

# Formal Referral Process

## IMPROVING PERFORMANCE

Sometimes, managers may be in a situation where they have suggested counselling or coaching to an employee whose work performance is of concern or who appears to be having difficulties but they don't know if the employee has accessed counselling or coaching and the performance problems continue. Formal referrals (where employees are requested to attend counselling/coaching by a manager, supervisor, human resources person or other key staff member) are for those occasions when the manager feels that they have done all that they can do internally to address performance issues and that a third party intervention is required. Usually, formal referrals will occur when an individual's work performance and/or behaviour in the workplace is problematic and when all due procedures have been followed in the workplace to attempt to resolve the problems. It may also be appropriate where an alcohol and other drug or fitness for work question is being raised. Typically a formal referral would be considered before there is a clear disciplinary issue or breach, but where there is fear that without intervention this may happen. It is an external intervention provided by CORP to assist with poor performance or inappropriate behaviour in the workplace that has continued, regardless of performance management that has occurred within the workplace. Ideally, the employee should be offered EAP counselling (i.e. a suggested referral) on at least one occasion prior to a formal referral option being pursued, unless the referral arises from a specific and unprecedented workplace incident.

The recommended procedure for making a formal referral is as follows:

### 1 Initial Contact with CORP

The manager or supervisor directly responsible for the employee should make contact with CORP (Admin staff will put you in touch with an appropriate person with whom to discuss the referral) and discuss the situation. Where counselling is not considered to be an appropriate response, we will discuss alternative courses of action/sources of referral.

### 2 Provision of Information

It is important that the person making the referral provides written information to CORP and the employee being referred in support of the referral, including: the work performance concern(s) and impact on the workplace

- what action has been taken to date and the outcome of actions
- the expectations for improvement
- a request for consent for three way communication to occur at the conclusion of counselling/coaching (or some other feedback mechanism).

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We can provide a pro-forma letter of referral to assist with this process if required. The counsellor/coach who will be seeing the employee, may also ask some questions about the work performance. The employee will be made aware of this information.

### 3 Making the Appointment

Either the manager or the employee can make the appointment once initial contact has been made and background information provided. The appointment can be made through CORP Admin with the specifically identified counsellor/coach. At the first appointment the employee (client) will need to bring both the letter of referral from the workplace and a signed authorisation form enabling CORP to release the specific information requested.

### 4 Feedback from CORP to the Referring Manager

Depending on the expressed preference, feedback may take the form of:

□ A three way meeting between the counsellor/coach, employee and referring manager/supervisor to discuss what has been agreed to in counselling/coaching and the implications of this for both the employee and the organisation (this at times takes the form of the manager/supervisor attending the first and last sessions).

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