A Leader's Guide to Here4TN

A support tool for Supervisors and Managers

Here4TN
Support For Your Life

PARTNERS FOR HEALTH

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What Does Here4TN Offer?

Here4TN, now powered by Optum®, is so much more than an Employee Assistance Program. It's a friendly and confidential service that provides a wide range of resources to help you manage your life. Get answers and support for all the ways life can stress you out:

- Where can I find the best daycare?
- What can I do to support my aging parent's needs?
- I need a lawyer — what do I do?
- How can we get financing to buy a home?

Because balancing work and life can be hard, **Here4TN** is here for you and your employees, 24/7, with answers to questions — big and small. Nothing is more important than your well-being.

Sometimes we can all use a little help. Promoting and encouraging use of Here4TN to your staff can help ease the burden of everyday demand and stressors that may impact their lives — and their workplace performance.

Adult and Eldercare Services
Caregiving resources and support
Adult day care programs
Grief and loss counseling
In-home/nursing care options

Child, Family and Parenting Support
Childcare options
Special needs care
Recreational activities
Adoption information

Convenience Services Referrals
Auto and home repair
Pet services
Lawn and yard care
Moving
Dining, entertainment and shopping

Education
Home schooling resources
Preparing for college
At-risk youth programs
Private school listings and information

Legal, Financial and Retirement
No-cost Legal consultations and referrals
No-cost financial consultations
Home ownership tools
Budgeting and debt management
Retirement planning

Chronic Illness and Condition Support
Caregiving resources
Food service and nutritional help lines

Relationship Information and Support
Marriage
Separation and divorce
Dating

Safety and Crisis Planning
Disaster preparedness
Resources and support for critical incidents
Internet safety

Stress and Depression
In-person counseling sessions
Web-based counseling sessions
Caring support on the phone

Answers to questions big and small

855-Here4TN
855-437-3486
www.Here4TN.com

This program should not be used for emergency or urgent care needs. In an emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room. This program is not a substitute for a doctor's or professional's care. Due to the potential for a conflict of interest, legal consultation will not be provided on issues that may involve legal action against Here4TN or its affiliates, or any entity through which the caller is receiving these services directly or indirectly (e.g., employer or health plan). This program and its components may not be available in all states or for all group sizes and is subject to change. Coverage exclusions and limitations may apply.

Introduction: 'Supervisors' Resources

A manager's work is filled with constant challenges. Here4TN can help. This resource guide for managers is filled with practical tips and strategies for managing performance issues, maintaining a positive, productive work environment and handling critical incidents and violence. It also shows you how the resources available from Here4TN, administered by Here4TN, can help you achieve these goals.

Keep in mind that the information and recommendations in this guide should not supersede your organization's standard policies and procedures. And, this book doesn't cover every possible workplace situation. If you need further information or assistance, you can call 855-Here4TN any time to request a development training program or schedule a management consultation with a management consultant.

Schedule a Consultation with a Management Consultant

As part of your Here4TN benefit, you have access to an unlimited number of telephonic consultations with one of our highly-trained management consultants. These licensed clinicians and Certified Employee Assistance Professionals have extensive experience consulting with managers and supervisors on workplace issues. They can give you advice and proven suggestions for:

- Identifying and managing troubled employees
- Learning to provide clear, constructive and timely feedback
- Making informal and formal referrals to Here4TN, especially for counseling services
- Dealing with non-work issues that impact the workplace
- And many other management questions you may have

Just call Here4TN to request a management consultation, which is available during regular business hours.

Management and Organizational Development Training Programs

You have access to training programs designed to enhance management and supervisory skills. They also can help you address workplace issues and concerns. These interactive workshops and seminars are conducted by experienced training and consulting professionals. They can be tailored to meet the specific needs of your organization.

Topics include:

- Promoting teamwork
- Managing conflict
- Effective coaching and counseling
- Building a safe place to work
- Preventing sexual harassment in the workplace
- Communication techniques for today's workplace
- Parenting teens
- Wills and estate planning
- How to manage your boss
- "Take your Children to Work Day" programs
- Stress management
- Physical fitness and healthy eating
- Workplace performance
- Personal and professional development

For more information or to arrange a training program, call Here4TN toll-free at 855-Here4TN.

Helping managers deal with employee issues and boost productivity is just one more way Here4TN can support you.

Managing Performance Problems

To sustain peak performance in your department, it's important to recognize and address problems that can impair productivity. In this section, you'll find practical information and techniques for doing just that.

Minimizing Distractions

Life in today's 24/7 world can be quite a scramble. Employees juggle work and personal responsibilities. It's very easy for a personal issue to distract someone on the job. As a manager, you can help minimize these distractions by being aware of employee concerns. And, make employees aware of resources that can assist them with their concerns before they lead to major performance problems.

Here4TN may do the legwork for you. Talk to your Human Resources representative about the Here4TN work/life benefits — such as childcare referral services, legal services and other programs — that can help employees meet their personal responsibilities so they can concentrate on work.

Suggesting Here4TN for Help (Informal Referral)

If an employee confides in you about a personal concern or simply mentions it in passing, you can suggest he or she call Here4TN. The Here4TN program is a free, confidential and professional resource. It helps people resolve personal problems so they can concentrate on work. Remember to make any recommendation in a private, supportive manner. Provide information about the Here4TN program to the employee. Your Human Resources representative will have the information. Remind the employee that, while you're encouraging use of the program, calling is up to him or her.

Of course, you don't have to wait for an employee problem to present itself. Make sure your staff understands the Here4TN program and knows how to use the services on their own. If you're enthusiastic about the program, odds are your employees will use this valuable resource when they need assistance with life's challenges — big or small.

Being Alert to Problems

Dealing with problems can be one of a manager's biggest challenges. While it's tempting to wait and hope that the problem will go away by itself, this rarely happens. If you observe poor quality work, excessive absenteeism or conflicts with co-workers, you need to address it immediately and directly.

Warning Signs of a Potential Problem

Everyone has a bad day from time to time. And, a few bad days don't necessarily signal a larger problem. However, certain behaviors may suggest that an emotional, substance abuse or other type of concern is impacting the workplace. It's important to remember that you shouldn't diagnose a possible problem. Instead, be aware of these warning signs to help you recognize when a problem is developing. That way, you can address it immediately.

