



# EMPLOYEE SUPPORT SERVICES SECTION

## A GUIDE FOR SUPERVISORS

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MIAMI-DADE COUNTY  
PEOPLE AND INTERNAL OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT  
BENEFITS AND EMPLOYEE SUPPORT SERVICES DIVISION



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# INTRODUCTION

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Miami-Dade County managers and supervisors are charged with the daily responsibility for the County's most important asset, the employees. Only when employees are at their very best can they perform efficiently on the job.

At times, all of us face problems and need help. The Employee Support Services Section (ESSS) recognizes that employees sometimes have personal problems that adversely affect every aspect of their lives and weaken their ability to perform satisfactorily on the job. The County made a commitment to help those employees experiencing difficult times with the creation of the Employee Support Services Section (ESSS), formerly, Employee Assistance Program (EAP) in 1984.

For the past forty-one years, all segments of Miami-Dade County government, from the County Manager's Office, the County Commissioners, and individual employees, including their family members, have often praised the services offered by the ESSS. This data reaffirms the ESSS' commitment towards the rehabilitation and reintegration of existing employees. This is far more desirable and cost effective than replacing these individuals with new hires, oftentimes after an often-lengthy disciplinary process.

This comprehensive manual has been prepared to acquaint you with the warning signs associated with personal problems affecting the employees' job performance, and to inform you about the services of our ESSS. Each manager and supervisor are encouraged to become thoroughly familiar with its contents.

# CONFIDENTIALITY

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Like most programs that provide employee assistance services, the ESSS program meets and adheres to the Privacy Practices Confidentiality Laws.

**Whether a referral is voluntary or supervisory, managers and administrators must guard employees' information and respect their right to privacy.**

It is the policy of Miami-Dade County and all its departments to protect the privacy and confidentiality of all customers' identifiable, personal, and confidential information. This includes, but is not limited to, protected health information as required by federal, state, and local laws.



SECTION 01

# ADMISSIONS







**The Employee Support Services Section (ESSS) deals with two kinds of admission:**

## **1 VOLUNTARY ADMISSION**

Occurs at the employee's own initiative. The employee, recognizing a possible need for assistance, consults with an ESSS representative before job performance problems become an issue. No feedback is given to the supervisor under this type of referral. The self-referral might be encouraged by the supervisor, a labor union representative, a co-worker, or a family member.

## **2 INVOLUNTARY ADMISSION**

Is initiated by departments when an employee tests positive on a drug test or when another serious offense occurs. For instance, low job productivity or acting-out behavior that puts at risk his/her employment and demands intervention. In such circumstances, use of drugs may be suspected. Therefore, authorized personnel may order a drug test when the following applies:

1. for cause (following an accident)
2. for reasonable suspicion (acting out behavior – indicating problems)
3. threats (violence on the job).

When this occurs, a referral to the ESSS program is generated and compliance with the program's treatment and recommendations becomes a prerequisite for continuation of employment with the County.

Problems that affect work performance are a legitimate concern to Miami-Dade County. One of your functions as a supervisor is to identify poor performance by employees and take corrective action. Your early identification and referral of the employee for help can result in improved job performance and help the individual lead a more productive life. Supervisors will find this manual very helpful and will use it as a tool to understand how the two different kinds of Employee Support Services admissions interface with the Miami-Dade County Progressive Disciplinary Process.

## ADMISSIONS AND PROGRESSIVE SUPERVISOR STEPS:

### 1 VOLUNTARY ADMISSION

If the employee comes as a voluntary ESSS admission during working hours and would like administrative time for his/her participation, the ESSS counselor may provide the employee with an enrollment letter that may grant the employee (at employee's supervisor's discretion) up to 3 hours of administrative leave. The employee must provide an ESSS enrollment letter to the supervisor for the supervisor to consider granting administrative leave time. No further information will be given without a signed written consent from the employee.

#### TYPES OF VOLUNTARY ADMISSION:

- Employee comes entirely on his/her own with no suggestion from any other person
- Employee comes at suggestion/urging of family or friends
- Employee comes at suggestion/urging of labor union representative
- Employee comes at suggestion/urging of co-workers
- Employee comes at suggestion/urging of healthcare personnel
- Employee comes at informal suggestion/urging of supervisor or another personnel representative

### 2 INVOLUNTARY ADMISSION

With involuntary ESSS admission, the employee's supervisor or designated personnel representative may inquire about the employee's enrollment participation and level of compliance with the instructions of the ESSS.

#### TYPES OF INVOLUNTARY ADMISSION:

- Employee comes to the ESSS because of a Disciplinary Action Report outlining any contracted conditions of employment regarding participation in the ESSS

Not all attendance or performance problems should be referred to the Employee Support Services Section. The program does not intend to prevent or divert a supervisor's labor management responsibilities in these cases. The program should not be viewed as a disciplinary method, but rather as another option or tool for supervisors to use in correcting difficult performance problems and helping the employee to retain his or her job. Please remember that the ESSS program's focus is to improve the mental well-being of employees to enhance their work performance.

SECTION 02

# OVERVIEW OF THE SUPERVISOR'S ROLE





## OVERVIEW OF THE SUPERVISOR'S ROLE

The following information should be used as a general guideline for dealing with performance problems and for making a supervisory referral to the Employee Support Services Section program. In all cases, however, administrative and disciplinary procedures may be applied as appropriate. Remember, ESSS referrals are not to be seen by the employee as disciplinary action, nor are they a substitute for appropriate disciplinary action.

