervisor/manager and always consult with Human Resources or Labor Relations representatives.



The Role of a Supervisor, Union Representative and an Agency OEAP Coordinator

Supervisor

The key role as a supervisor is to monitor job performance. The supervisor is responsible for ensuring that work gets finished and the employees are performing their job according to standards. The supervisor is the link between a quality product and an effective workforce. If there is deterioration in job performance, there may be personal life adversities affecting the employee's life. This is when the supervisor may want to address the issues to determine what is needed to make sure the employee performs.

The supervisor should be consistent in following the agency's policy on corrective and progressive discipline, and focus on job performance and work-related behavior. When necessary, the supervisor is expected to take the prescribed steps to correct and deter the recurrence of unacceptable performance or behavior. Consulting with OEAP is a viable option, which may be helpful in restoring the employee's performance to acceptable levels.

Realize that the supervisor is not an expert in human behaviors and should not attempt to diagnose or speculate as to the reason or cause of the problem or be drawn into such discussions. Rather, the supervisor should remain focused on job performance and work-related behavior and use available OEAP resources, when necessary. In this capacity, the supervisor is to provide the best level of support and motivation to the employee, while meeting his or her responsibilities.

Union Representative Role and Responsibilities

In 1984, a group of management and labor leaders came together to discuss the importance of the State of Ohio having a program to assist employees who might be dealing with problems affecting job performance. Over the years, union leadership has played a key role and assisted the OEAP by serving on committees and the OEAP Advisory Board.

Since many union members and leaders work side-by-side with employees who may face challenges that can affect job performance, they play a key role in directing their co-workers to getting help through OEAP.

Also, unions provide assistance to employees who enter into OEAP Participation Agreements by working closely with OEAP consultants to assure that employees are complying with the requirements of the agreement.

Agency OEAP Coordinator

The role of the agency OEAP coordinator is to promote the OEAP program. This role is voluntary and may vary by agency, depending on the needs of the agency. The primary functions of most agency OEAP coordinators are to serve as a resource, advocate for OEAP services and maintain confidentiality. There are other supporting functions the agency OEAP coordinator may provide such as being a positive role model in the workplace.



Serving as a Point of Contact and Resource

- Be available as a point of contact to employees, supervisors, managers and union representatives by providing information or assistance. Note: the role of the agency OEAP coordinator is to only provide information, support and to facilitate; he or she is not to function as a therapist or counselor.
- Act as a liaison to supervisors and managers on issues involving the OEAP. They assist the supervisors with referral procedures, assessing the need for OEAP intervention with employees' performance or personal problems.
- Maintain a neutral status in dealing with employees and supervisors, as it relates to disciplinary actions. The agency OEAP coordinator should not act as a representative for an employee against management. However, the OEAP coordinator can assist in identifying situations that may warrant on-the-job intervention by OEAP once an employee has been identified as having performance problems that may result in discipline (e.g., policy violation, behavior, attendance).
- Assist employees in early intervention strategies, if requested.

Maintaining Confidentiality

- Agency OEAP coordinators are to follow state and federal regulations on confidentiality. No information, written or oral, can be disclosed by the agency OEAP coordinator.

Coordinating Education and Training

- Understand the need for identifying problems.
- Coordinate with OEAP to ensure that prevention classes are conducted. For example, classes on substance abuse, domestic violence and other personal problems should be presented as a means of providing awareness. These problems can affect an employee's performance.

Advocating for OEAP Services

- Assist in the promotion and distribution of information about OEAP services to help employees make better informed decisions.
- Provide information about the services that are offered, but also promote a positive image and reputation. Awareness of the program can be accomplished in a variety of ways such as printed materials, newsletter or information articles, health fairs, group discussions, displays, etc.

Promoting a Healthy Work Environment

As a manager/supervisor, helping to create a healthy workplace is one of the greatest attributes to the work environment that provides employees with a sense of teamwork, self-worth and a positive atmosphere. The supervisor plays a key role in creating that environment, which helps to build stronger relationships between employees and management.