Attendance

- Takes frequent unexpected or unexcused absences
- Complains of vague illnesses
- Often leaves work early or returns late from lunch
- Takes long, extended breaks
- Has numerous Monday and/or Friday absences
- Regularly disappears from the work area without explanation

Concentration

- Tends to forget instructions
- Has difficulty handling complex assignments
- Takes longer with tasks, or doesn't put enough effort into the job
- Neglects detail

Communication

- Is argumentative
- Is less communicative than in the past
- Writes unclear communications

Interpersonal Skills
- Avoids co-workers or manager/supervisor
- Complains excessively
- Responds to input and/or feedback in a defensive or angry manner
- Creates friction with co-workers or manager

Dependability
- Fails to meet schedules and/or deadlines
- Makes unreliable and/or untrue statements

Initiative
- Needs constant supervision
- Has a hard time accepting and/or following through on new projects

Quality of Work
- Causes complaints from customers
- Demonstrates inconsistent and/or sporadic work quality
- Is careless or makes more and more mistakes

Judgment
- Makes inconsistent or poor decisions
- Draws an increased number of poor conclusions
- Produces frequent errors on routine matters

Safety
- Experiences more on-the-job accidents
- Ignores proper safety procedures
- Disregards the safety of others

Other Behavior Issues
- Has inappropriate personal appearance or grooming
- Shows less interest and/or enthusiasm for the job
- Experiences wide swings in mood or attitude
- Generates complaints or concerns from co-workers

Documenting Workplace Problems

Managing work-place problems is never easy. Good documentation can make a tough situation a little less stressful by giving you a factual record that lets you remain objective. It also helps you explain how the employee needs to improve. And, it protects you and your organization in case you have to terminate an employee.

By keeping a formal record of your concerns, you will be able to:
- Identify and describe key problems
- Separate the facts from any personal reactions you may have about the situation — such as frustration or irritation — so you can stay focused on job performance
- Decide when to address your concerns with the employee
- Help the employee recognize the problem and its severity by presenting the work performance decline in a factual, non-judgmental manner

While documentation takes time and can seem daunting, the process doesn't have to be complicated. You can use the following documentation guidelines in conjunction with any specific procedures your organization may have in place. Be sure to check with your Human Resources representative and follow your organization's policies.

It's important to update your record on an ongoing basis, noting each incident while it's fresh in your mind. You may want to keep a separate notebook just for this purpose, so you don't end up with multiple scraps of paper that are easy to misplace. Most importantly, keep your documentation in a confidential place.

While documenting an employee's performance, you should continue to work with the employee to help him or her improve. Give the person ongoing feedback. Be specific about what behavior or action needs to change. Identify opportunities to help the employee learn to do the job properly — such as additional training or outsourced educational seminars.

Ideally, you will be able to resolve the situation informally. If not, your documentation will serve as a valuable reinforcement when you have a formal meeting with the employee to discuss concerns and expectations. It also will provide solid support if you have to let the employee go.

Documentation Tips

- Record each incident while it's still fresh in your mind
- Note the date, time and location for each incident
- Describe the action you took and the employee's reaction. Also, write down the subsequent impact on the employee's work performance and/or the work group
- Specify all people or work groups involved
- List specific performance standards or regulations violated
- Stay objective. Record observations, not impressions, feelings or judgments

For an example of performance documentation, see Appendix A.

Holding a Formal Review Meeting

(Please check with your Human Resources representative before holding a formal meeting.)

What do you do when an employee is not measuring up to job expectations? How do you discuss the situation with the employee? What can you do to minimize the impact of one employee's work performance decline on the rest of the department?

All situations and workplace environments are unique. However, the following formal meeting technique can work in a variety of situations — both simple and complex. This six-step process can make a difficult situation less stressful. It helps you prepare for and conduct a formal meeting in an organized, objective manner.

Typically, a formal meeting happens after there has been an on-going, well-documented pattern of decline. In many cases, however, it makes sense to meet with employees as soon as you notice a problem developing. Communicating your concerns and outlining expectations early often helps an employee get back on track right away.

Step 1: Be Prepared

Preparation is the key to a successful meeting. Here's what you should do before you sit down with the employee:

- Schedule the meeting. Select a time and place that will ensure the meeting is private.
- Organize and review your documentation. You may want to make notes on the key points you want to cover. Having an outline makes it easier to remain calm and objective. Prepare the messages you want to communicate to the employee, making sure the language and tone are appropriate.
- Prepare a list of expectations so you can tell the employee exactly what he or she needs to do. You can create your list by referring to the formal job description and comparing the individual's current and past work performance. Be sure to include both acceptable and unacceptable levels of performance.
- Consult with your Human Resources representative to make sure your messages are appropriate and that any planned action is consistent with your organization's guidelines. You also can call Here4TN for advice from a Here4TN management consultant.
- Ask your Human Resources representative for a copy of your organization's Here4TN benefit information or go to Here4TN.com.

Once you're thoroughly prepared, you are ready to meet with the employee.

Step 2: Start Positively

Begin the meeting by expressing concern for the employee. You may want to mention one or all of the following:

- You scheduled this meeting because you've noticed a problem.
- The change is not typical of past work habits.
- You're concerned about the change and the impact it's having on others in the workplace.
- Next, mention a couple of examples that show you recognize the good work the employee has done in the past and/or recently. At this point, you can:
  - Let the person know of his or her value to the organization.
  - Cite the employee's specific contributions — years of service, past work performance, technical skills, etc.
  - Emphasize your appreciation for these contributions.

Step 3: Zero In on the Problem

After you've reinforced the positive aspects of the employee's work, it's time to explain why you're concerned about his or her current work. The notes and expectations list you made when preparing for the meeting will be very useful as you cover the following points:

Explain expectations

- Review specific job expectations
- Be concise and detailed

Specify concerns

- Review where the employee has slipped compared to past work behavior
- Give objective examples with dates and times. You can show the employee your documentation if you're met with resistance or denial
- Emphasize the seriousness of the situation

Remind yourself to focus on the facts of the work-related problem and not the personality of the individual, regardless of the employee's response during this part of the conversation. Avoid making judgments or becoming angry or defensive.

Watch Your Body Language

It's important to keep a natural and relaxed body language during the formal meeting. The conversation can be even more difficult if you appear nervous. Demonstrate assertiveness by using direct eye contact, an erect body posture and clear speech. Gestures and facial expressions can add emphasis, provided that they are authentic and natural for you.

Step 4: Plan a Solution

Allow the employee to respond to your concerns. Ask if there's anything going on with the job that is making it difficult for the person to meet expectations. Find out if there's anything you can do — such as providing additional training — to help the employee be successful.

Discuss an improvement plan for the employee. The plan should include:

- The specific concerns and/or behaviors that need to be addressed
- Detailed actions to correct the problem — such as counseling, on-the-job coaching or off-site seminars
- An appropriate timeline for the completion of each action. Include dates and times for intermediate and summary reviews of the issues

Step 5: Refer the Here4TN Program

If the employee mentions a personal problem that's impacting work performance, recommend the Here4TN program in your formal performance meeting. Here's how to make a "formal referral" to the employee

Provide information about the Here4TN program.

Mention that the program provides prepaid assistance for any personal problem or concern the employee may have.
Assure the person that use of the program is completely confidential — no one will know what services are used or what is discussed. Give the employee information on the Here4TN program. Include full details on how to use the benefits. Again, your Human Resources representative can provide this for you or go to Here4TN.com for more information..

Suggest that the employee call Here4TN.
Offer assistance in making the call if necessary (i.e., offer the private use of your phone and office to call after the meeting). Tell the employee that using the Here4TN program is his or her decision. Remind the employee that regardless of whether he or she decides to call, you still expect performance to improve.