As a supervisor, you should be alert to the employee's need for help, observe changes in behavior patterns, and offer an expert referral. There are eight basic procedures to follow when referring an individual to the Employee Support Services Section (ESSS). The supervisor should consider the following steps in serving the needs of the employee.

### 1 OBSERVE

Changes in employee behavior can signify that individuals have personal concerns that are interfering with their work performance

### 2 INFORM

Prior to any counseling, informal or formal, the employees must be fully aware of the rules and regulations, departmental policies, and supervisory expectations/consequences, which will result from a violation.

### 3 PREPARE

When you have observed deteriorating performance and/or unfavorable changes in personal or work patterns, your options to assist an employee include:

- Discussing performance difficulties with the individual before the difficulties become serious enough to involve upper management
- Inform the individual about the availability of the Employee Support Services Section program
- Discussing the matter with your immediate supervisor, particularly before discussing it a second time with the employee

- Contacting the Employee Support Services Section directly to discuss the advisability and procedures for referral
- Keeping in mind that your primary objective as a supervisor is not to determine the employee's underlying problem
- Remember that your objective should be to advise the employee of the specifics of his or her poor performance and to obtain agreement on the method of reversing the performance

### 4 DOCUMENT

As a supervisor, when you are faced with declining or erratic performance, you need to document observable and verifiable facts. Complete and accurate documentation is essential when dealing with an employee with performance problems.

### 5 CONFRONT

You should schedule a private discussion to advise the employee that:

**CORRECTIVE ACTION** must be taken to address unacceptable work behavior

**PROFESSIONAL HELP** is available from the Employee Support Services Section if emotional or other personal problems are contributing to their unacceptable performance

**FURTHER STEPS** may be taken if the employee's performance does not improve in a reasonable time

## 6 FOLLOW UP

Occurs after your initial performance discussion with the employee and after advising the individual of the availability of the Employee Support Services Section program.

## 7 REFER

Referrals can be initiated and encouraged by any of the following:

**SELF** - an employee may call the ESSS directly and schedule an appointment. The supervisor may never know that the employee has been admitted into the program (unless the employee authorizes the disclosure in writing)

**SUPERVISOR** - supervisors should contact the ESSS directly for consultation regarding the referral process. Once they have the employee's permission, they may schedule an appointment. The employee will usually be seen within two working days of the call

**UNION** - labor union stewards may contact the ESSS and initiate a referral. Their process is nearly identical to a supervisory referral, except that the employee must receive leave authorization from the Department

**CO-WORKER** - a fellow employee may contact the ESSS (with the employee's permission) and schedule an appointment

**FAMILY MEMBER** - a family member may contact the ESSS for consultation and referral of the employee or themselves to the program

## 8 REINTEGRATE

If the employee has been on leave of absence from work at the written request (letter) of the ESSS and is now ready to return to work, the ESSS will provide a letter to the supervisor with a recommended return-to-work date. Please be advised that leave of absence and return-to-work dates are determined by the employee's provider in writing (letter) to the assigned ESSS counselor.

If a return-to-work conference is necessary, the discussion will focus on the following:

- Supervisor's expectations
- Employee's responsibilities
- Employee's special needs (i.e., after-care)
- ESSS's continuing role

## 9 INITIATE PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE

If all the above efforts fail in bringing the employee to an acceptable and consistent level of work, progressive discipline in accordance with Miami-Dade County procedures may be the only option available to use.

## SUMMARY OF SUPERVISOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES

### SUPERVISORY DO'S

- Know your employees
- Document job performance regularly
- Act whenever job performance declines
- Document objective facts that justify fitness-for-duty examination or mandatory ESSS referral
- Make sure unfit employees don't perform safety-sensitive job functions
- Know how to get help for an employee

### SUPERVISORY DON'TS

- Try to get a confession
- Diagnose an employee's problems as mental health, drug, and/or alcohol use
- Discuss your suspicions with other employees (only your direct management)
- Accuse the employee of having a substance use or mental health problem
- Put in writing that an employee has a substance use or mental health problem

## SUPERVISOR'S ROLE - OBSERVE!

Supervisors are responsible for observing the following:

### 1 PATTERNS OF JOB PERFORMANCE DETERIORATION

The following words relate to job performance problems and should especially be noted if they are continuing and repeated. To act upon these concerns, documentation is required.

**ABSENTEEISM** - Patterns of absenteeism vary with each person. The following are some general patterns. Generally, any excess absenteeism or increases in absenteeism should be noted.

- Unauthorized leave
- Excessive sick leave
- Monday and/or Friday absences
- Repeated absences of 2-4 days
- Repeated absences of 1-2 weeks (5-10 days)
- Excessive tardiness Monday mornings
- Excessive tardiness after lunch
- Leaving work early
- Peculiar and improbable excuses for absences
- Higher absences for illness than the average
- Frequent unscheduled short-term absences

#### ON-THE-JOB ABSENTEEISM:

- More absences from post than job requires
- Frequent trips to water fountain or bathroom
- Long coffee breaks
- Physical illness on the job

#### HIGH ACCIDENT RATE AND/OR MORE ACCIDENT CLAIMS:

- Accidents on the job
- Frequent trips to the nurse or doctor's office
- Accidents off the job affecting performance



**DIFFICULTY IN CONCENTRATION:**

- Work requires greater effort than usual
- Job taking more time than usual
- Possible hand tremor when concentrating