The following are a few ideas to help strengthen or create a healthy work environment:

- Recognize employee's accomplishments;
- Frequently ask and use employee's feedback;
- Maintain open communications;
- Support employees in professional development and give them challenging assignments;
- Allow for balance between work and home life;
- Utilize OEAP whenever necessary.

Resolving Employee Conflict

What is Workplace Violence?

Workplace violence can be any act of violence against persons or property, threats, intimidation, harassment, or other inappropriate, disruptive behavior that causes fear for personal safety at the worksite. Different actions in the workplace can trigger or cause workplace violence (i.e., anger over disciplinary actions or the loss of a job, resistance by a customer regarding a policy or procedure). It may even be the results of non-work-related situations such as domestic violence, "road rage," hate incidents or crime.

Workplace violence can be inflicted by an abusive employee, a manager, supervisor, co-worker, client, customer, family member or even a stranger. Whatever the cause or whoever the perpetrator, workplace violence is not to be accepted or tolerated.

The following are examples of workplace violence:

- *Bullying*: May include hostility, spreading malicious rumors, gossip, or innuendo that is not true, undermining or deliberately impeding a person's work, physically abusing or threatening abuse, removing areas of responsibilities without cause.
- *Threats*: Can range from verbal abuse to physical violence.
- *Intimidation*: Intentionally and maliciously causing an employee or co-worker to feel inadequate or afraid. This includes verbal threats, unjust criticisms, sabotage of a person's work or supplies, sexual harassment and physical violence.
- *Revenge*: A harmful action against a person or group in response to a grievance – whether it is real or perceived.



Warning Signs or Indicators

Although it is not possible to predict human behavior and there is no specific profile of a potentially dangerous individual, there are several warning signs that one may want to be aware of in the workplace, such as:

- Direct or veiled threats of harm;
- Intimidating, belligerent, harassing, bullying, or other inappropriate and aggressive behavior;
- Numerous conflicts with supervisors and other employees;
- Bringing a weapon to the workplace, making inappropriate references to guns, or having a fascination with weapons;
- Making statements about or being fascinated with incidents of workplace violence, or identifying with statements made by perpetrators or aggressors of workplace violence;
- Employees expressing desperation (over family, financial, and other personal problems) to the point of contemplating suicide;
- Drug/alcohol abuse;
- Extreme changes in behaviors.

Preventing Workplace Violence

Supervisors/managers should be able to recognize each of these behaviors as a clear indicator that something may be wrong and these signs should not be ignored. Addressing workplace violence issues is vital, not only in dealing with the aggressor but preventing the problem from progressing in order to maintain safety. Having policies in place that can address these issues and leave no doubt regarding the consequences of such behavior is critical. Also, supervisors/managers must remember that the employee who has been the target of such behavior is the victim and should be offered all avenues of assistance. Training provides the supervisor with a better understanding of common causes, early warning signs, and prevention and intervention services available through the OEAP. This type of training is offered in two different modules: one for employees and the other specifically for supervisors/managers.

Domestic Violence

In Ohio, domestic violence is knowingly causing or attempting to cause physical harm, or threatening others to believe the offender will cause imminent physical harm to a relative, a person who you live with now or have lived with in the past. It includes same sex couples, a spouse or any person you have a child with. Victims of domestic violence experience a broad range of emotional consequences, including depression, anxiety and low self-esteem, all of which can adversely affect employee productivity.



All agencies may not have specific domestic violence policies; but it is an issue that impacts the workplace. Agency leadership can become involved by:

- Educating all employees about domestic violence and how to access help;
- Offering resources through the confidential OEAP services;
- Developing a workplace domestic violence policy;
- Collaborating with local domestic violence organizations and law enforcement agencies for education and service referrals.

