

The Role of the Supervisor/Manager in Substance Abuse Prevention

Management Competencies: A Factor in EAP Success

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ON
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At the 1990 European EAP Conference, I concluded my published paper with the following comments:

The problems of substance in abuse in organizations are going to have to be fought with as many resources as possible. Organizations face difficult tasks, working to deal with the many factors of earlier decisions, outside influences, and their own organizational culture and management practices. What organizations do must coordinate and add to what societies in general do to combat the drug problem. Employee Assistance Programs must take a strong, proactive stance - a leadership role - in these efforts. The leadership role will involve establishing the vision, getting the support of people throughout the organization, and working toward strategies that will have a clear impact on results for the organization.

The theme of the 1991 European EAP Conference, PREVENTION, takes these comments and asks for a closer examination of the training issues related to employee assistance programming.

A Review

Since 1971, I have spoken often - and sometimes loudly about the need for coordination of EAP and management policy/practice. At the 1990 European EAP Conference, my published paper included an extensive analysis of this issue in a U.S. - European comparison. The following are selected segments from that paper.

Making EAP's Work

The role of Employee Assistance Programs will have to change during the 1990's to respond to the substance abuse problem in organizations. EAP's will have to change to keep pace with the changing nature of the substance abuse problem in organizations and the changing forces in organizations. Key issues for EAP's in the 1990's will be in the areas of a proactive stance, training and education, and organizational culture.

Excellence

Tom Peters and his colleagues have provided organizations of the United States with a model for achieving excellence. From a "bias for action" to emphasizing selection and training, Peters has taken a clear stand for a strong culture and a focus on the people in the organization.

Organizations with stringent anti-drug policies and procedures, and strict pre-employment and random drug testing, are instituting practices that run counter to these ideas. The problem for many organizations, for example an airline, is how to support the philosophies of excellence and yet react specifically to mandated random testing programs. A tougher question, not yet answered by any serious research, is whether or not "excellent" organizations have less serious rates of employee substance abuse. While it is conceptually sound, some experts stand by their estimates that substance abuse affects most organizations at fairly consistent rates.

Proactive Role

Substance abuse in organizations is no longer a human resource problem that can be tucked away with the personnel department, or the employee health program, or the employee assistance program. The issues of productivity, participation, and excellence are being discussed at the highest levels of organizational strategic planning and management. An organization's posture on its employees is the subject of major organizational focus and leadership. The voice of Employee Assistance Programs must be heard in these discussions.

Organizations are daily making decisions about drug testing, management training, changes in organizational culture. In some cases, these changes are being made without the input of employee assistance experts. The new testing program, the new supervisory training program, or the new two-year plan to change the organization's culture, is introduced. And the Employee Assistance Program finds itself lacking input into areas that might significantly affect its philosophies and ways of operating.

Organization Culture

Organization culture, the elusive and very popular topic of an organization's values and driving forces, is another key issue for Employee Assistance Programs. To what extent does an organization's culture, its management practices, its policies and procedures, contribute to employee substance abuse and other EAP concerns? The debate can rage forever on whether particular types of substance abuse are hereditary, or a person's own decision, or caused by reactions to life events. But it is clear, in some cases, that unhealthy working conditions, or high stress jobs, are likely to experience more - and more serious - cases of substance abuse.

Education/Training

Overall, more than two-thirds of all organizations say they have formal policies regarding substance abuse, but only about one-quarter conduct or sponsor training programs on identifying or dealing with substance abusers in their work forces.

Dale Feuer, "Workplace Issues," Training

The best tool for recognizing drug problems remains the eyeballs of concerned and in-touch supervisors and peers. Use these, and then provide counseling and help as needed...

Tom Peters, "Drug Testing Kills Productivity,"
On Achieving Excellence

The topic of "training and substance abuse" has received very little attention. New training materials are necessary to prepare supervisors and managers for dealing effectively with substance abuse problems.

Jim Schreier, "Substance Abuse in Organizations,
1971 - 1986, Realities, Trends, Reactions"

Training is not the only element in an organization's effort to confront substance abuse. But its absence seriously hampers efforts for successful implementation of a policy or employee assistance programming. Organizations must increase training efforts. And there is a corresponding need for new training materials for substance abuse programs.

Organizations are not going to combat the problems of substance abuse effectively unless they take a broad, integrated approach. Organizations that have avoided (or successfully decreased) problems of substance abuse have done so with policy, organizational culture, qualified supervisory and management personnel, and training on both substance abuse and management issues. Dealing with substance abuse is not solely a policy/testing issue. It involves values, motivation, stress, communication, change, conflict management -- all basic management skills.

These are the conclusions based on the first U.S. research project looking specifically at the actions, policies, and responses of organizations concerning training issues and substance abuse.