**CONFUSION:**

- Difficulty in recalling instructions, especially details
- Difficulty in handling complex assignments
- Difficulty in recalling mistakes
- Sporadic work patterns: alternate periods of very high and very low productivity
- Resistance to change on the job: Changes may present a threat because the current job may enable or hide low performance
- Coming to work in a non-acceptable condition

**GENERALLY LOWERED JOB PERFORMANCE:**

- Misses deadlines
- Makes mistakes due to inattention or poor judgment
- Wastes an excessive amount of material
- Making bad decisions
- Offers improbable excuses for poor work performance

**DETERIORATING PERSONAL APPEARANCE/GROOMING:**

- Unshaven
- Hair not combed
- Inappropriate attire
- Body odor
- Lacking make-up (if normally used)

**EMPLOYEE RELATIONS ON-THE-JOB:**

- Friction with supervisor and other employees
- Over-reacting to real or imagined criticism
- Wide swings in mood and morale
- Borrowing money from co-workers
- Complaints from co-workers
- Unreasonable resentments
- Avoiding colleagues

**KEY INDICATORS RELATED TO SUPERVISORY PERSONNEL:**

- Allowing safety standards to slip
- Issuing conflicting instructions
- Using employees' time and skills ineffectively
- Submitting incomplete reports and data
- Becoming lax in supervisory duties

**KEY INDICATORS RELATED TO HIGHER MANAGEMENT:**

- Budgets being mismanaged
- Schedules fail to be coordinated
- Agency fails to deliver proper service
- Decisions are made with insufficient data
- Poor judgment is affecting overall efficiency

**REMEMBER:**

ALL employees, including ourselves, exhibit some of these job performance problems on occasion. It is the pattern of performance over months that one should note and document. Time is the critical factor in:

- Establishing job performance standards
- Observing and documenting deterioration
- Evaluating improvement in job performance

**PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING**

- Supervisors are not expected to be diagnosticians
- ESSS referrals are to be based on job performance problems and/or unacceptable behavior
- Early intervention is crucial to successful resolution of serious problems

## 2 GENERAL BUT POSSIBLE PATTERNS OF TROUBLE WITH SUBSTANCE USE

- Changes in work attendance (absentee patterns)
- Changes in work habits, efficiency, etc. (lower quality or quantity of work)
- Changes in physical appearance (dress and hygiene)
- Wearing sunglasses at inappropriate times (indoors or in evening)
- Unusual efforts to cover arms (possible needle marks)
- Association with known drug/alcohol users
- Stealing items which can be readily pawned or sold for cash
- Borrowing money from co-workers (possibly to buy drugs)
- Unusual excuses for behaviors
- Excessive nervousness
- Absences from work area
- Spasmodic work pace
- Financial problems
- Depressed condition
- Avoidance of supervisor and co-workers
- Flushed face
- Resentfulness
- Family problems
- Increased incidence of illness
- Frequent non-work visits from other people
- Defensiveness
- On-the-job accidents/injuries



## SUPERVISOR'S ROLE - PREPARE!

The key words as pertaining to job performance are Continued and Repeated. **Please remember that problems need to be documented** if the employee is to be confronted successfully. Therefore, it is important to note times, dates, etc., in your reports:

### PREPARATION LIST FOR NOTING PATTERNS

#### 1 ABSENTEEISM

The patterns of absenteeism will vary with some employees. The following are some general patterns. Any excess or increase in absenteeism should be documented

- Unauthorized leave Excessive sick leave
- Monday and/or Friday absences
- Repeated absences (2-4 days)
- Excessive tardiness, especially on Monday mornings or in returning from lunch
- Repeated absences (1-2 weeks)
- Peculiar and improbable excuses for absences
- Higher absenteeism rate than other employees for colds, flu, etc.

#### 2 ON-THE-JOB ABSENTEEISM

- Continued absences from work site
- Frequent trips to the water fountain or the bathroom
- Long breaks (i.e., coffee breaks)
- Physical illness on job

#### 3 HIGH ACCIDENT RATE

- Accidents on the job
- Frequent trips to nurse
- Accidents off the job (affecting job performance)

#### 4 DIFFICULTY IN CONCENTRATION

- Work requires great effort
- Job takes more time
- Possible hand tremor while concentrating

#### 5 CONFUSION

- Difficulty in remembering
- Increasing difficulty in handling complex assignments
- Difficulty in recalling past mistakes

#### 6 SPASMODIC WORK PATTERNS

- Alternating patterns of very high and very low performance

#### 7 APPEARANCE

- Coming to or returning to work in an obviously abnormal condition

#### 8 GENERALLY LOWERED JOB EFFICIENCY

- Misses deadlines
- Makes mistakes due to inattention or poor judgment
- Wastes more material
- Making bad decisions
- Complaints from clients

#### 9 EMPLOYEE RELATIONS ON-THE-JOB

- Overreacts to real or imagined criticism
- Wide swings in mood or morale
- Borrows money from co-workers
- Complaints from co-workers
- Unreasonable resentments
- Begins to avoid colleagues



## SUPERVISOR'S ROLE - DOCUMENT!

Proper and careful documentation is an essential part of supervision at all levels and is always necessary for efficient County operations. Proper documentation provides an authentic record of what has occurred in the past and helps to avoid the lack of clarity that sometimes occurs when one attempts to evaluate an employee's performance based on "memory." The effective use of documentation procedures is critical to the success of the program.

It is very important that the supervisor understands that documentation should cover problems that occur only on the job. Mention of incidents that take place outside the work setting could be construed as an invasion of privacy. The County can only legitimately become involved when an off-the-job problem interferes with job performance, or when the employee's actions qualify as conduct unbecoming a county employee. When any off-the-job problems create job performance difficulties, however, the difficulties should only be carefully viewed when considering maintaining his/her job.