Communication Conflict

Most conflict is a result of poor communication. Most people have no interest in creating conflict with others. Most of us know enough about human behavior to distinguish between healthy communication and the words or actions that contribute to rocky relationships. It is in our interest to maintain relations which are smooth, flexible and mutually enhancing. The problem occurs when one fails to use cooperative approaches consistently in our dealing with others. Often we are not aware of how our own behavior contributes to interpersonal problems. Sometimes one forgets or becomes frustrated and annoyed. At times, one can feel so exasperated and focus on his or her own needs at the expense of others, causing conflict.

In fact, only 10 percent of communication is verbal, 50 percent is body language and 40 percent is tone of voice. Often it's less important what one says than how it's said. Entering into a verbal confrontation with the right attitude and demeanor can mean all the difference to resolve a conflict. Keeping it "professional or business" is easier said than done. Those in a supervisory role must learn to deal with the problem at hand while maintaining a professional demeanor. Learning how to deal with communication conflict can become a major part of a supervisor's everyday job. One of the ways to prevent communication conflict is to use effective conflict strategies.





Techniques to Consider When Resolving Communication Conflict

- **Active Listening:**
 - Display a willingness to listen;
 - Ask questions and show interest;
 - Focus on issue(s) and listen for key points of what is being communicated.

- **Non-verbal Communication:**
 - Be open and consistent in how you use your body language. This can help defuse emotion. For example, be consistent in eye contact and posture so you appear welcoming and engaging.

- **Using “I” Statements:**
 - Be centered in the belief that if the speaker assumes responsibility for his or her statements others will be less likely to react and be defensive;
 - Take ownership for your statements;
 - An example of an “I” Statement: “I am frustrated when you don’t show up to work on time.”

- **Avoiding Communication Obstacles:**
 - Don’t fall into those easy communication traps when dealing with conflict. Examples of common obstacles that get in the way of effective communication are:
 - Diagnosing – “Your problem is that you”
 - Discounting – “Cheer up, it’ll work out”
 - Lecturing – “How many times do I have to tell you”
 - Threatening – “This is the last time I will”

For additional assistance with communication conflict, trainings are available through OEAP that can help you address such issues.

“Life isn’t about what happens to you, it’s about how you react to what happens to you.”

— Unknown





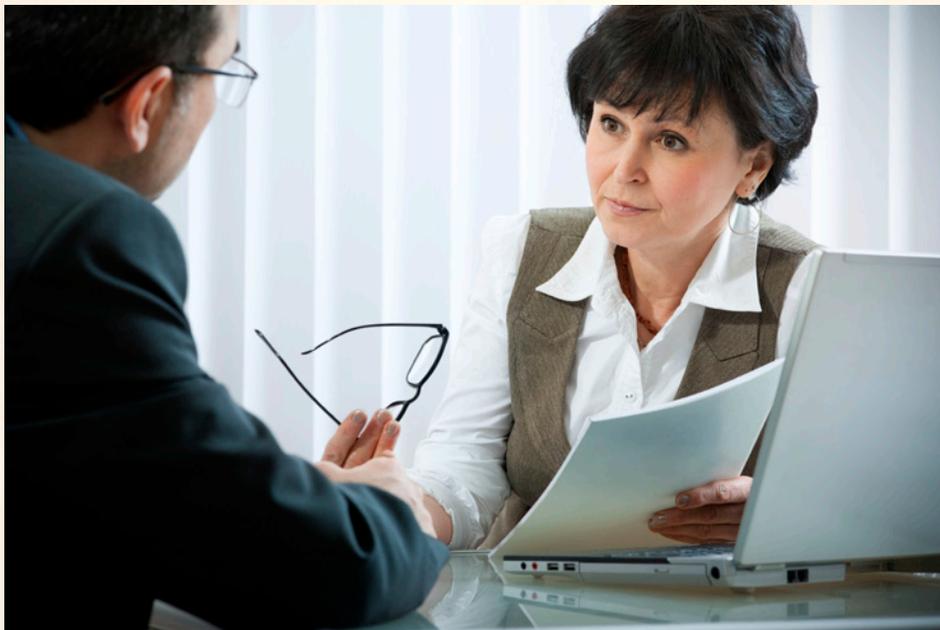
How to Deal with Difficult People

There's an art to dealing with difficult people. The following are techniques to consider:

- Stay calm, cool and focused in the face of aggression;
- Do not use sarcasm, rudeness or plain idiocy;
- Learn how to respond with poise and control, either over the phone or in person;
- Develop strategies that include good acting, compassion, finding common ground and brevity.

When dealing with difficult people, sharing responsibility, not responding, changing the subject or using appropriate humor may reduce feelings of hostility.

For additional assistance with dealing with difficult people, trainings are available to help you. Contact OEAP to register for the course.



“Nothing gives one so much advantage over another as to remain calm and unruffled under all circumstances.”

— Thomas Jefferson



Coaching Employees

What Does Coaching Employees Involve?

One of the most important qualities of a good supervisor is the ability to develop employees. Taking an active role in the development of your team demonstrates confidence and concern for the future of the organization. Development should be supported as an agency-wide effort; however, most of the responsibility falls on the shoulders of the supervisor.

Coaching Involves:

- Informal/formal one-on-one interactions;
- Listening, encouraging, advising, motivating and developing;
- Applying and providing essential supervisory tools and resources;
- Sharing values and beliefs for employee management.

As a supervisor, one of your primary responsibilities is to develop your staff. Coaching is an ongoing process. It involves informal feedback and coaching sessions that should be conducted throughout the year. The key point is to always remember that coaching is not optional for supervisors; it is part of each supervisor's job.



“Few people are successful unless a lot of people want them to be.”
— John Maxwell



Key Points About Coaching

- Use coaching to improve performance or increase motivation.
- It is not training.
- If you invest in people, in the short-term, you will receive the benefits in the long-term.
- Ask questions and listen to employees.
- Offer ideas, teach new skills and allow them to engage in new opportunities.

Benefits of Coaching

- Maximizes your time.
- Improves quality and productivity.
- Boosts enthusiasm and morale.
- Strengthens relationships and communication.
- Fosters commitment and increases job satisfaction.
- Improves teamwork.
- Builds trust and enhances loyalty.
- Helps you maintain connections with employees.
- Creates a positive working environment.

Talking to Troubled Employees

- Don't point the finger or place direct blame.
- Stay calm.
- Listen to understand. In an argument no one listens.
- Address the issue early.
- Avoid one-sided solutions. Empower the worker to develop solutions.
- Respect the employee.
- Point out positives about the employee.
- Address the problem, not the employee.
- Follow up with the employee in a private, tactful manner.



Entering into a Participation Agreement

What is a Participation Agreement?

The OEAP Participation Agreement is a contract between agency management and an employee facing discipline (e.g., suspension or removal), which states the work rule violation and the period of time the Participation Agreement will be in effect (minimum of 180 days, maximum of 730 days). OEAP develops a plan, agreed upon by the employee, to help ensure the employee's participation in a treatment program developed by the appropriate clinical provider. To ensure compliance, the employee must meet all terms of the treatment plan.



In an effort to improve the employee's job performance during the period of the Participation Agreement, management may:

- Agree to consider modifying the discipline held abeyance for employees who successfully complete the terms of the agreement;
- Dismiss the contemplated disciplinary action; or
- Carry out the disciplinary action as originally proposed (if no improvement in job performance has been documented).