The Release of Information Form
If you would like to confirm that the employee has used the Here4TN program, ask him or her to sign a Release of Information form. It can be supplied by the management consultant. Be sure to explain to the employee that the Release of Information form only allows Here4TN to provide confirmation that he or she used the services and/or any counseling appointments — and nothing more. Assure the employee that Here4TN will maintain his or her privacy and will not disclose the specific nature of the problem or what services were used.

Remind the employee that he or she can still call Here4TN even if he or she chooses not to sign the form.

Please fax all signed Release of Information forms to the number provided by your management consultant.

Keep in mind that the Here4TN program is voluntary and use of the services is up to the employee. A formal referral is not a disciplinary measure. It doesn't supersede your organization's standard policies and procedures for dealing with poor work performance. Please check with your Human Resources representative before your formal performance meeting in case you need to make a referral.

Referral to the EAP cannot be mandatory unless your agency has a policy in place to support mandated referrals. Information regarding the EAP can be found at Here4TN.com.

If a mandatory referral is necessary and is an option with your agency, call Here4TN and speak with a management consultant. The specialist will help you prepare for the referral process, as well as:

- Find a suitable provider and make an appointment for the employee's initial evaluation
- Supply a Release of Information form for the employee to sign so the management consultant can communicate with you about the employee's compliance with treatment
- Provide a confidential report to you or the Human Resources representative regarding the employee's cooperation and attendance. The specialist also will include any recommended treatment or educational programs for the employee
- Make referrals to appropriate resources to help the employee
- Update you on the employee's progress with the treatment or educational programs
- Notify you when the program is completed and if any work accommodations and/or conditions are needed for the employee to return to work
- Continue regular follow-ups with you until the matter is resolved

Special Note for Regulated Businesses
If your organization is subject to regulations of the Department of Transportation, Nuclear Regulatory Commission or Department of Energy, the management consultant has the knowledge and expertise to help you navigate the regulatory protocols in case an employee tests positive for drug use.

Step 6: Discuss Next Steps and Consequences

- Tell the employee that you will summarize the improvement plan in writing for him or her to sign. Schedule a date and time for a follow-up meeting to discuss and sign the written plan.
- Outline what disciplinary action you will have to take if work expectations aren't met. Be specific without being threatening. Be prepared to follow through with the action if the situation does not improve.
- Emphasize that the employee is responsible for resolving the present situation and avoiding future consequences.

Step 7: Wrap It Up with a Vote of Confidence

Remind the employee that you have confidence in his or her ability to address these issues, and that you're interested in making sure that he or she succeeds. After the meeting, document your discussion with the employee. Include details of the improvement plan and the employee's willingness or refusal to use the Here4TN program.

Step 8: Follow Up

Following up after the formal meeting is the best way to ensure that the situation is resolved in a positive, productive manner. Here are a few suggestions:

- Continue to monitor the employee's work, documenting any improvement and decline
- Set up regular times to give feedback and review progress as per the improvement plan
- Don't be overly sensitive or concerned about how the employee feels about the situation
- Support and recognize positive behavior changes
- Follow through with disciplinary procedures if necessary
- Keep all aspects of the situation private. Never share your concerns or frustrations with the employee's co-workers

The formal meeting can be a welcome catalyst that motivates a struggling employee to resolve problems and improve work-place performance. However, it's possible that some people, when presented with a factual review of the issues and clear expectations of what must be done, may decide to move on to another job. And, then there are those who listen to what you have to say, but just cannot or choose not to meet expectations.

In any case, the formal meeting will help you better understand your employee's potential. And, you'll get a sense of his or her interest in and commitment to improving. It also provides an important document should you need to take disciplinary action in the future.

Remember, you don't have to handle tough problems on your own. If you need assistance, check with your Human Resources representative, and call Here4TN to speak with a management consultant.

When a Crisis Hits

Sometimes an employee's behavior can reach a point where it threatens the safety and well-being of the employee or his or her co-workers. If you believe the employee is in immediate danger of harming himself or herself, or other employees, immediate action is required. Follow your organization's procedures for responding to dangerous situations, which may include notifying security or calling the police. Once everything is under control, you can contact Here4TN for additional support and guidance. Depending on the situation, you also may seek assistance in coordinating a Fitness-for-Duty evaluation.

A Fitness-for-Duty evaluation requires the employee to see a designated psychologist or psychiatrist before returning to work. This professional assesses the employee for any impairment due to a mental health issue, substance abuse or both. The management consultant will find a suitable provider to conduct the evaluation. And, he or she will work with you to address any additional concerns or service needs.

In order to handle the process as smoothly as possible, always consult your Human Resources representative. Keep in mind that, while the management consultant helps coordinate the Fitness-for-Duty evaluation, the costs of the evaluation aren't covered by Here4TN.

Terminating Employees

If an employee continues to fail to meet job requirements, you may have to terminate him or her. Terminating an employee is never easy. In order to handle the process as smoothly as possible, always consult your Human Resources representative. And, you can always call Here4TN and talk to a management consultant for additional advice and support.

Maintaining a Positive Workplace

There are many ways to cultivate a positive and successful work environment — including motivating staff, fostering collaboration, recognizing contributions and dealing with personality issues.

Creating a Motivating Environment

No matter the business, it's a fact that motivated employees are more productive than their ambivalent counterparts. People who want to do something — and want to do it well — will do a better job than those whose main interest is simply "getting it done."

That's why effective managers have a little bit of cheerleader in them to build spirit, pride and attachment to the organization. Enthusiasm, energy and excitement are the qualities that inspire confidence and make people feel their work is meaningful.

Traditional management teachings suggest that the job of management is primarily one of control. But, today's best leaders know that the more they control others, the less likely it is that people will excel. So, they don't command and control. Instead, they support and motivate by providing a work environment that encourages employees to put forth their best effort.

Listen

Listening to what your employees have to say and appreciating their unique viewpoints shows respect for them and their ideas. It's one of the best ways to build trust and credibility — two essential ingredients for sustaining a motivating work environment. Plus, people listen more attentively to those who listen to them.

Lead by Example

Take risks. Be willing to make mistakes and learn from them. By doing so, you create an environment that encourages your employees to stretch beyond the boundaries of what they know. Chances are, they'll follow your lead and take risks, too. As a result, they'll reach higher levels of accomplishment and take greater satisfaction in their work.

Share the Big Picture

Give employees a sense of purpose and importance by letting them know how their work benefits others and contributes to the success of the organization.

Build In Variety

Routine, while often necessary, can be dulling. Assigning a variety of tasks or types of projects can help relieve monotony. It also provides the opportunity to cross-train your employees and, as a result, builds a stronger team.

Coach When Necessary

It's easy for employees to get frustrated if they're unsure of how to do the job. Make yourself available to help and support employees struggling with a task, learning new skills or taking on new responsibilities.