Key Survey Findings

- 65% of the responding organizations have formal employee assistance programs. Only 26.7% provide training related to employee use of alcohol or other substances.
- The majority of training conducted focuses on policy and procedures with the least training focused on confronting/counseling and legal issues.
- Training programs on substance abuse are not integrated well with other management training efforts. Nor are examples of substance abuse problems common in regular management training activities. Program information is sometimes shared or there is some coordination.
- Survey respondents believe that their training efforts should be increased in the area of prevention. And efforts should be decreased in the area of company policy and procedures.
- Attitudes toward an issue as complicated as substance abuse and training are difficult to measure. But survey respondents clearly believe that training can have a greater impact in combatting the problem than policy, rules, or testing. They also believe that the substance abuse issue is closely related to basic management effectiveness.

But the topic of "training and substance abuse" has received very little attention. Organizations must develop creative strategies for preventing substance abuse in the work force. This means new policies for intervention and treatment, new training programs, new programs for employee productivity and morale, and new programs for job and individual enrichment. An integrated approach that includes management style, organization culture, and employee assistance efforts must be considered.

The 1991 Perspective

The prevention of substance abuse, and other EAP concerns, is going to happen only with greater emphasis on education. The substance abuse problem in organizations will be solved by increased educational efforts, better management techniques, and improved treatment models. Prevention is a goal of the first two. It can play an important part in treatment programs as well.

Organizations must recognize the importance of training in the area of substance abuse programming. Training must go beyond efforts to teach the facts of substance abuse and the procedures of testing and employee assistance referrals. Training must include the critical links between all areas of management responsibility and substance abuse. This means that issues related to substance abuse must be integrated into training programs on management skills, supervisory development, leadership and motivation, communication skills, interviewing and performance appraisal, stress management, and executive development. There must be an integrated approach to eliminating substance abuse that involves organization culture, management practices, and employee assistance programming.

Integration with Other Management Training

A key issue for substance abuse training is the relationship to other organizational training efforts. Some organizations have structured employee educational programs on alcohol and other substances as part of employee assistance programs or wellness efforts. Some have structured them as part of industrial health or safety. Still others have conducted them through training and development departments.

How the program is structured raises questions about the possible impact of the programs. Effective programs for supervisors and managers must be based on a recognition of the need for basic management skills. An outstanding company policy for identification and referral could fail because managers lacked the communication skills to be effective. Some well-publicized programs have been ineffective because of these specific factors.

The questionnaire collected information showing the degree of coordination and/or integration of the substance abuse training efforts with other management training. The results showed that coordination is not very extensive. Integration of programs will have to be increased for better implementation of employee substance abuse programs.

The organizations providing substance abuse training also provide regular management training opportunities for their management and professional employees. But the integration and sharing of information are relatively low. The use of examples of substance abuse problems in regular management training is also low. Table 1 summarizes the responses to these questions.

Table 1
Integration/Sharing of Information
between Management Training and Substance Abuse Training

To what extent are the two programs fully integrated? $x = 2.5$

Not Integrated	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Highly Integrated
	25%	6%	25%	12%	6%	19%	6%	

To what extent was information from both programs shared? $x = 3.2$

Not Shared	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Highly Shared
	20%	7%	7%	20%	13%	13%	20%	

To what extent are examples of substance abuse used in basic management programs, programs not specifically designed toward substance abuse? $x = 2.0$

Not at All	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	In Many Programs
	19%	19%	38%	0%	12%	12%	0%	

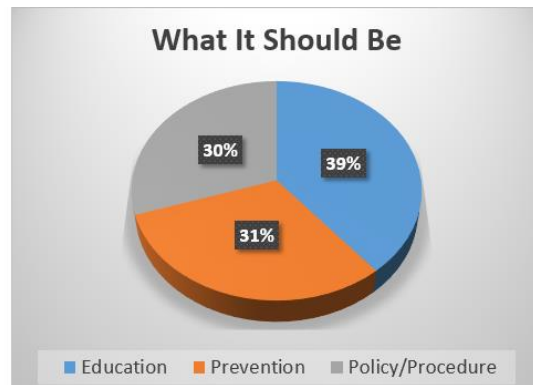
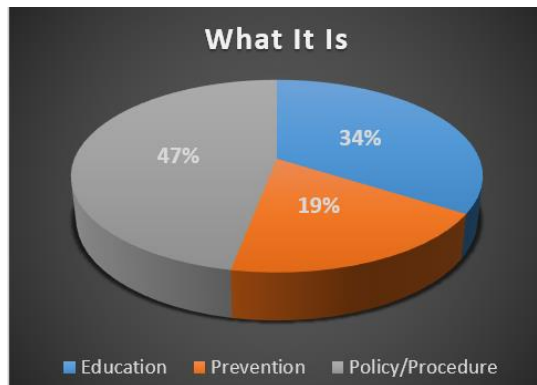
To what extent is the situation two separate areas of responsibility doing two separate things? $x = 2.8$

Not at All	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Definitely Separate
	13%	13%	20%	20%	7%	20%	7%	

The Focus of Substance Abuse Training

The survey sought the opinion of respondents on what the focus of their programs was versus what they thought it should be. Respondents identified company policy/procedure as the number one role of current training efforts, followed by education/information, and prevention. However, they identified education/information as the number one role that substance abuse training should take. This was followed by a much greater role for prevention and a significantly smaller role for company policy/procedure. Table 2 summarizes the responses to this question.