The following are the type of work rule/policy violations where a Participation Agreement may be appropriate:

- Drug-Free Workplace Violations
- Absence without leave
- Neglect of job responsibilities
- Abusive behavior
- Tardy and absenteeism



Participation Agreement Process

Participation Agreement cases are assigned to an OEAP consultant who provides case management and monitoring of the agreement. The OEAP consultant communicates to the agreed-upon departmental or agency designee either the compliance or non-compliance of the employee according to the terms of the agreement. Because of the sensitive and confidential nature of the treatment involved, the OEAP consultant will maintain regular communication with management, the union representative, provider and employee during the duration of the agreement. Management will not be informed of any specific details of the treatment, only the fact of compliance or non-compliance.

A “Fitness for Duty Evaluation”

An employee exhibiting behaviors that raise concerns about the employee’s ability to remain in the workplace can be addressed through a fitness-for-duty evaluation or independent medical exam. During a fitness-for-duty evaluation, a psychological evaluation is performed to assess the employee’s ability to perform his/her essential job duties. Agency management should work with the agency’s human resources office in identifying a provider to complete this psychological evaluation. The agency’s human resources office may contact OEAP for assistance in identifying providers. The psychologist or psychiatrist completing the evaluation will generally report the results to human resources, who will then consult with agency management on the evaluation results.

“When you confront a problem you begin to solve it.”

— Rudy Giuliani





Organizational Transition Services



Organizational Transition Services

OEAP provides assistance to management and employees during times of organizational transition. Employees who may be faced with losing their jobs because of workforce reductions are the most vulnerable populations to experience stress-related problems while still on the job and/or even after being displaced.

Employees who remain in the workplace after workforce reductions or restructuring also may experience problems related to guilt, job security and anger. When left unresolved, these feelings may trigger:

- A loss of loyalty;
- A higher turnover rate;
- Lower productivity;
- A decreased morale;
- A decline in performance.

OEAP offers support and education in a joint effort to address the concerns of both management and labor. To help managers, supervisors and union representatives to improve the organizational health and productivity of the organization, the following are areas for which OEAP can provide training and education:

- Organizational change;
- Restructuring and intervention groups;
- Supervisor consultation;
- Stress management;
- Team building;
- Workplace loss or crisis;
- Workplace violence.



Critical Incident Stress Management Services

Critical Incident Stress Management

Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) is a service offered to State of Ohio agencies and employees. The CISM services will address the needs of state employees who may be exposed to or experience critical incidents in or outside the workplace.

The CISM services are available to help individuals return to normal recovery due to the reaction of a traumatic event or a critical incident. In addition, pre-incident education and training can be requested by agency managers.

In the event of a critical incident, OEAP staff are available to assist in determining what services would be most beneficial for the situation or the circumstance. Contact OEAP for consultation, on-site support, intervention services and/or pre-or post-incident education.

Types of Critical Incidents

Catastrophic Events

These events have extreme impact on the workplace. Catastrophic events significantly impact the work site production and may draw media attention. The level of trauma to the work site and employees is extreme.

Examples include:

- On-site shooting;
- Hostage situation;
- An explosion (man-made or natural);
- A natural disaster;
- A severe level of trauma to a large number of employees and/or where operations are severely affected or stopped.

Critical Incident

An incident that may involve or directly affect employees in the workplace. The level of trauma can range from low to moderate.

Examples include:

- On-site death;
- An employee threatens or commits violence against co-worker(s);
- A work-site accident;
- An employee dies unexpectedly or commits suicide.



Special Incidents

Special incidents usually do not involve the workplace. The appropriate intervention may involve a meeting with employees on an as-needed basis.

Examples include:

- Employee involved in a tragic accident;
- Employee death due to natural causes;
- Employee grief counseling.

Why are Critical Incident Stress Management Services Needed?

When the stressors become extreme or severe, it often produces a heightened state of cognitive, emotional and/or behavioral reactions. Critical Incident Stress Management Services offer intervention tools and resources to help individuals cope with the effects of traumatic events.

Intervention Services

On-site Support

Individual on-site assistance is given while the effect of the incident is still taking place. Services provided on-site are brief, practical crisis intervention functions that are designed to limit the level of distress employees may experience. These services do not interfere with the business operations.