It is very important that you record, in detail, any unsatisfactory job performance and all the unusual activities of the employee you believe to be "troubling." This is important for several reasons. **First**, you must be able to demonstrate to the employee exactly how and when his/her

performance has deteriorated. **Second**, in the case of an employee grievance, valid documentation of employee activities is essential. **Finally**, a careful record of employee performance will enable those involved in the program to diagnose and treat the employee's problem more accurately.

To document a performance problem (or any other unusual activity) correctly, you should record the employee's name, date, time, and place of the incident. This should include a brief description of what happened and all the individuals who were involved. If any time is lost or materials are damaged, this should also be noted.

It is important that the documentation is written! As supervisors, you should document any behavior on the job that stands out as unusual, subnormal performance (e.g., accident, unexcused absence, missed meeting, poor public relations, and low productivity). Documentation of unusual events helps the supervisor to identify a change in job performance. It is important to document the date and time of the event. You never know when you will need to retrieve this information. Documentation is also critical and necessary, especially if the job performance problem leads to termination. Without adequate documentation, you will have problems supporting your decision.

### 1 DOCUMENT JOB PERFORMANCE

These are areas in which a decline may occur:

#### PRODUCTIVITY:

- Quantity - % (percentage) below standards or expectations.
- Quality - kinds of errors or mistakes made
- Sloppy work
- Half or poorly completed jobs
- Missed deadlines
- Missed meetings
- Missed appointments

**ABSENTEEISM ON AND OFF THE JOB:**

- Number of days missed, compared to average employee
- Time away from workplace such as
  - long coffee breaks and long bathroom breaks
  - Unexcused time away from job
  - Chronic tardiness
  - Accidents: disregard for safety procedures
  - Inappropriate behavior on the job
  - Sleeping on the job
  - Intoxication
- Wasting time
- Sexual harassment
- Illegal activity
- Violating policies and procedures or
- Not following standard operating procedures
- Wastes materials
- Poor judgment and decisions
- Inability to get along with co-workers and supervisors

**NOTE**

- These are general categories to document.

**REMEMBER**

- Document facts, observable, verifiable behavior, and objective (not subjective) performance data.

**2 REASONS FOR DOCUMENTATION****YOU ARE NOT A COMPUTER:**

It is impossible to remember all the facts in your head.

**HINDSIGHT IS NOT 20/20:**

When evaluating a decline in performance objectively with an employee without a written record, you may remember the good and forget the negative, or remember the negative and forget all the good work done.

**LITIGIOUS SOCIETY:**

You may need to keep a written record to support disciplinary actions (i.e., grievance, arbitration, or termination hearings)

Part of the Performance Evaluation Interview: Documentation gives credibility to your performance concerns. Employees cannot dispute what is written in black and white.

**IMPORTANT NOTE**

- Avoid any direct reference to the ESSS in the employee's personnel file unless such is needed to support a disciplinary action.



# SUPERVISOR'S ROLE - CONFRONT!

## 1 CONSTRUCTIVE CONFRONTATION POLICY

Constructive confrontation is designed to assist you as a supervisor in motivating a problem employee to do the following:

- Manage and correct his/her personal problem
- Improve job performance

This is widely used to motivate the employee to seek help that will prevent serious consequences from occurring if the problem is not resolved.

## 2 CONSTRUCTIVE-CONFRONTATION PROCEDURE

### DOCUMENTATION

It is vital that you have accurate documentation of the employee's job performance in your possession at the time of the initial confrontation (Include date and time of all absences, tardiness, rule violations, behavior that is abnormal, attitude changes or unusual activities).

### INITIAL CONFRONTATION (INFORMAL):

- Be firm (confrontation)
- Be fair (constructive)
- Be consistent (both)

During the process, set the atmosphere/tone of the meeting. Relax and start with small talk. At the appropriate time, confront the employee and encourage feedback.

### CONFRONTATION TOPICS INCLUDE:

- Employee's poor work performance
- Changes in the employee's behavior
- Possible disciplinary steps
- Union contract provisions
- Effect on other employees
- Effect on employee's work record

During this phase, also help in a constructive manner:

- Offer emotional support
- Show concern for the employee's welfare
- Allow the employee to verbalize (i.e., an explanation of his/her behavior)
- Listen to personal problems
- Explain County Personnel and ESSS policies
- Offer to call the ESSS for the employee and to set up an appointment

Expect these possible reactions from the employee:

- Denial of drug and/or alcohol use
- Denial of personal problems
- Arguing his/her fitness-for-duty
- Arguing circumstances leading up to the referral
- Being very cooperative

It is important that you, as a supervisor, remain calm and objective. Let the employee know that you are concerned; that the County values the employee; and that you want to assist the employee. HOWEVER, be firm. Make it clear to the employee that job performance must be brought to a satisfactory level and maintained. Give the employee a set time frame in which to accomplish this task. Schedule another informal meeting within two weeks.



## SUPERVISOR'S ROLE - REFER, FOLLOW-UP, REINTEGRATE OR INITIATE PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE!

Supervisors are in the best position to observe the employee and are most knowledgeable concerning job expectations. In this sense, supervisors are also in a very good position to make ESSS referrals. The steps that follow are an overview of the supervisor's role when making an ESSS referral.

