

Early Identification & Employee Wellness

For EAP Professionals – Bridging the Gaps

Introduction

Employee Assistance Program (EAP) professionals play a key role in identifying early signs of stress, mental health concerns, and substance use among employees. Early recognition allows for timely intervention, preserves employee well-being, and supports a safe, productive workplace.

This guide provides practical strategies, checklists, and tips for EAP professionals to detect potential concerns while maintaining confidentiality and trust.

1. Why Early Identification Matters

- Prevents escalation of workplace issues.
 - Promotes recovery-friendly and supportive environments.
 - Encourages employees to seek help proactively.
 - Protects workplace safety and productivity.
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2. Behavioral Warning Signs

Look for changes that may indicate an employee is struggling:

- Frequent absenteeism or tardiness.
- Decreased productivity or quality of work.
- Withdrawal from colleagues or social activities.

- Increased irritability, conflict, or emotional outbursts.
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3. Physical Warning Signs

Physical indicators can be subtle but important:

- Changes in appearance or hygiene.
 - Noticeable fatigue or sleep disruption.
 - Unexplained weight loss or gain.
 - Signs of intoxication or withdrawal.
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4. Performance Indicators

Monitor workplace performance patterns:

- Missed deadlines or incomplete work.
 - Frequent errors or lapses in judgment.
 - Difficulty concentrating or making decisions.
 - Decline in overall engagement or initiative.
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5. Approach & Confidentiality Tips

- Approach employees with care, empathy, and neutrality.
- Use private, confidential settings for discussions.
- Focus on observable behaviors and patterns rather than assumptions.

- Document observations objectively, without judgment.
 - Ensure compliance with HIPAA, ADA, and organizational policies.
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6. Early Engagement & Support Steps

1. **Initial Check-In:** Reach out with a supportive, non-judgmental approach.
 2. **Confidential Screening:** Offer voluntary self-assessment tools (see Appendix A).
 3. **Resource Connection:** Provide information about counseling, treatment, or internal wellness programs.
 4. **Follow-Up:** Schedule follow-up check-ins to track progress and support continued engagement.
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7. Checklist: Early Identification

	Action	Notes
1	Observe for behavioral, physical, and performance indicators	Maintain objectivity
2	Document patterns of concern	Use EAP-approved tracking forms
3	Approach employee with empathy	Keep conversation private
4	Offer confidential wellness screening	Provide voluntary self-assessment tools
5	Connect employee to support resources	Counseling, EAP services, treatment referrals
6	Schedule follow-up	Track engagement and improvement

8. Appendix A: Suggested Self-Assessment Tools

- [Workplace Wellness Questionnaire \(fillable PDF\)](#)
- [Behavior & Performance Tracker \(fillable PDF\)](#)

These tools allow employees to reflect on stress, mood, or substance use and provide EAP professionals with structured insight for early intervention.

9. Resources & References

- [BridgingtheGaps.com/resources-for-eap-professionals](https://bridgingthegaps.com/resources-for-eap-professionals)
 - National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) – Workplace Substance Use Guidance
 - Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) – Employee Assistance Programs
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10. Contact & Support

For additional guidance, training, or partnership opportunities:

Bridging the Gaps EAP Support Team
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