Defusing Session

- Intervention held with a small group of people relatively soon after a critical incident.
- Defusing sessions typically last less than one hour and are intended to reduce the effects of exposure to a traumatic event, prior to employees leaving the work unit or returning to duties.

Individual Interventions

Intervention held with an individual employee following a critical incident. This is an opportunity for the employee to share information and their reaction about the incident. These sessions last about 45 to 60 minutes.

Critical Incident Stress Debriefing

- Intervention held with a group (10 to 15 is optimal) and ideally within 15 days of the incident.
- A Critical Incident Stress Debriefing session is a discussion of the involvement, thoughts, reactions and feelings resulting from the incident.



How to Handle an Employee Suicidal Threat or Intent

A manager, supervisor or union representative may find it challenging or difficult to approach the topic of suicide with an employee. It is a very difficult and personal matter to address; however, if there is a threat, talking directly and openly to the person may be the best action.

If there is an employee in immediate danger and there is reason to believe the person is threatening to take their life, contact security, call 9-1-1 and contact human resources. This is a time when the supervisor or union representative must act to get the person the immediate help needed. Remember, taking the appropriate action is critical for ensuring the employee receives help to prevent a suicide. Once the critical calls have been made, contact OEAP for additional assistance.

Because there are serious consequences of a suicidal intent, please do not try to deal with this type of situation alone. These types of situations need an immediate response. Contact OEAP on behalf of the employee. If there is immediate danger, call 9-1-1.

Possible Warning Signs of Suicide Risk:

- Sudden changes in behavior or mood, such as sadness or depression, uncharacteristic silence or withdrawal or neglect of work, appearance or hygiene;
- Talking or writing about death or dying, or making suggestive comments like “What’s the point of living? Life is meaningless. No one would miss me if I were gone;”
- Seeking lethal means such as saving pills or asking to borrow a gun;
- Giving away possessions;
- Asking about details of their life insurance policy, especially as it relates to cause of death;
- Showing interest in end-of-life affairs, such as making a will, discussing funeral preferences, etc.

Training and Education

Is Training and Education Available to all Employees?

OEAP offers training and education programs at no cost to all employees, state agencies and institutions. Training events require an advance notice of 10 business days. Each training session requires a minimum of 15 participants. The agency OEAP coordinator or human resources representative must complete an OEAP Training Request form and send it to the Ohio Department of Administrative Services’ (DAS) Office of Learning and Professional Development (OLPD) via email at: das.hrd.training.staff@das.ohio.gov or via fax at 614.728.3064. A representative from DAS OLPD will make contact within 48 hours.

When completing the request, indicate the name of the contact responsible for making the decisions regarding the training or event. For additional information about available trainings, visit the OEAP website at: ohio.gov/eap.



Website and Contact Information

Resources on the OEAP Website

OEAP offers many Web-based resources and information such as:

Strategic Focus: Mission & Goals	Policies & Procedures
Meet the Staff	Notification of Privacy Practices
Publications	Participation Agreement
Agency/Institution OEAP Coordinators	Self Help Resources
Training & Education	Online Video Library
Critical Incident Stress Management	Resource Directory
OEAP Advisory Committee	Frequently Asked Questions

How to Contact OEAP

Office hours are from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. A confidential voicemail is available to receive messages outside of these core business hours.

Location:

30 E. Broad Street, 27th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215
Telephone: 614.644.8545 (Central Ohio)
Toll-free Number 1.800.221.6EAP (6327)
Fax: 614.728.3046

Note:

Employees who work second or third shifts, weekends (such as in hospitals and institutions) or other variable hours have the option of calling from home for more privacy and convenience prior to or after their shift or days off during the week.





**OHIO EMPLOYEE
ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

614.644.8545

1.800.221.6327

ohio.gov/eap