### 1 REFER

In the event that the employee accepts the referral into the ESSS program (and with the employee's written authorization), the following occurs:

- In cases of mandatory referrals, you, the supervisor, will be able to receive progress reports from ESSS to advise you of the employee's compliance with the contracted requirements of the Program.
- Within two weeks of discharge from the primary treatment program, you will be notified of the employee's discharge from the ESSS and given any positive and negative factors with regard to the discharge.

### 2 FOLLOW UP

Supervisors who have referred employees for treatment with the ESSS should do the following:

- Continue to monitor job performance
- Continue to observe the employee's behavior
- Continue to support the employee's positive efforts toward problem resolution
- Continue the progressive disciplinary process until resolution is achieved
- Confront the employee at the earliest sign of job performance deterioration
- Use the constructive confrontation strategy
- Notify and consult ESSS if the employee is not improving so that ESSS can address with the treatment program

### 3 REINTEGRATE

Following successful completion of an employee's primary treatment for substance use, the supervisor can request a return-to-work interview with the employee and the ESSS counselor/case manager (optional if deemed necessary). At this meeting, four issues are covered:

- Supervisor's expectations
- Employee's responsibilities
- Employee's special needs (i.e., after-care)
- ESSS's continuing role

### 4 INITIATE PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE

If all the above efforts fail in bringing the employee to an acceptable and consistent level of work, progressive discipline may be the only option available for use.

SECTION 03

# COMMON MISTAKES OF SUPERVISORS



There are certain common mistakes that supervisors often make in refusing to deal with performance problems related to an employee's personal problems. Read and avoid these mistakes:

## 1 THE STIGMA

Many people still regard mental health problems and substance use as social and moral disgraces rather than as health problems. The supervisor, who should be anxious to help salvage a valuable employee, sometimes finds the employee's personal problems too embarrassing to deal

with. It is easier to ignore or cover up the problem until it becomes so blatant and disruptive that the supervisor feels justified in terminating the employee. Thinking of mental health problems or substance use as treatable illnesses will help eliminate this stigma.

## 2 THE FEAR OF JEOPARDIZING SOMEONE'S CAREER

Sometimes a supervisor feels that referring an employee to the Employee Support Services Section will brand that person as unstable and destroy the employee's future in the County. This is clearly contrary to the viewpoint expressed in County policy. The County wants to keep, not

terminate, good employees. The supervisor may be the only person able to see that a troubled employee gets the help needed (Is this being a destructive informant or a supervisor who really cares about the employee?).

## 3 THE TIME EXCUSE

Supervisors often believe (or hope) that a problem will work itself out in time. Mental health problems, as well as substance use problems, are progressive diseases not improved by time

alone. The longer they go untreated, the worse these problems become as well as the employee's work performance.

## 4 THE FEAR OF LOSING A GOOD WORKER

A supervisor may feel obligated to protect a person who was, or still is, a good worker.

## 5 THE FEAR OF MAKING A MISTAKE

The supervisor who is uncertain about the source of a performance problem may fail to act even when job performance has definitely declined. If you are in doubt about a specific case, just call the

ESSS Manager or anyone else connected with the program. That's why we have an Employee Support Services program to answer your questions and to help County employees.

## 6 THE "IT'S MY PROBLEM; I'LL SOLVE IT" ATTITUDE

Some supervisors feel a responsibility to try to solve every problem that arises in their unit. However, mental health and substance use problems are medical problems requiring qualified assistance.

## 7 THE SKID-ROW STEREOTYPE

People who grew up with the misconception that only skid-row bums are alcoholics can't believe that someone they interact with every day is really

an alcoholic or other substance user. Alcoholism and substance use is a disease.

## 8 THE SUPERVISOR'S OWN PERSONAL PROBLEMS

Supervisors are no less prone to serious problems than other employees are. Like any other employees, before admitting a problem, they probably harbor guilt and anxiety about their problem. It's not surprising, therefore, that troubled supervisors may

react with suspicion, even unconscious hostility, toward the Employee Support Services program. Supervisors who present personal problems should be referred to the program by their own supervisors, and/or should refer themselves.

## 9 OTHER CONCERNS AND EXCUSES FOR REFUSING TO DEAL WITH PERFORMANCE PROBLEMS RELATED TO AN EMPLOYEE'S PERSONAL ISSUES

- Fears loss of employee's confidence/support
- Jeopardizing the employee's ability to make a living and support their family
- Does not like confrontations
- Fears possible loss of productivity
- Lacks training on the referral process
- Fears for personal safety





SECTION 04

# LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR SUPERVISORS

## LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR SUPERVISORS

### 1 PERMITTING AN INTOXICATED EMPLOYEE TO DRIVE HOME

Under no circumstances should an employer permit, encourage, or condone an employee in an obviously intoxicated or drug influenced state to

leave the workplace as the driver of the employee's or County's vehicle.

### 2 ARRANGING A RIDE FOR AN INTOXICATED EMPLOYEE

The employer should request the employee to remain at the workplace and, during the interim, the employer should attempt to make other arrangements for sending the employee home.