Support Collaboration

Isolation does nothing to support creativity. We all need opportunities to socialize, exchange information and solve problems informally. Find ways to intentionally create interaction among your employees. You might hold regular group meetings and establish times for a one-on-one consultation. Set up brainstorming sessions where the team works together to solve problems and enhance communication.

Evaluate Results

At the end of big projects, it's a good idea to take the time to review the successes and failures of the project together as a team.

Build the review around four questions:

- What did we do well?
- What did we do poorly? You might start the ball rolling by mentioning something that you think you could have done better. This will help people understand that the meeting is about learning, not blaming.
- What did we learn from this?
- How can we do better next time?

And, remind them that it's important to acknowledge failure in order to learn how to do something better the next time. Then, begin the next project with a review of the lessons learned.

Create Challenges and Choice

Assign projects that will help employees grow and let them take the lead in figuring out how to get the job done. This gives your team a challenge — and pride in their work when the challenge is met. The sense of accomplishment and freedom also helps build interest and confidence as employees feel more powerful and personally responsible. Of course, you should be sure that your employees are set up for success — make sure they have all the tools they need and check in on a regular basis to offer guidance.

> Keep in mind that different people are driven by different things. Given the diversity of people and personalities in the workplace, no single type of motivation can inspire everyone. Take the time to find out the needs and ambitions of the people who work for you.

Inspiring Teamwork

Teams are a big part of work life today. Whether as part of a corporate project team or on the staff in a restaurant, few of us work in jobs where we rely only on ourselves to get everything done. When you combine people with varied backgrounds and experiences, you end up with many different personalities and opinions. As a manager or team leader, how do you turn this eclectic mix into a productive team? Here are some ideas.

Make the purpose clear. Ensure that all team members understand specifically what the team is supposed to accomplish. Depending on the team, this purpose can range from one specific project to a developmental goal of the entire organization.

Align individual goals with the team's goals. It is shared desire, not talent that builds teamwork. Inspire your team by clearly stating how each member's duties contribute to the team's success. Also, know your employee's interests and, whenever possible, give them responsibilities that fit their goals.

Utilize the differences in your team. You have a unique set of people with unique skills and attributes. Be aware of these differences as you assign tasks, and try to allow employees to share their knowledge. For example, teaming a less-experienced computer programmer with an expert gives both a chance to further their skills, whether it be programming or mentoring.

Don't sweat the small stuff. Continually check the progress of the overall project to ensure that team members don't dwell too much on minor points.

Assume the best in people. While it's easy for team members to blame each other if a problem occurs, a good team can rise above finger-pointing and focus on the task at hand. It's important to establish up front, and continually reinforce, a common assumption that all team members do their best. And, when things go wrong, the entire team shares the responsibility. This approach frees your team to focus on fixing problems.

Praising Employees

Employees don't live by salary alone. Personal appreciation and recognition also are an important part of job satisfaction. Besides being an esteem-booster, praise can be an effective teaching tool, telling employees what they're doing right and encouraging them to keep doing it.

Keys to effective praising:

Consult employees first. Each person reacts to praise differently, so ask each employee how he or she would like to receive positive feedback. For example, would the person like to be praised in front of co-workers, or prefer a private note instead? The Employee Recognition Questionnaire in Appendix B can help you determine the best way to praise your employees.

Praise immediately. Don't save it for the annual review. The longer you wait to praise an achievement, the less effective the praise will be.

Be specific. State the exact behavior you're praising and its importance to you and the organization. For example, instead of saying: *"I see you made a new schedule. Thanks."*

Consider saying: *"This new schedule you worked out gives us better coverage on our shift. We won't have to scramble when it gets busy, and that will make all our lives easier. Thank you very much."*

Mean what you say. Be honest and sincere. Phony praise is easy to spot and your employees will resent it.

Share team credit. Make sure everyone gets credit in a team effort, and stress the specific contributions of each member of the team.

Leave praise on its own. Separate praise from reprimands and criticism, so it doesn't seem like sugar-coating.

Recognize the little things. Routine jobs also contribute to the department and organization, so be sure to acknowledge them. And, don't overlook employees who are on time and always do their jobs well.

Giving Feedback for Improvement

Giving an employee feedback on poor performance can be one of the toughest jobs a manager can do. However, an employee who's not working up to standards can put the remainder of your team under considerable stress. It also can hurt morale if responsible workers have to keep compensating for someone else's poor performance.

Tips for effective feedback:

Be honest and prompt. Provide candid feedback in a timely and professional manner.

Keep it private. Give feedback in your office or a private setting away from other employees.

Focus on facts. This can be an emotional experience for both you and the employee. Focusing on the facts helps you be more objective, and the employee less defensive.

Focus on the behavior, not the person.
Don't dwell on personality; it's difficult to correct an employee's poor attitude. But, you can address specific behaviors, like a slow response to a customer asking for assistance.

Stay balanced. Giving feedback to employees only when they're doing something wrong can make work frustrating or discouraging, so be sure to provide praise when deserved. People want to know when they're doing something right.

Explain your reasons. Let the employee know that you're giving feedback to help him or her be more effective on the job.

Listen to the employee's perspective. Ask how the person feels about the feedback and if he or she agrees with you. Discussing the feedback can make it easier for your employees to accept. The employee also may give you some insight that can help solve the performance problem.

Give direction. When providing feedback for improvement, clearly show how to perform the task correctly. This way, you spend more of your time reinforcing desired behavior.

Follow up on compliance. Only the employee can decide whether to accept your feedback. If he or she repeatedly ignores it, you may have to consider disciplinary action.

Take as you give. Give your employees opportunities to give feedback on your performance as well.

Managing Employee Burnout

When employees are exhausted — either physically or emotionally — frustration, indifference, absenteeism and even resignation can result. This hurts both team performance and the organization's bottom line.

What can you do when employees show these signs of burnout? First, try to find out the reason so you can address it directly. Following are a few common causes of burnout and some strategies to resolve them.

The Job Itself
Sometimes burnout results from the work environment, particularly in stressful jobs that involve lots of long hours and tight deadlines. Burnout happening to several employees in the same job is a strong indicator that the job may be at fault.

What you can do:
Ask the employee how he or she feels about the job and if there's anything you can do to improve working conditions. While some of the remedies may be beyond your control, you may be able to negotiate for extended due dates or use outsourced resources to make the workload more manageable.

Employees' Progress Not Meeting Personal Goals
Many people have strict professional goals for themselves or compare their work lives with those of a relative or friend ("When my brother was 35, he was already..."). It's easy for people to get disappointed and stressed when their jobs don't meet their ambitions.

What you can do:
Try to involve the employee in leadership or decision-making activities. Some managers recruit their most talented people to become part of an "executive council" that advises on how to build morale and deal with workforce issues. People brought into such levels of creative planning feel a greater sense of importance, which may help them stay motivated.

Employees with Too Much Going on in Their Lives
Trying to balance multiple work and personal obligations can be very stressful.

