

managerAssist®

What is managerAssist®?

managerAssist® is a confidential telephone advisory service for managers dealing with difficult or complex people issues. The managerAssist® service may be used as a stand alone service for a manager seeking consultation for a particular issue, or to refer an employee to the EAP Counselling Service.



Some of the most common situations for which managers and supervisors seek assistance from managerAssist® are:

- How do I refer an employee who has serious personal issues to the EAP?
- What do I do about my concerns for one of my employees who is behaving out of character?
- What do I do about information that one of my team members may be suicidal?
- How do I handle a difficult performance discussion with an employee?
- How do I advise my team about a major change that will affect them?

How do I use managerAssist®?

Simply call **1300 360 364** and ask for a **managerAssist® appointment**. You will be provided with a telephone appointment during business hours on the day of your call, or you can schedule one at your convenience.

A manager calling managerAssist® will speak to one of our senior consultants who has expertise and experience in people management issues. The service is confidential, so no identifying information regarding a manager's use of the service is provided to the organisation by Davidson Trahaire Corpsych (DTC).

1. To seek specialised people management advice

When dealing with a difficult or complex people management issue, the manager should first consult the relevant organisational policies and procedures and consult with HR or colleagues, as required. Following this there still may be some questions for the manager about how to deal with issues such as:

- Dealing with a difficult personality
- Understanding the impact of a mental illness or other psychological issue
- Maintaining composure in an emotional situation
- Delivering a difficult message in a sensitive manner
- Responding to aggressive or confrontational situations
- Minimising the impact of an individual's issue on team functioning
- Managing conflict between individuals or within a team

managerAssist® provides the opportunity for managers to seek advice on strategies, debrief, or rehearse planned approaches to these difficult people management situations.

2. When referring an employee to the EAP, managerAssist® can be used:

- To provide advice to the manager on whether the EAP is the best option for an employee, or to discuss other suitable alternatives
- To provide advice to the manager on how to present counselling to an employee who may be reluctant to use the EAP
- For the manager to provide background information on an employee they are referring to the EAP (with the staff member's prior knowledge) e.g. performance issues, work conflict issues, or other issues affecting the employees work
- For the manager to obtain feedback on the counselling progress for an employee they referred to the EAP. This would apply only where it is agreed between the manager and the employee that it would be of benefit for the manager to receive such feedback, and where the employee provides written consent to DTC to provide feedback.

Case examples

1. An employee is involved in a motor vehicle accident on the weekend and is in a critical condition. There is a chance they may not recover. After consulting with HR, the manager calls managerAssist® for advice on:

- ▶ How and when to talk to the injured employee or their family
- ▶ What to tell the team about their colleague's condition
- ▶ The potential emotional impact on the team
- ▶ Other support services that may be useful for the team

2. A manager has to arrange a performance discussion with an employee who tends to become emotional and tearful, or aggressive and angry, when they don't agree with what the manager says. The performance of the employee has not been at the required level and the manager knows the employee will disagree. In previous meetings the manager has "given in" to the employee and come away feeling upset and shaken. Prior to the meeting, the manager calls managerAssist® for advice on:

- ▶ Appropriate responses to someone in emotional distress
- ▶ Strategies to defuse an angry situation
- ▶ Ways to maintain their own emotion during the meeting
- ▶ An opportunity to debrief following the meeting and manage their own emotional reactions

3. A manager is performance managing an employee regarding some of their comments and behaviours in the workplace that are perceived as inappropriate and offensive by their colleagues (could be sexual, bullying, discriminating). The employee is defensive of their behaviour saying "it's just my personality" but agrees to attend EAP Counselling as they can see that others may be offended and it is causing problems in the workplace.

- ▶ If the manager just gives the client DTC's number and encourages them to make an appointment, what do you think the client might say to the counsellor?
- ▶ Instead, with the agreement of the employee, the manager can call managerAssist® and provide some background information on the context of the referral and the agreed counselling goals to DTC, prior to the client's first session. This way the client, the counsellor and the manager all have a shared understanding of the purpose and desired outcomes of the counselling.