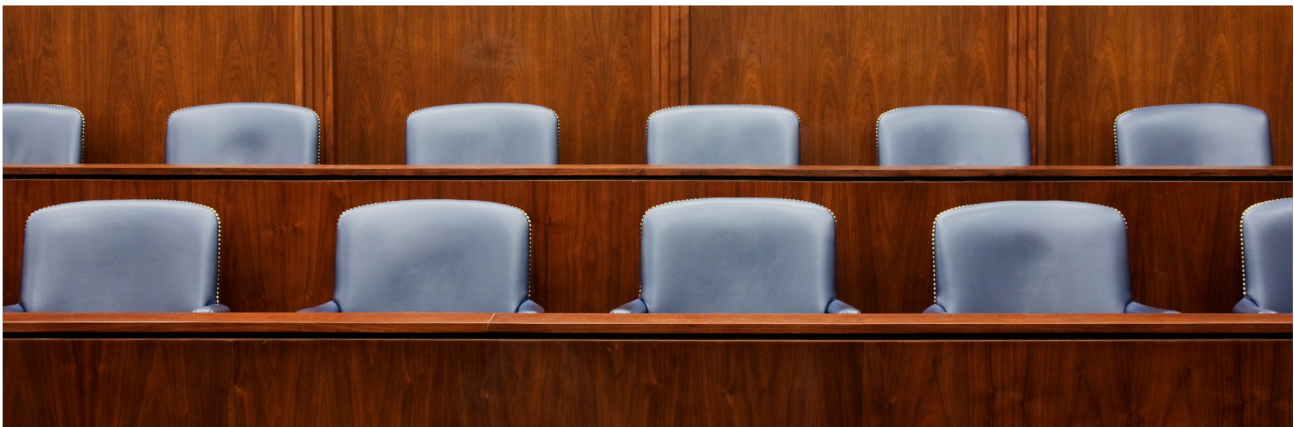
For example, the employer may call a member of the employee's family. If the intoxicated employee becomes aggressive and abusive, the employer should consider contacting the police.

### 3 SUSPENDING AN EMPLOYEE'S DRIVING PRIVILEGES

The employer should consider suspending an employee's driving privileges, pending an investigation into an incident. In the event the employer is reasonably satisfied that the employee was under the influence of alcohol, illicit drugs, or

non-prescription drugs, the employer may make it a condition that the employee's return to work is based on the employee's participation in an alcohol or drug treatment program.

Employers cannot be too lax in how they handle employees who are intoxicated during the working day. Remember, regardless of an employer's humanitarian concern for the employee, the employer has significant legal responsibilities for the safety of other employees and especially the public at large.





SECTION 05

# EMPLOYEE'S QUESTIONS ABOUT THE EMPLOYEE SUPPORT SERVICES PROGRAM



# EMPLOYEE'S QUESTIONS ABOUT THE EMPLOYEE SUPPORT SERVICES PROGRAM (ESSS)

## What is an Employee Support Services Program?

The ESSS program is an employer-paid employee benefit for the employee and his/her family. The ESSS program was created to help people find solutions to their problems.

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## What is an ESS Program for?

A comprehensive ESSS program is for an employee, supervisors, and eligible family members.

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## In simple terms, how does the ESSS program work?

A person with a problem meets with a Licensed Professional Counselor to identify the problem and plan a resolution.

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## How and why does counseling work?

Professional counseling is evidence-based. Counseling offers a new perspective and hope for change by helping us see and change ourselves through our thoughts, emotions, behaviors, and goals.

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## Why might one be afraid to participate in counseling?

Some feel that only weak people need help from others and that only "crazy" people seek mental health treatment.

## What are the most common problems people present to the ESSS?

Relationships, marital, family, stress, anxiety, worry, depression, and concerns about possible substance use.

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## What are an employee's rights with regard to enrolling in the ESSS?

- 1. Job Security:** This cannot be jeopardized by participation in the ESSS
  - 2. Refusal To Go:** Jobs are retained or lost based on performance only
  - 3. Confidentiality:** Nothing can be shared with anyone without the employee's written consent.
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## Does an employee pay for ESSS's services?

There is no out-of-pocket expense incurred for enrollment in the ESSS program including assessment and case management.

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## What about payment for referral services?

The employee's health insurance pays for outpatient, inpatient, and other levels of care as needed for both the employee and eligible family members. However, routine co-payments may be required. ESSS only recommends in-network providers. In some cases, ESSS will seek approval of a single case agreement from the insurance company if a provider with a certain specialty cannot be found.

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## How can we be sure if ESSS's records are kept out of one's personnel files?

ESSS's records are considered medical records and cannot be released to anyone without the person's written consent.



### Why would an employee choose to go to the ESSS rather than going directly to other treatment sources?

The ESSS controls ineffective utilization and costs and helps the employee find the most appropriate services for a given problem.

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### What is the ESS Training and Prevention component?

The ESSS training sessions are designed to encourage trust and employee participation as needed. Training is provided for employees, management, supervisors, and labor union leaders.

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### How and where does one go for an appointment?

One can call (305) 375-3293 to make a routine appointment between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, virtually or in-person. Some after-hours appointments on certain days are available. An appointment for emergency/crisis situations can be made anytime during work hours. If you have an emergency when the ESSS is closed, call your insurance health care provider or 911. ESSS is located at 601 NW 1st Court, Suite 15-050 | Miami, FL 33136.

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### What is an ESSS assessment?

An assessment is a type of evaluation conducted to make a professional diagnosis of one's problem and identify the employee's specific needs and services. In all cases, we use a comprehensive biopsychosocial evaluation.

### What happens with a referral for treatment?

Referrals are made within a professional network, carefully selected and both vetted by the ESSS and credentialed by the employees' health care insurance provider. At the time a referral is arranged, the client receives an explanation of all potential referral treatment costs, coupled with an appraisal of insurance and family resources available for treatment.

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### What kinds of professional services are available?

Through the ESSS, we can arrange for mental health and substance use services ranging from outpatient to inpatient treatment. We also refer to financial counseling, childcare, and housing services.