What you can do:
Recommend Here4TN to help employees meet their personal responsibilities, like child and eldercare, housekeeping services or no-cost legal and financial consultations.

Employees Are Fatigued or Depressed
The burned-out person could simply be deep-down tired. On the other hand, the employee may be suffering from a mild or major form of depression. Fatigue and depression are among the top reasons workers seek medical attention, according to the American Medical Association. Here4TN can help employees find a provider for support.

What you can do:
Let the employee know that his or her well-being is important to you. Offer the person a sick or comp day to rest, and encourage him or her to see a doctor. If the employee seems to be more than just tired, suggest he or she talk with the experts at Here4TN for help and support.

Preventing Burnout
Because people tend to keep their concerns private, many employees may be dealing with these issues without your knowledge. But, you don't have to wait for signs of burnout to do something about it. Make sure your employees are aware of the Here4TN program — and other workplace benefits, resources and programs available to help people deal with stressful concerns both on and off the job. Also, encourage people to use such services early to prevent small issues from growing into bigger, burnout-causing problems.

Dealing with Difficult People

You have to manage a wide range of personalities on your team. While most people are cooperative and reasonable, some employees have annoying behaviors that make them difficult teammates. Despite doing good work, such “difficult people” tend to cause tension and upset co-workers. This can affect team productivity. You may never “like” these people. But, it’s important that you understand them and develop techniques to help them be more productive.

Here are some typical difficult personalities, with strategies on how to keep them from disrupting your organization.

Dr. No

Often a perfectionist and a pessimist, this person is a professional at raining on everyone’s parade. “That will never work” is Dr. No’s motto.

When dealing with a pessimist, acknowledge his or her concerns and ask for ideas on how to address them. You also can use Dr. No’s habit to your advantage. Running new ideas past such a person can help you prepare for possible objections that may be raised by others.

The Time Thief

This employee takes much more time than needed when talking with you, using digressions and long explanations to keep the conversation going.

Make it clear at the beginning of the conversation that you’re happy to talk but that your time is limited. Always ask for the short version of the story.

The Heckler

A verbal bully, this person fires off insults or sarcastic comments while you or other people are talking.

If a heckler interrupts your presentation, you can either ignore the remark or politely ask the person to save all comments until the end. If the comment was an insult, you can challenge the heckler by asking how his comment relates to the discussion. While a bold maneuver, this reply addresses the person’s behavior and focuses everyone on the matter at hand.

The Angry Bull

Such aggressive people are demanding and loud, lashing out at those around them.

When dealing with an Angry Bull, start by letting the person vent and blow off steam. Let the employee know that you’re trying to understand his or her views by using statements like, “That sounds frustrating” or “I know that you’re working hard on this.” Many aggressive people aren’t used to others really listening to them, so they may be more willing to calm down when speaking with you.

Once an Angry Bull is a bit more composed, suggest a short break and arrange a calmer time to meet and talk about the problem. During that meeting, you also can talk about how the person’s temper is hurting the team’s performance. And, you can offer Here4TN as a resource to help the Angry Bull manage his or her anger.

For more information on dealing with difficult people, visit Here4TN.com

Handling Workplace Conflict

Conflicts are an unavoidable part of life. When a workplace issue or disagreement strains employee relationships and prevents the job from getting done, you'll have to step in and play peacemaker. The following steps can be used as a starting point for managing employee conflicts.

Step 1: Do your homework.

- Try to get as much factual information about the conflict as you can.
- Evaluate how the disagreement has affected productivity so you can explain the impact of the conflict to the employees involved.
- Find out about organization policies on resolving workplace conflicts.

Step 2: Meet with each individual privately.

- Ask each employee about the problem to get more information.
- Let the person express his or her feelings. But, if the conversation starts to stray into personal opinions, calmly ask the person to stick to the facts of the disagreement.
- Be fair and impartial. Don't take sides or cast blame.
- Explain how the conflict is affecting the workplace. For example, perhaps uninvolved employees are gossiping about the argument instead of discussing work issues.
- Discuss your organization's policies regarding job conflict. Let the employee know what behavior isn't appropriate in the workplace. Be upfront about any consequences or disciplinary actions that may result if the conflict continues.
- Ask employees about their thoughts for solutions, assessing their willingness to resolve the conflict.

Step 3: Hold a joint meeting.

- Bring both parties together in a safe, private forum where they can talk openly to resolve the problem.
- Be fair and impartial. Give each person the same amount of time to speak. Try not to show support for either side, despite any efforts to win you over.
- Allow each employee to explain his or her version of the problem. Don't let one party interrupt while the other is talking. You can tell the person, "You will get a chance to talk in a moment."
- Have each person restate the other's view of the problem. This can help both sides fully understand each other's point of view. Ask each party to confirm the accuracy of the other's restatement to be sure that everyone has been heard.
- Ask each employee to suggest solutions to the problem. While it's possible that you may have developed your own solution, people are usually more committed to ideas they come up with on their own.
- If the employees offer no solutions, or the suggestions are impractical or unacceptable, then you'll have to propose your own solution. This may involve you taking a side. If so, be sure to fully explain the reasons behind your decision. Tell the other party why you feel it's the best way to go. Otherwise you risk alienating the other party.
- Ask each employee to restate the solution so there are no misunderstandings. Be sure everyone is committed to carrying it out.
- Schedule a follow-up meeting to check the employees' progress on resolving the conflict.

Of course, managers aren't expected to be expert mediators, and workplace conflicts are as varied as the people involved. No single approach will work for every situation. Consult with your Human Resources representative for more information and advice.

You also can call Here4TN management consultants for further assistance. While the specialists don't provide mediation services per se, they can help you develop strategies and tactics for dealing with the conflict you're facing. They also can help you locate qualified professional mediators in your area, if needed. And, the Here4TN Workplace Effectiveness team offers workplace seminars on how to manage employee conflicts.

Want to find out more about improving employee productivity and managing workplace issues? Here are a few of the many publications available on the subject.

- *Dealing with People You Can't Stand: How to Bring Out the Best in People at Their Worst*, by Rick Brinkman
- *First, Break All the Rules: What the World's Greatest Managers Do Differently*, by Marcus Buckingham
- *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Restoring the Character Ethic*, by Stephen R. Covey
- *Management Challenges for the 21st Century*, by Peter F. Drucker
- *Beyond the Hype: Rediscovering the Essence of Management,* by Robert G. Eccles and Nitin Nohria, with James D. Berkley
- *Primal Leadership: Realizing the Power of Emotional Intelligence*, by Daniel Goleman
- *The Abilene Paradox and Other Meditations on Management*, by Jerry B. Harvey
- *How the Way We Talk Can Change the Way We Work: Seven Languages for Transformation*, by Robert Kegan and Lisa Laskow Lahey
- *Enlightened Leadership: Getting to the Heart of Change*, by Ed Oakley and Doug Krug
- *Seeing Systems: Unlocking the Mysteries of Organizational Life*, by Barry Oshry
- *Leadership and the New Science: Discovering Order in a Chaotic World*, 3rd edition, by Margaret J. Wheatley

You also can call Here4TN for further Here4TN assistance and advice. You can request a training program or schedule a management consultation with a management consultant during regular office hours. And, other services are available all day, every day. These services provide you and your employees with information and support to help maintain a productive team and a healthier, happier work environment.

