

## **Personal Problems at the Workplace**

Everyone has personal problems.

How do you know if these problems are interfering with your work?

This is what shows up:

### **1. Generally lower job performance:**

- Difficulty in recalling instructions, conversations, details, etc.
- Increasing difficulty in handling complex assignments/cases
- Difficulty in recalling own mistakes
- Assignments/procedures take more time
- Mistakes due to inattention, poor judgment, lack of knowledge, lack of skill
- Complaints from co-workers, patients, and/or clients

### **2. Absenteeism**

- Use of unauthorized leave
- Excessive sick leave
- Frequent absences at the beginning or end of the work week
- Excessive tardiness, especially at the beginning of the work week or in returning from lunch and/or breaks

### **3. On the job absenteeism:**

- Frequent absence from assigned work area
- Failure to respond to phone calls, pages, or emails
- Frequent trips to bathroom or break room
- Long coffee breaks
- Malingering

### **4. High accident rate – both on and off the job**

### **5. Erratic work patterns – alternate periods of very high and very low productivity**

## **6. Poor work relationships**

- Conflicts with staff and colleagues
- Overreacts to real or imagined criticism
- Wide mood swings
- Borrows money from co-workers
- Argumentative, belligerent, insubordinate behavior
- Unreasonable resentments
- Begins to avoid associates
- Poor boundaries with staff, colleagues, or clients
- Frequent inappropriate remarks or off-color humor with staff, colleagues, or clients.

## **7. Indicators of poor performance by supervisor/managers**

- Begins to let performance standards slip
- Begins to issues conflicting instructions to subordinates
- Uses employees time and skills inefficiently
- Submits incomplete records and data
- Budgets may begin to be mismanaged
- Schedules fail to be coordinated
- Less than proper service
- Does not deal with problem employees
- Increased conflict among department employees

## **How should colleagues or supervisors respond to concerns about an employee or a colleague?**

1. Objectively observe and document problematic behavior.
2. Maintain appropriate professional boundaries
  - Avoid diagnosing or interpreting the meaning of the behavior.
  - Follow your organization's disciplinary policies and procedures.

- Set, communicate, and enforce appropriate performance/behavioral expectations.
- Offer an appropriate referral (counseling) to help the individual meet performance/behavioral expectations.
- Set, communicate, and enforce appropriate consequences for not meeting performance/behavioral expectations.
- Obtain consultation, if needed, about how to conduct a constructive confrontation.

**3. If dangerous behavior is observed you must act appropriately to protect the public safety.**

- Obtain emergency assistance if necessary
- Act in accordance with your organizations' policies and procedures, code of ethics, legal obligations.
- Consult with a colleague, supervisor, or other knowledgeable professional if you are unsure how to proceed.
- Recognize that failing to address problematic behavior ultimately does more harm than good.

## **Handout: Personal Problems at the Workplace**

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- Increasing difficulty in handling....
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## TICKET 1

Welcomes rehab group members today. After brief check in began discussion of personal problems which affect work performance. Discussed how personal problems results in lower job performance, absenteeism, high accident rates, erratic work patterns, poor work relationships. Processed these with concrete examples of each. Groups discussed the physiological changes which result in “fight or flight” response to stress and how this gradually erodes away cognitive abilities, emotional stability, and general health status.

### **Individual Note:**

Client shy but able to participate in group class and discussion. Attentive and cooperative. Good sense of humor. Defensiveness low.

### **Plan:**

- Continue working on positive management of stress and challenges both at work and in personal relationships.
- Continue working on positive employment skills to prepare and support full time work readiness.