

Frontline Supervisor



Brought To You By **SAVE** www.save-eap.org 805-962-5387

■ **SAVE** helps employees with personal and professions challenges and protects the bottom line of the company by reducing absenteeism and costs, including those related to workers' compensation. But what about improved morale? How does one put a dollars-and-cents measure on it so **SAVE** gets credit?

When **SAVE** helps employees resolve personal problems, happier and healthier employees result. If we can assume that happier and healthier employees have a positive effect on morale, then it's obvious that **SAVE** can be a major contributing factor. But your question is about dollars and cents. Although it is not possible to pin a dollar figure to low or high morale, there are other measurable values that morale is known to directly affect. One of them is turnover. Research is plentiful on the hard costs of turnover. Productivity is also affected by morale. And, of course, this can be measured. So, if **SAVE** is proactive within the organization, helps employees resolve problems, and contributes to high morale and lower turnover, there is some significant confidence that the dollars-and-cents impact can be safely attributed to **SAVE**. There are dozens of other factors that also influence the bottom line.

■ My employee injured his foot playing soccer over the weekend. The story is suspect, but he is on crutches and wants to avoid lifting for a few weeks. I asked for a doctor's note, but honestly, it looks fake. Does **SAVE** get involved in situations like this? Our small company doesn't have policies or procedures.

Typically, larger organizations manage situations of this type with service vendors, policies and procedures, and human resources consultation. If none of these procedures, services, or advisors exist, contact **SAVE** for guidance and about its capacity for assisting you. At this moment, you can only accept what the employee is telling you. You must accept on good faith that an injury exists, how bad it is, and how it occurred. You can't question or examine "functional capacity" to verify the need for the accommodation. You must also assume the doctor is real, the note is valid, and that nothing else (i.e., substance abuse, etc.) influenced the cause of the injury and could become a bigger problem in the future. Those are a lot of factors! **SAVE's** assessment and coordination of communication regarding medical needs would cover all these bases and allow you to focus on job issues rather than external factors.

■ When an employee seeks help from **SAVE**, how is it different from counseling services offered in the community by a therapist in private practice?

For starters, **SAVE** appointments are usually available within the week, and sometimes on the same day. When trying to get an appointment with a therapist in private practice, it can take up to a month, and many therapists have a waiting list. **SAVE** services are completely free to the employee. When seeking services outside of **SAVE**, the employee will have to pay starting with the first session. Depending on the issue, **SAVE** therapists can often

help employees resolve their issues within the 3 free **SAVE** sessions by using a modality referred to as Solution Focused therapy. If more long term support is needed, the **SAVE** counselor will refer the employee to a therapist on their employer's health insurance provider list.

■ **Many personal problems are very difficult to overcome. Addiction is one of them. How does **SAVE** help employees with this illness if a client only self-refers because of some trouble or symptom related to the addiction? People in total denial are going to pay attention only to an immediate fix, right?**

Symptoms of a problem, not “the problem” itself, lead people to seek help. This dynamic is practically universal in the helping process. Regarding addiction, self-referral to a doctor, or **SAVE** counselor is usually prompted by an adverse work-life incident (symptom). Misinformation and stigma feed denial, so “self-diagnosis” of addiction is often a slow discovery process. The path includes many small and larger crises before acceptance. This process can be accelerated, however, with accurate information and motivational counseling that overcome the addict's misunderstanding of addiction. This misunderstanding may include a definition of addiction that doesn't match his or her symptoms. This is where **SAVE** plays a role. Most alcoholic drinkers in denial will have some definition of convenience, one that allows the individual to “compare out” of the diagnosis. If and when symptoms worsen, the definition may change. Still, as awareness grows, the likelihood of accepting treatment increases with a crisis. **SAVE** therapists are trained to assess for addiction and are able to educate a client about treatment options.

■ **Please offer a few important tips, perhaps including a few of the most overlooked, supervisors should consider when making a referral to **SAVE**.**

When making a formal referral to **SAVE**, success means that the employee actually makes it to the appointment. To increase this likelihood, consider the following. 1) Assure employees of confidentiality. This is their key concern even if they don't say so. 2) Promise the employee that you will not discuss the referral with his or her coworkers or other managers. 3) Promise the employee that participation in **SAVE** has no bearing on job status, future promotional opportunities, or job security. Only performance-related matters can affect these things. 4) Talk to **SAVE** ahead of time. Communicate details to **SAVE** about performance issues upon which the referral is based. Tell the employee you have spoken to **SAVE** and have given them the exact same performance information discussed with the employee. 5) Say that you anticipate hearing the appointment was kept. And most importantly, remind the employee that **SAVE** is there to provide them with the support they need, not as a means of punishment.

NOTES