Visit Here4TN.com and click on the "Managers" link to access the training catalog.

Helping Employees through Life Transitions and Leaves of Absence

As a manager, you likely have an instruction book on handling employee paid time off or year-end reviews. But, sometimes situations come up that aren't so straightforward. Perhaps an employee is dealing with a personal challenge such as a divorce or death in the family. Or, maybe it's a happy event such as a pregnancy or adoption. The following checklists can help you prepare for issues that may arise when an employee experiences a life change. You'll also learn what resources to tap into when you have additional questions.

Preparing for Planned Leave — Pregnancy or Adoption

- **Talk with your Human Resources department.** Leave policies and procedures can differ by company, so make sure you understand the details of yours. Share the information with your employee.
- **Provide your employee with the HERE4TN phone number and website.** Your employee can call for information about available pregnancy or postpartum programs and learn how to update benefits for new dependents.
- **Help with the transition.** Choose someone to take over your employee's responsibilities while he or she is on leave. Prepare early so there's enough time for a smooth transition.
- **Talk with your other employees and, if needed, clients.** Set expectations with other employees about roles. Make sure clients and other managers within the company know who to contact with questions.

Dealing with Unexpected Leave — Death in the Family or Sickness

- **Talk with your Human Resources department.** Bereavement and illness leave policies and procedures can vary by company, so make sure you understand the details of yours. Share the information with your employee.
- **Give your employee the EAP or Work/Life program phone number.** He or she can call to learn what mental health resources may be available. Also, your employee may want to ask about what — or how much — information to share with co-workers.
- **Meet with your other employees.** Say as much or as little as your employee requests. Discuss your plan for sharing the responsibilities while your employee's out.

Handling Grief or Sensitive Conversations

- **Talk with your Human Resources department regarding company policies and procedures.** These can differ by company, so make sure you understand the details of yours.
- **Call your EAP or Work/Life program for assistance.** Ask for guidelines on what you can and can't say and if there are resources for more information. Get tips on how to approach the discussion.
- **Listen and give support.** Not everyone will want to discuss their feelings of loss or grief. But, be prepared to offer a sympathetic ear. Your employee may not be focused on work, so be ready to explain the leave policy and address concerns about work coverage while he or she is out.
- **Provide HERE4TN contact information.** Speaking with a mental health professional may help, so remind your employee about this resource.
- **Allow time and space.** Healing doesn't happen right away, so your employee may seem sad some days. And, holidays or other work-related events may bring up memories. Your employee may not want to join in celebrations.
- **If appropriate, discuss how and what information to share with co-workers.** Your employee may want to talk with his or her co-workers separately or as a group about the loss or difficult situation. Or, he or she may want you to make a general announcement.

Getting Ready for Your Employee's Return

- **Talk with your Human Resources department regarding company policies and procedures.** These can differ by company, so make sure you understand the details of yours. Ask about what preparations should be made in advance and what can be done on the day of your employee's return.
- **Call your Here4TN for assistance.** Get tips on how to smoothly transition your employee back to the job.
- **Ask fill-in co-workers to give an update.** Find out what procedures may have changed or where projects stand. Provide this information to your returning employee.
- **Make a transition plan.** Schedule a meeting to welcome your employee back, go over any changes in policies or procedures, and discuss any concerns about the transition process.

Substance Use Disorder: The Recovering Worker

If you are aware of an employee returning to work after substance use disorder treatment, you are one step closer to a safer, healthier workplace. This article will help you plan for the return of your employee as well as prepare for any upcoming challenges.

Helping the Employee Return

After an employee has completed treatment and is ready to return to the workplace, plan to have a Return to Work conference. Individuals participating may include:

- Supervisor
- Employee
- EAP counselor (if applicable)
- Counselor or staff member from the treatment program (optional)
- Human Resources personnel
- Employee's representative, if one has been elected

The purpose of the conference is to assist the employee's transition into the workplace and inform management about continuing treatment plans. Such meetings are particularly helpful if the employee requires work accommodations to attend self-help meetings (e.g., AA, NA), outpatient treatments, gradually increase workload, adjust travel schedules or change supervision.

Be sure that the employee's voice is heard in this meeting. As a supervisor, ask for both the employee's input and the counselors' recommendations. With the meeting participants, discuss the goals and how they will be achieved. Try to accommodate treatment goals into the employee's work schedule. If the workplace does not know why the employee was on leave, discuss with the employee and HR representative, how the employee would prefer the subject be addressed.

Ask your employee how the workplace can assist him with his transition into the workplace. Many employees are relieved that management approaches the subject and appreciate the interest.

While remaining sensitive to your employee's requests, clearly identify what can and cannot be expected from you and the company. Also, be explicit about your company's expectations of the employee. In this meeting, address the consequences if the employee chooses to resume substance abuse. Consider using a Return to Work agreement or contract, which describes the meeting's conclusions. It will be a helpful guide for future action if needed, and it clarifies stated expectations and goals.

Supervising a Recovering Employee

Typically, after an individual completes Substance Use Disorder/Chemical Dependency (SUD/CD) treatment, he or she feels inspired to maintain the new lifestyle and is positive about the future. However, individuals can also experience fatigue and apprehension. Expect a significant adjustment period.

A recovering addict must remain drug free of all mood-altering drugs for the rest of his or her life. For example, an individual who completed treatment for cocaine addiction cannot switch to smoking pot "occasionally" without ultimately having negative results. "Occasional" substance use may or may not include mood-altering drugs prescribed by a physician.

As a supervisor, please remember that it is not your job (or anyone's in the workplace) to keep the employee sober. Your responsibilities do include being supportive, honest and expectant of success. If you ignore the employee or his or her experiences, you can exacerbate problems. By the same token, excusing the recovering employee from reasonable job expectations because of the employee's recovery status can sabotage his or her recovery process.

The Lakeside-Milam Recovery Centers of Washington give the following guidelines for supervisors in their booklet The Recovering Worker:

Do:

- **State your performance expectations clearly.** Your worker cannot live up to your expectations if they are not fully understood.
- **Be open with your worker.** If you have concerns about the person's performance, express them directly. Keep communication open.
- **Be fair when asked for sick or personal time.** Follow company policy regarding other illnesses employees may have. Time for therapy, aftercare, and AA or NA meetings can usually be scheduled outside of work hours.
- **Use the same standards of performance for this worker that you use for any other worker.** Treat this person as you would any other worker.
- **Expect success.** If you expect your worker to do well, you may help to increase the chances that he or she will.