Table 2 Role of Training for Substance Abuse		
What It Is		What It Should Be
34%	Education/information	39%
19%	Prevention	31%
47%	Company Policy/Procedures	30%



Attitudes Toward Substance Abuse Training

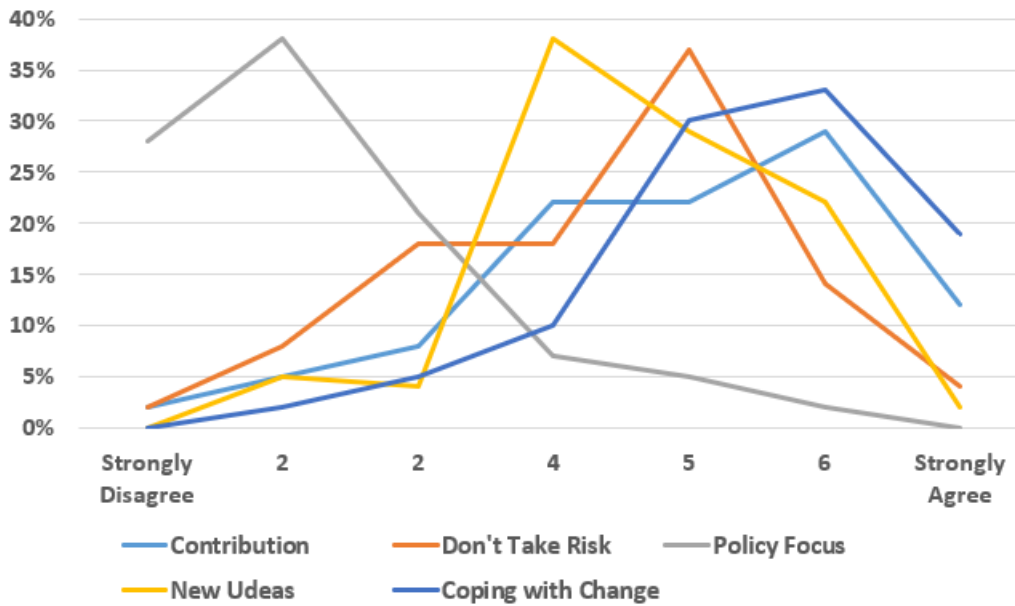
Is substance abuse as a training topic going to be the saving factor in the 'War against substance abuse?' Is substance abuse training a poor substitute for tougher policies and testing programs? Or is substance abuse training really dealing with issues of employee development and change? These are tough questions and even tougher for training professionals to answer. But these questions, and others, were asked in the final section of the survey. The feelings are clear. Yet differences of opinion are obvious in the distribution of responses. The vast majority of respondents feel that:

- Substance abuse training can make a valuable contribution to effective management.
- Very often the people who need training aren't taking part.
- Training is the preferred solution to policy, rules, and/or testing.
- Substance abuse training is not about methods; it is about changing and learning to cope with change.

Table 3 presents the questions asked about attitudes and philosophies about the role of training in dealing with substance abuse. It is important to note the trends. It is equally important to note the range of responses to all items. The field of substance abuse training is, despite decades of information, still in its infancy. Part of this is the changing nature of the problem. There have been increases in cases of employee substance abuse and constantly changing "substances of popularity." But the fact remains that substance abuse and training are issues that will develop as both attitudes and techniques/materials are changing.

Table 3 Attitudes Toward Substance Abuse Training								
Substance abuse training makes a valuable contribution to effective management, and this contribution can be clearly demonstrated. <i>x=4.9</i>								
Strongly Disagree	1 2%	2 5%	3 8%	4 22%	5 22%	6 29%	7 12%	Strongly Agree
Substance abuse training could really put some people right, but those who could benefit most do not risk-taking part. <i>x=4.3</i>								
Strongly Disagree	1 2%	2 8%	3 18%	4 18%	5 37%	6 14%	7 4%	Strongly Agree
Substance abuse training has little contribution to make to management, the real impact is through policy, rules, and/or testing. <i>x=2.3</i>								
Strongly Disagree	1 28%	2 38%	3 21%	4 7%	5 5%	6 2%	7 0%	Strongly Agree
Substance abuse training is not yet perfect, but substance abuse trainers come closer to the final answer with each new idea. <i>x=4.6</i>								
Strongly Disagree	1 0%	2 5%	3 4%	4 38%	5 29%	6 22%	7 2%	Strongly Agree
Substance abuse training is not about methods; it is about changing and learning to cope with change. <i>x=5.4</i>								
Strongly Disagree	1 0%	2 2%	3 5%	4 10%	5 30%	6 33%	7 19%	Strongly Agree

Attitudes toward Substance Abuse Training



Training House, located in Princeton, New Jersey, U.S.A., is an international provider of management training materials. Their materials are based on a carefully thought out model of individual development for management performance.

