

Supervisor Training

Working Partners for an Alcohol
and Drug-Free Workplace



MISSISSIPPI STATE
UNIVERSITY™

Department of Human
Resources Management

Supervisor Training Outline

- Objectives of training
- Overview of Drug-Free Workplace Policy
- Supervisors' responsibilities
- Identifying performance problems and managing potential crisis situations
- Recognizing problems
- Intervention and referral
- Protecting confidentiality
- Continued supervision
- Enabling and supervisor traps
- Do's and Don'ts for supervisors



Objectives of Training

At the end of the training, supervisors should understand:

- The different components of the Drug-Free Workplace Policy
- Their role in implementing the Drug-Free Workplace Policy



At the end of the training, supervisors should know how to:

- Identify and investigate crisis situations
- Recognize workplace problems that may be related to alcohol and other drugs
- Intervene in problem situations
- Refer employees who have problems with alcohol and other drugs
- Protect employee confidentiality
- Continue to supervise employees who have been referred to assistance
- Avoid enabling and common supervisory traps



Overview of Drug-Free Workplace Policy – University Policy HRM 60.118

The Drug-Free Workplace Policy accomplishes two major things:

- Sends a clear message that the use of alcohol and drugs in the workplace is prohibited
- Encourages employees who have problems with alcohol and other drugs to voluntarily seek help



The Drug-Free Workplace Policy exists to:

- Protect the health and safety of all employees, customers, and the public
- Safeguard employer assets from theft and destruction
- Protect trade secrets
- Maintain product quality and company integrity and reputation
- Comply with the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988 or any other applicable laws



The Drug-Free Workplace Policy answers the following questions:

- What is the purpose of the policy and program?
- Who is covered by the policy?
- When does the policy apply?
- What behavior is prohibited?
- Are employees required to notify supervisors of drug-related convictions?
- Does the policy include searches?
- Does the program include drug testing?



- What are the consequences for violating the policy?
- Are there Return-to-Work agreements?
- What types of assistance is available to employees needing help?
- How is employee confidentiality protected?
- Who is responsible for enforcing the policy?
- How is the policy communicated to employees?



Supervisors' Responsibilities

It is your responsibility, as a supervisor, to:

- Maintain a safe, secure and productive environment for employees
- Evaluate and discuss performance with employees
- Treat all employees fairly
- Act in a manner that does not demean or label people



It is NOT your responsibility, as a supervisor, to:

- Diagnose drug and alcohol problems
- Have all the answers
- Provide counseling or therapy
- Be a police officer



Legally sensitive areas:

- Safeguard employees' confidentiality
- Ensure the policy is clearly communicated
- Establish procedures to thoroughly investigate alleged violations
- Provide due process and ample opportunity for response to allegations
- When testing is included, ensure quality control and confirmation of positive tests



Identifying Performance Problems and Handling Potential Crisis Situations

Distinguishing between a crisis situation and a performance problem

Crisis situations are less common than performance problems and can consist of:

- Dangerous behavior
- Threatening behavior
- Obvious impairment
- Possession of alcohol and other drugs
- Illegal activity



- Questions to consider when investigating a potential drug or alcohol crisis situation
- Recommended actions to take when confronted with a possible drug or alcohol situation



Recognizing Problems

Addiction:

The irresistible compulsion to use alcohol and other drugs despite adverse consequences. It is characterized by repeated failures to control use, increased tolerance and increased disruption in the family



Ongoing performance problems that do not respond to normal supervisory actions may be signs of addiction and other personal problems and may require more intervention. Examples of common performance problems that may be indicators of underlying addiction include:

- Poor attendance – tardiness, unexplained absences, long lunches
- Co-worker or customer complaints
- Mistakes and missed deadlines



Intervention and Referral

Steps to take when you have identified a performance problem:

- Document the performance problem
- Get yourself ready
- Set the stage
- Use constructive confrontation
- Refer for assistance
- Follow up on progress towards meeting performance goals



Constructive confrontation:

- Tell employee you are concerned about his/her performance
- State problem
- Refer to documentation of specific events
- Avoid over-generalizations
- Ask for explanation



- Avoid getting involved in discussions of personal problems
- Try to get employee to acknowledge what you see as the problem
- State what must be done to correct problem
- Set time frame for performance improvement
- Specify consequences if problem continues



Protecting Confidentiality

For supervisor referrals to be effective, an employee needs to know that:

- Problems will not be made public
- Conversations with a referral agent are private and will be protected
- All information related to performance issues will be maintained in his/her personnel file



- Information about referral to treatment, however, will be kept separately
- Information about treatment for addiction or mental illness is not a matter of public record and cannot be shared without a signed release from the employee
- If an employee chooses to tell co-workers about his/her private concerns, that is his/her decision
- When an employee tells his/her supervisor something in confidence, supervisors are obligated to protect that disclosure



There are some limits on confidentiality that may require:

- Disclosure of child abuse, elder abuse and serious threats of homicide or suicide as dictated by state law
- Reporting the results of assessment and evaluation following a positive drug test
- Verifying medical information to authorize release and/or leave time as specified in University policy
- Revealing medical information to the insurance company in order to qualify for coverage under a benefits plan



Continued Supervision

After constructive confrontation and referral, the employee will need:

- Continued feedback about behavior and performance
- Encouragement to follow through with continuing care and support groups
- Accurate performance appraisals and fair treatment
- Time to adjust to doing things differently
- Respect for his/her privacy
- Open lines of communication
- Corrective action if old behaviors reappear



Enabling

Enabling: Action that you take that protects the employee from the consequences of his/her actions and actually helps the employee to NOT deal with the problem.

Examples of enabling:

- Covering up
- Rationalizing
- Withdrawing/Avoiding
- Blaming
- Controlling
- Threatening



Supervisor Traps

- Sympathy
- Excuses
- Apology
- Diversions
- Innocence
- Anger
- Pity
- Tears



Do's for Supervisors

- DO emphasize that you only are concerned with work performance or conduct
- DO have documentation of performance in front of you when you talk with the employee
- DO remember that many problems get worse without assistance
- DO emphasize that conversations are confidential with a referral agent
- DO call your department's Human Resources Generalist to discuss how to make a referral



Don'ts for Supervisors

- DON'T try to diagnose the problem
- DON'T moralize. Limit comments to job performance and conduct issues only
- DON'T discuss alcohol and drug use
- DON'T be misled by sympathy-evoking tactics
- DON'T cover up. If you protect people, it enables them stay the same
- DON'T make threats that you do not intend to carry out



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