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### Where are referrals made?

ESSS referrals are made to the **least restrictive, least expensive** and **most suitable** treatment resources. These include self-help groups, group counseling sessions, couples/family sessions, individual sessions, and psychiatric services. These resources range in a spectrum of service levels from outpatient providers to inpatient treatment facilities.

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### What kinds of professionals are used for referrals?

We refer only carefully selected psychiatrists, psychologists, clinical social workers, licensed mental health counselors, marriage and family therapists, addiction professionals, as well as other licensed mental health and addiction professionals. All of these are either licensed or certified by the State of Florida, insurance carriers, and applicable professional organizations.

## What will the ESSS do for management and supervisors?

The ESSS will consult with supervisors on how to best communicate with an employee who seems to have a problem affecting his or her work. Training in successful referral strategies and utilizing your ESSS as a management tool are available upon request.

## Why would an employer provide an ESSS for employees?

National studies show an employer can save as much as six dollars for every dollar invested in an ESSS. These savings come in the form of reduction in lost time due to tardiness and absenteeism, reduction in on-the job accidents, and a significant reduction in unemployment compensation claims. The greatest savings are in helping a troubled employee stay employed rather than having to terminate the person, then recruit and train a replacement.

## What is a supervisor's responsibility with ESSS?

Supervisors can refer employees whose job performance seems to be affected by personal problems. Supervisors should not try to diagnose or treat the employees' or their own personal problems. Supervisors should take their own problems seriously and go to the ESSS for help just like any other employee.

## Could going to the ESSS cause an employee to lose their job?

Jobs are lost or retained solely based on performance, not based on an individual's personal or mental health problems. If a personal problem is affecting one's work, going to the ESSS may help the person and save a job.

## How does drug testing relate to the ESSS?

The ESSS does not perform drug testing. Miami-Dade County, through Administrative Order #7-27 calls for alcohol and drug screening with pre employment, with reasonable cause, and with county-provided physical examinations. The county is allowed to require drug testing in cases of any reasonable suspicion. A positive drug test during a pre-employment physical eliminates the possibility of employment. Employees who test positive for drugs are mandated to participate in the Employee Support Services Section as a condition for continued employment. A second positive drug test could result in termination.

## What are the most important things to remember about the Employee Assistance Program?

Remember these four C's:

1. **Confidentiality:** Information is not released without the written consent of the employee/client.
2. **Counseling:** Professional counseling is given to people who want to help themselves.
3. **Comprehensive:** The ESSS treats problems seriously by utilizing:
  - Professional assessments
  - Expeditious referrals
  - Timely counseling
  - Structured aftercare
  - Comprehensive follow-up
  - Employee orientation sessions to acquaint workers with the services of the program
  - Supervisory training sessions to equip supervisors in using the ESSS as a tool for effective management

**Cost:** There is no out-of-pocket expense for any ESSS center help given to Miami-Dade County employees or eligible family members. ESSS services are either covered by the employee's health insurance or are free of charge. Recommended treatment services are generally covered by the employee's health insurance. However, your treatment service provider will charge routine co-payments as outlined by the terms of your insurance.

SECTION 06

# MANAGEMENT AND SUPERVISORS' QUESTIONS ABOUT THE ESSS



# MANAGEMENT AND SUPERVISORS' QUESTIONS ABOUT THE ESSS

## How widespread are employees' personal problems, which may be affecting the workplace locally?

US population in 2023 was 334.9 M meaning that very close to 1 in 4 people in US suffer with a mental health or substance use disorder. 14% of the population have a substance use disorder over the age of 12.

Only 10% of whom received treatment, according to the latest National Survey of Drug Use and Health. (2021: 6%) More than half of those individuals who struggle with MH will go untreated.

Mindbody in 2021 ranked Miami as "the eighth most stressful city in the U.S." Based on data from the national survey on drug use and health for 2021-2022, approximately 13% of individuals aged 12 and older in florida reported using illicit drugs. This represents 1 in 8 people.

- Healthcare expenses associated with illicit drug use in Florida cost over two billion dollars a year
- Indirect costs such as absenteeism and lost productivity are estimated to cost Florida's economy over 10 billion dollars.
- More than 70 percent of those arrested by Miami police are employed in the Miami-Dade County area
- Because South Florida is a major source of drug imports, the increased availability that results accentuates the threat and the losses to businesses of all sizes.

## In what ways do employees' substance use problems impact productivity in the workplace?

Investing in mental health is not just a moral obligation; it is a sound financial strategy.

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that depression and anxiety disorders cost the global economy approximately \$1 trillion annually in lost

productivity. According to the National Safety Council and the National Institute of Drug Abuse -

- Workers with substance use disorders miss an average of 25 days from work annually, more than double the normal rate
- Employees struggling with opioid addiction may miss 29 or more days per year

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and Recovered.org in 2022 -

- 56% of individuals involved in fatal and serious injury road accidents tested positive for alcohol or drugs

According to the US Department of Labor

- Employees use of drugs or alcohol is a factor in approximately 65% of all on-the-job accidents

## To what extent do employees' mental health problems impact productivity in the workplace?

**Employee Productivity:** A study by the McKinsey Global Institute found that for every \$1 invested in mental health initiatives, companies can expect a return of up to \$4 in improved productivity. This demonstrates a clear financial incentive for businesses to prioritize mental health.