Training is a process, not a product. Its success is measured by improved performance in the workplace, not by the acquisition of new concepts and procedures in the workshop.

A Five-Step Cycle for Competency-Based Management Development

The following is a five-step cycle for doing this ... one that is being used successfully in hundreds of organizations that have made the commitment to use supervisory training and management development as a tool for growing an organization and its most precious resource.

Step 1: Assessment

The purpose of assessment is to pinpoint specific needs, establish a "benchmark" of performance (entering behavior), plan individual programs of training and development, measure improvement over time, and make sure that the right managers are attending the right courses at the right time (based on their needs and priorities rather than ours).

Step 2: Interpretation

Once managers have identified their areas of strength and weakness, they need help in defining the behaviors that contribute to outstanding performance...the knowledge, attitudes, and skills that are the subsets of each competency on which they were assessed.

Putting it most simply, they need feedback on what their scores mean, why they scored as they did, and where their performance does and doesn't echo the behavior of highly successful managers, and how they can improve.

Step 3: Planning

Newly hired employees and workers in entry-level jobs can expect supervisors and instructors to train them. But when people become managers, they take on the responsibility of development -- for themselves and their work group. The organization can help (by providing courses and resources), but the responsibility for becoming an effective manager rests with the individual. Thus, every supervisor and manager should have a plan for personal growth and development.

This plan requires a solid data base that includes such things as:

- past performance appraisal data -- strengths and weaknesses
- objective measures of performance (assessment labs, Managerial Assessment of Proficiency)
- subjective opinions of stakeholders (work group, peers, spouse, etc.)
- awareness of all available personal development options
- a model of a good individual development plan

Step 4: Training

There are many actions other than training that a manager might take as part of a personal development plan: coaching by the boss, mentoring by an expert, serving on a task force, participating in professional associations, attending a national conference, and so on. Indeed, some of these are more effective than training programs will ever be in shaping certain kinds of management behavior. However, training courses will still be the mainstay of management development programs because of the many benefits that accrue. These include:

- impact on an organization's culture across the board;
- team building (networking, sharing, strengthening the informal organization chart);
- cost effectiveness (one instructor and course design can reach hundreds);
- "critical mass" (leverage) of participants in groups;
- participants are resources to each other, sharing experiences, examples, etc.

Step 5: Reassessment

To what degree has performance improved as a result of training? What opportunities exist for further development? How does the cost of the program compare with the benefits? (What is the return on investment?) Where does the training program or performance maintenance system need strengthening?

Managerial Assessment of Proficiency

Training House publishes the Managerial Assessment of Proficiency that reflects this five-step process. Exhibit 1 presents information on the concept of a competency.

A brief review (and gross oversimplification) of the last 40 years of HRD might be useful. The decade of the 50's saw courses emphasize knowledge ... lots of facts, theory, concepts. Training manuals were crammed with information, and classes were over-heavy on lectures, supplemented by slides, overheads, and handouts. Then we moved into the 60's and saw an increased emphasis on attitudes ... sensitivity training, outward bound programs (team building, survival, etc.), assertiveness, awareness, human relations, motivation, and so on. The decade of the 70's saw a shift to the "hard-nosed, no-nonsense" emphasis on skills ... how-to-do-it programs, behavior modeling, simulations, role play, and more "hands-on" learning.

As we entered the 1980's, we began to realize that each of these approaches is limited. An integration of K-A-S provides a more nourishing menu for trainees. The competency studies of the early 80's also showed us the folly of looking at the legs of our stool as separate, isolated support: all three must work together.

Exhibit 1 What is a Competency?		
	Skills	Competencies
Definition	"How-to-do-it" with focus on steps, procedures, actions.	Clusters of related skills-knowledge-attitudes to shape and sustain behavior.
Focus	Specific to given situation: e.g. selection interview, performance appraisal, meeting leadership.	Generic to many situations: e.g. listening and organizing a message, using questions effectively.
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • quick fix • good for routine, repetitive procedures • reaches trainees with limited education • deals with highly predictable situations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • better transfer (generic) • prepares trainees to deal with new situations • reaches a broader (heterogenous) audience • more return on the training investment (ROI)
Model	