Your Employee Assistance Program is a support service that can help you take the first step toward change.

Supporting Veterans in the Workplace

Beginning a new career or entering a new organization can be stressful. For Veterans, the initial transition from military service to the civilian workplace can create additional challenges for the employee as well as the employer. As a manager, it is important to be aware of the concerns that may arise with returning Veterans and the signs that the employee may be having challenges. Understanding the signs of PTSD or a distressed employee as well as providing natural workplace support are a few ways to assist transitioning service members to succeed in the workplace.

Signs of PTSD or Distressed Employees in the Workplace

PTSD symptoms usually emerge within a few months of a traumatic event, however symptoms may emerge many months or even years following a traumatic event. Symptoms may include:

- Memory deficits
- Lack of concentration
- Time management issues
- Disorganization
- Panic attacks
- Sleep disturbance
- Outbursts of anger
- Mood swings

What is a Natural Support?

A natural support person – such as a supervisor or a mentor – can offer guidance on appropriate interpersonal skills and work behaviors, assist with one-on-one job training at the worksite, problem-solve as needed, and help acclimate the individual to the work environment. In the event that the employee needs assistance beyond the employers' capabilities (i.e. if an employee displays the signs of distress listed above), a possible referral to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) would be encouraged.

Natural Support Strategies

- Implement a flexible and supportive supervision style
- Provide additional forms of communication and/or written and visual tools
- Conduct regularly scheduled meetings (weekly or monthly) with employee to discuss workplace issues and productivity
- Develop strategies to deal with problems before they arise
- Create written agreements that include responsibilities and expectations as well as short-term and long-term goals
- Provide day to day guidance and feedback, including positive reinforcement

Links for Returning Veterans and Their Families

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Re-adjusting to life at home can be a challenge for some Veterans and their family members. Listed below are a couple resources that may help:

- http://www.afterdeployment.org/ provides self-care solutions targeting post-traumatic stress, depression, and other behavioral health challenges commonly faced after a deployment.
- http://www.ourmilitary.mil/ is an official government website, managed by the Department of Defense Office of Community and Public Outreach.