Don't:

- **Be protective of the worker.** Be fair, but do not coddle.
- **Be overly demanding of the worker.** Constant scrutiny and negative criticism will deter success.
- **Delay in confronting job problems which begin to surface again**. Job problems could indicate a relapse or other difficulty.
- **Talk about your worker's problems with others in the work group.** Personal information about your worker is none of their business. Suggest they direct their questions to the worker.
- **Focus your expectations on drinking or drug-taking behavior.** Keep attention on the job. You are on solid ground when you comment on work.
- **Expect failure.** Expect success.

Relapse

It is not uncommon for a recovering individual to relapse or have a "slip" in recovery. Whether this relapse signals the return of regular substance use or is part of the recovery process depends on how the person manages the event. Sometimes relapse occurs because the individual does not follow the recovery program designed by the treatment team. At other times, the individual loses focus that abstinence is a significant priority in his life. If the individual immediately seeks assistance from the treatment provider and treatment is temporarily intensified, the usage may only be a temporary setback. Relapse is a symptom of chronic chemical dependency disorders, and it is impossible to predict the outcome of an isolated use. Additionally, relapse can occur with someone who has been in recovery for a significant amount of time.

Be aware of these behaviors:

- Weight change
- Mood swings
- Poor skin color
- Unreliability
- Frequent intake of antacid or aspirin
- Large amounts of coffee

If you observe the return of old behavior, be concerned and schedule an immediate time to talk with your employee. Ask if s/he has been attending aftercare meetings, encourage following community support programs and remind him/her that EAP can provide recovery support.

In order to avoid confrontation about a substance use disorder, employees use a variety of "traps." Lakeside-Milam identifies the following:

- **Sympathy** — Tries to get the supervisor involved in his personal problem
- **Excuses** — Is defensive and has a reason for everything
- **Apology** — Is very sorry; says it won't happen again
- **Promises** — Says he will do better; that the supervisor can depend on him in the future
- **Diversions** — Tries to get supervisor off the subject
- **Innocence** — Says it's someone else's fault and insists that everyone is against him
- **Anger** — May say, "How dare you question what I do? Look at the loyalty I've shown to you and all that I've done for you!"
- **Pity** — May say, "I can't do anything right. I am worthless, see?"
- **Tears** — Falls apart in the confrontation

As stated previously, managing the disease of addiction is a daily challenge. Relapse, however, is not failure, and resist the urge to see it as a lack of commitment. If your employee does relapse, continue to be supportive and encourage him to reenter treatment. Since many companies have specific policies and procedures regarding drug and alcohol use, remember to consult your company's specific policies regarding relapse and the Human Resources Department if there are required disciplinary actions.

Communications encouraging employees to contact Here4TN EAP to assist in the rehabilitation and treatment of alcohol and drug abuse should include contact information for Here4TN and language that an employee may participate without jeopardizing his/her employment status. However voluntary participation does not preclude disciplinary action for violating policy.

Referral to the EAP cannot be mandatory unless your agency has a policy in place to support mandated referrals. Information regarding the EAP can be found at Here4TN.com.

Preventing Violence at Work

Almost two million American workers report that they are victims of workplace violence every year and many more incidents are never formally documented. Some workplaces have a higher chance of violence, but the risks are present even in non-hostile environments.

Workplace Violence Defined

Any act or threat of physical violence or intimidation at work is classified as workplace violence; meaning harassment or other behaviors that disrupt the workplace. Examples include any form of a true threat, verbal abuse, physical assault, and even homicide. In short, workplace violence is any behavior that is disruptive, threatening, and/or violent.

- **Disruptive behavior** — These disorderly acts involve yelling, using profanity, pointing fingers, and verbal abuse.
- **Threatening behavior** — This type of bullying threatens people or property in a verbal or written manner. For example, "I'll make you wish you hadn't done that!" or "Just you wait…" are considered threatening behaviors.
- **Violent behavior** — When someone physically assaults another with or without a weapon, throws an object, or destroys property they are exhibiting violent behavior.

High-Risk Workplaces

Some workplaces are at a higher risk of violence due to the location and nature of the job. Healthcare professionals, public service employees, customer service representatives, and law enforcement officers are all considered to have a higher-risk workplace. Other jobs with a higher likelihood of violence include businesses where money or alcohol is exchanged with the public, services that work with volatile or unpredictable people or jobs that require late-night hours or are located in a high crime area. Working alone or in an isolated place can also pose a greater threat of workplace violence.

Indicators of Potential Risk

Hindsight is always 20/20, but there are obvious signs of potential workplace risks. The following are all signs that could point to a viable threat of violence:

- Sudden changes in job performance and behavior
- Outbursts of anger and an inability to control emotions
- Paranoia about co-workers
- Romantically obsessing, stalking, or sexually harassing a co-worker
- History of violent behaviors or discussing violent topics in nature
- Threats that are direct or indirect
- Drug or alcohol problems
- Carrying a concealed weapon or flashing one around

Diffusing Potentially Violent Behavior

Emotions and situations can quickly escalate when people blame others or feel confused, frustrated, and angry. The following information suggests how to dial down potentially violent workplace behavior.

- **Confused** — This person will seem distracted or uncertain. The best way to diffuse this behavior is to be patient; listen to their concerns and provide them with facts.
- **Frustrated** — Individuals who react easily to stress and resist problem solving are typically very frustrated. They may seem defeated even if they accomplish something. A good way to engage this person is to provide a calm environment in which to listen to their concerns. Clarify any misconceptions they might have in a peaceful manner.
- **Blaming others** — This person won't take responsibility for his or her own problems, and they continually find fault with others. The quickest way to diffuse this individual is to focus on the facts of "how" a situation occurred rather than "who" caused it. Create a listening environment and include others when needed.
- **Angry** — When someone's body language clearly communicates anger, arguing with him or her is not helpful. They might be shouting, pointing at others, hitting things, or using profanity. The best thing to do is to get your supervisor or security officer immediately. Protect your personal safety and the safety of your co-workers by intervening carefully and constructively.

Workplace Violence Prevention

The most effective way to eliminate workplace violence is to prevent it. The following are four strategies for preventing violence, protecting workers, and creating a peaceful work environment:

- **Education** — Learn how to recognize, escape, or diffuse potentially volatile situations to maintain your personal safety. Attend trainings to be informed as they are made available.
- **Zero-tolerance** — Encourage your employer to establish a zero-tolerance policy when it comes to violence and intimidation. The policy should be written; and all employees, customers, clients, and consultants must adhere to it or face consequences.
- **Reporting** — Employers should provide a safe and easy means for employees to report violence or threats of violence. Alert your supervisor or human resources personnel immediately if you feel a situation is escalating toward potential violence.
- **Good judgment** — Employees should not enter anywhere they feel unsafe. Especially at night, it's good judgment to implement a "buddy system" or call for security to escort you.

If you are an employer, take every security measure necessary to create a safe working environment for your employees. For employees, share your ideas regarding workplace safety with your supervisor or employer. If you are one of the two million victims of workplace violence, seek counseling. Even witnesses to violence might need to reach out for help. Check with your human resources department, a licensed therapist, or another health professional to get the support you need.

