

**EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
OF
WARREN, WASHINGTON AND SARATOGA COUNTIES, INC.**

PREPARING FOR THE FIRST INTERVIEW

1. PREPARE PERFORMANCE DOCUMENT

- Documenting performance problems is a skill that gets better over time. Documentation is essential if you are to eventually resolve performance problems that are ongoing, severe, and/or linked to a personal problem. Confrontation and referral of a highly defensive employee is made more difficult without properly written documentation.
- Employees minimize the severity of past discussions and incidents. This makes documentation important. Defensiveness is normal. Differences between your memory and your employee's memory relative to an event is normal (even though your version may be correct.) It is not that your employee is lying. Overuse of defensive thinking contributes to cognitive distortions of factual accounts of behavior for which the person is responsible.
- Avoid subjective, non-specific emotional language in documentation. Be factual and to the point. Use descriptive terms that can be measured. Describe performance and attendance problems in terms of what can be seen or heard. Do not ramble into lecturing the employee, labeling the behavior, suggesting hypothetical outcomes and consequences, or speaking for other parts of your organization. Depending on your position, be careful not to make official statements that are unauthorized.

Documentation – Bad Example

The employee was extremely late and obviously appeared hung over. She acted inappropriate when she was confronted and said that other employees come in later than she does. The employee stormed out of the room and observers were stunned by the behavior. Two employees report that domestic problems cause her tardiness.

Documentation – Good Example

The employee was late today (date, time). She appeared out of proper uniform. When confronted, the employee became belligerent, saying, (statements or acts). She interrupted while being corrected and appeared unwilling to accept feedback, saying, (statements made). She then left the room slamming doors. The noise was loud enough to be heard by others who came to investigate. Two employees reported feeling fearful at this worker's behavior stating, (statements).