



Troubled employees FAQ

How can I tell if an employee is just having a bad day or if he or she is dealing with ongoing personal issues?

The key is to look for continued or repeated poor performance on the job. The majority of employees will have an occasional challenging day but an employee who is dealing with ongoing issues will be impacted over a period of time. They will usually show a consistent decline in work performance. Refer to "How to identify a troubled employee: a checklist" for a thorough list of warning signs.

I feel uncomfortable prying into my employees' personal lives. Do I really need to confront them and if so, how can I do it without making either of us feel awkward?

Knowing every detail of an employee's personal life is not necessary in order to be helpful and offer appropriate resources. It's important that you or another manager talk to the troubled employee before the situation gets worse. Ignoring or dismissing the issue won't make it disappear.

Let the employee know that although you understand that their personal life is none of your business, you're concerned about his or her well-being. Explain that when a personal struggle becomes a job performance issue, you need to address it for the benefit of the employee and the entire organization. Let your team member know you care and want him or her to find the resources that can help.

What's the next step after identifying a troubled employee?

After observing that an employee might be struggling, you should make a plan to talk with him or

her. During the meeting, be sure to:

- Share your observations
- Express your concerns
- Offer resources
- Create a plan for improvement and follow up

You may decide that the employee could benefit from speaking to an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) counselor.