Sources:

- https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/workplaceviolence/
- http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/violence/
- http://www.doli.state.mn.us/WSC/wvp.asp

Critical Incident Response Service

The effects of a critical incident

When something sudden or traumatic happens in the workplace, it's important to take steps to ensure your workplace's safety and the employees' mental health. The professional crisis services of a Critical Incident Response Service (CIRS) help employees manage their feelings and can have a very positive impact on morale and productivity.

When a traumatic incident occurs, it impacts everyone involved, producing very powerful external stressors that often push people beyond their normal capacity to cope. This kind of stress is often referred to as traumatic stress. Critical incidents can be very disruptive to an organization. The emotional responses to the incident often cause employees to be distracted and unable to concentrate or focus. Employees may experience irritability, conflict, and physical or emotional illness. Organizations may also experience low employee morale. These negative responses to a critical incident can continue for weeks, even months. Productivity is reduced as employees find it difficult to get back to "business as usual."

During times of tragedy, it helps for management to have a structured, immediate response for dealing with the human side of crisis, such as through an Employee Assistance Program (EAP), like Here4TN. Here are just a few of the situations in which CIRSs can help:

- Grief debriefing
- Employee with terminal illness
- Employee suicide
- National disaster
- Natural disaster
- Serious injury at the workplace
- Threat of injury at the workplace
- Workplace violence
- Threat of violence

CIRS sessions

CIRSs are led by trained Here4TN EAP counselors with quality experience in helping traumatized persons who may need intervention services, such as Group Critical Incident Response sessions. Counselors can provide assistance to managers and employees.

Management

Here4TN counselors can assist management in assessing and providing psychological first aid to traumatized personnel immediately after the event. They can also give direction as to how to manage the first de-escalation meeting for employees before they leave on the day of the event. Typically, a group debriefing scheduled 24 to 72 hours after the traumatic event provides employees with the opportunity to vent emotions and share what they have experienced.

Employees

The debriefing provides employees with the opportunity to fit the pieces of the event together, so they can make sense of it. A group debriefing is a time to normalize reactions, educate the employees that these reactions are part of the human response to an abnormal event, and explain that these reactions are normal and time-limited. This group discussion can help the employees place their experience into a manageable perspective. Group debriefings also assist employees in understanding and managing their reactions to a traumatic event and facilitate their return to work.

Do you need a CIRS?

What information do human resources and management personnel need to determine if a CIRS might be indicated? You should look for events that might cause impact and traumatic stress to your workforce. Ask the following questions:

- **Was any employee killed?** How many employees are hurt? If any employee was killed or physically injured, you have a traumatized workforce that may need assistance.
- **Is there any continuing threat to life (real or perceived)?** When people are assaulted, robbed or victimized in some manner, the fear that the perpetrator will find them and hurt them is very strong. When personnel perceive an ongoing threat to their safety, they are traumatized.

- **Could this incident have been highly stressful to those involved?** Keep in mind that to be involved does not necessarily mean that employees were present (e.g., a co-worker committing suicide on the weekend). Use your Here4TN to help understand the kind of stressors that place people at risk.
- **Have there been any other recent crises or stressful events within the organization or within this specific work group?** Keep in mind that individuals may perceive events differently, and it's possible for some that stressful events may have a cumulative effect.
- **Did the incident happen in the workplace?** Did the incident happen in proximity to employees while they were working? When the incident happens in the workplace or close by, chances are that many more employees will be impacted. While not all employees are impacted with the same intensity, many experience "secondary stress" as they witness police or other rescue personnel doing their jobs.

Every crisis or traumatic event in the workplace does not require a CIRS, but every event needs to be assessed to determine what kind of intervention may be helpful to assist those impacted.

Research has shown that when organizations recognize the emotional impact of a critical incident and provide safety, support and understanding, their employees return to a normal level of functioning more quickly. Providing employees with a CIRS and Here4TN counseling services is known to reduce the potential long-range negative impact on the workplace.

Preparing for CIRS Services:

Before the Services

- You can access CIRS services by calling 855-here4tn 24 hours a day.
- You will reach a CIRS coordinator who will ask very specific questions about the incident and schedule services, which will be within 72 hours.
- The coordinator will provide guidance communicate the services to your site, and will provide handouts. It will be suggested that a conference room be reserved so there is a confidential space for the counselor to meet with your people.

Day of Services

- You will want to meet with the counselor and provide any updates or logistics.
- The counselor will provide group support as well as individual sessions with employees. Managers should meet with the counselor in separate sessions.
- The counselor will provide general feedback from the group sessions (without violating any confidentiality), and talk about what to expect form employees in the coming weeks, and how to manage their reactions.

After the Services

Within 24 hours of services, the CIRS coordinator will follow up on the services and schedule any future sessions.

For more detailed information regarding Critical Incidence Responses Services, visit the Here4Tn.com

Appendix A

Managing Performance Problems: Sample Documentation

Job Performance Record		Employee Name: John Smith	
DAY	**DATE**	**TIME**	**CHANGE IN PERFORMANCE**
Monday	3/11	2:30 pm	Missed report deadline. I left him a message at 9am asking for status. Did not return message until 2pm. Said he was at the dentist. Swears he told me about the appointment a week ago.
Wednesday	3/13	9:45 am	Received John's report. It's good! But still late. Gave him positive feedback on the article and empha-sized how crtitical it is for him to finish his work on time - or to let me know welll in advance if there's a problem.
Friday	3/15	9:30 am	Called in sick. Said he had a migraine.
Tuesday	3/26	9:05 am	Received complaint from field staff about missing shipments. Spoke to John who was very defensive and blamed the distributor for problems he has "solved" in the past.
Thursday	3/28	9:40 am	Tardy, 40 minutes late without a call.
Friday	3/29	9:25 am	Left message with the front desk saying his car broke down and he woudln't be able to get to work.
Monday	4/01	11:00 am	Absent. No explanation.
Tuesday	4/02	3:30 pm	Had one-on-one meeting with John. Told him I'm concerned about how often he's been out lately. He promised to have all his work complete by the end of the week.

Appendix B

Maintaining a Positive Workplace: Employee Recognition Questionnaire

Completed by: ____

Job Title: ____

Date:____

1. How do you like to be appreciated for your accomplishments?

Style:

In person or otherwise (e.g., via email, voice mail, note, etc.)?

____

Privately or publicly?

____

If publicly do you prefer to involve colleagues, senior/executive managment, both, other?

____

Timing:

Do you prefer to be recognized for your achievenments:

At the end of a project (less frequesntly, for large tasks completed)?

____

____

On the ongoing basis (more frequently, for small achievemnets throughout a bigger project)?

____

____

2. In addition to recognition, what types of rewards are meaningful to you (e.g., money, comp time, movie tickets, pizza party, group outings)?

____

____

3. Is there anything you'd like to add or suggest regarding recognition?

____

____

11000 Optum Circle, Eden Prairie, MN 55344