- According to a Gallup survey in 2022, workers who rate their mental health as fair or poor report approximately 12 unplanned absences per year, nearly four times the rate reported by employees who report good mental health.
- Also, according to Gallup, a troubled employee is estimated to work at only 60% of their potential efficiency.
- According to a study by Workplace Options in 2023, 15% of employees report issues with their job performance due to personal challenges.



## What detailed studies are available to measure the impact of personal problems in the absence of an effective Employee Assistance Program?

First, consider this formula for measuring the cost of NOT having an Employee Assistance Program.

**AVERAGE ANNUAL EMPLOYEE WAGE**

**X**

**10% OF TOTAL EMPLOYEES**

**X**

**25% IN LOST EFFICIENCY**

**=**

**CONSERVATIVE ESTIMATE OF  
ANNUAL LOSS TO EMPLOYER**

**Absenteeism:** According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), employees with untreated mental health conditions are [3 to 5 times more likely to miss work than their peers](#). On average, this results in a loss of 20.5 days of work each year per employee, significantly affecting overall productivity

A 2020 report from Deloitte United Kingdom found that workplaces with no mental health strategy had a 25% higher turnover rate, especially among high performers.

The Integrated Benefits Institute's 2020 Benchmarking Trends found that 40% of all long-term disability claims are mental health-related in workplaces without mental health resources.

## Why refer to the EAP for services?

More than 80% of employees treated for mental health report improved levels of work efficacy and satisfaction. (APA Center for Workplace Mental Health).

**Turnover Rates:** Organizations that prioritize mental health see lower turnover rates. Gallup's research indicates that companies with [highly engaged teams](#)

[experience 25% lower turnover](#). This not only saves on recruitment and training costs but also helps maintain institutional knowledge and stability within teams.<sup>1</sup>

**Presenteeism:** The CDC reports that presenteeism, where employees are physically present but unable to perform at full capacity due to mental health issues, [can reduce productivity by 30% or more](#). This silent drain on resources underscores the need for proactive mental health support.<sup>2</sup>

And it's cost-effective. When employees receive effective treatment for mental illnesses, the result is lower total medical costs, increased productivity, lower absenteeism and decreased disability costs. The bottom line: investing in a mentally healthy workforce is good for business.

## To what extent can the employee support services section help recover losses in productivity?

A study by Attridge, M. (2010) found that employees who used EAP services experienced an 8% to 12% improvement in productivity. 86% of employees reported improvement in emotional and mental health, which directly supported better job performance.

The National Behavioral Consortium Benchmarking Study (2015) found that employers with robust EAP's saw up to 40% improvement in productivity over a 6-month period. Users had 30% fewer missed workdays after engaging in EAP services.

A study by Attridge, M., et al (2016) found that presenteeism (when an employee attends work despite being unwell, injured, or experiencing stress, leading to reduced productivity and overall performance) improved by 27% and absenteeism dropped by 22%.

A study by Morneau Shepell and the Employee Assistance Professionals Association (2017) found that for every one dollar invested in an EAP, employers saw an average return of investment of \$8 to \$14. Nearly 70% of users reported an improved ability to manage work demands. Organizations with robust EAP's saw lower turnover and fewer disability claims.

SECTION 07

# EMOTIONAL WELLNESS



## EMOTIONAL WELLNESS | BEING THE BEST... YOU CAN BE

### 1 WHAT IS THE ROLE OF MIAMI-DADE'S EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM?

The Miami-Dade Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a confidential service which focuses on assisting those who are struggling with personal problems that may be affecting their ability to function at home, work or in the community. EAP

counselors focus on supporting employees with internal and external resources that assist in setting the foundation for restoration or enhancement of emotional and mental wellness.

### 2 WHO CAN USE THE EAP?

The EAP is available to all Miami-Dade county employees and their eligible family members and dependents.

### 3 WHAT KIND OF PROBLEMS DOES THE EAP HELP WITH?

Some of the needs and concerns employees have brought to the EAP are:

- Family/Marital Problems
- Anxiety/Emotional Problems
- Stress Management needs
- Substance Use/Alcohol Use
- Financial Problems
- Death of a loved one
- Anger Management
- Community Resources such as Child Care

### 4 DOES THE EAP TELL ANYONE ABOUT ME CONTACTING THEM?

The EAP is designed to be a confidential resource and support for employees. The program is designed to ensure confidentiality. Employees that

come to the EAP on a voluntary basis will have information released only to individuals authorized by the employee.

### 5 HOW DOES THE EAP PROCESS WORK?

The employee can refer themselves to the program for consultation. Managers and Directors can also make mandatory referrals to the program in circumstances such as substance use. Additionally, a manager can call the EAP for consultation in

regard to concerns about employees that may have personal struggles that are affecting their performance and assist employees with making an appointment by calling us directly.

### 6 WHAT DOES IT COST?

All internal EAP sessions are FREE for the employee. Referrals can be given to a provider covered by your health plan. However, you may be required to

pay co-payments for services provided based on coverage levels, as you would for a doctor's visit.





# Get In Touch

CALL 305-375-3293 to schedule an appointment with a staff member. Emergency walk-ins are also accepted.

**HOURS OF OPERATION:**  
8 am to 5 pm Monday-Friday.

**MIAMI-DADE COUNTY  
EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM:**  
OTV South Building  
601 NW 1st Court  
Suite 15-050  
Miami, Florida 33136

\*IF YOU OR A LOVED ONE NEED IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE OR EXPERIENCE A MEDICAL EMERGENCY, PLEASE CALL 911 OR PROCEED TO THE NEAREST EMERGENCY ROOM.

