

Q. How do I document a bad attitude? It is too subjective. I would almost need a video of the person's actions in order to accurately describe it.

A. You're right. A bad attitude cannot be documented as such. It requires more quantifiable language. The Oxford dictionary defines "attitude" as "a settled way of thinking or feeling about someone or something, typically one that is reflected in a person's behavior." Behaviors that can be seen, heard, and therefore described constitute the language that reflects attitude problems. But it does not end there. The next piece is linking these behaviors to undesirable or problematic effects. If, for example, your employee is constantly making cynical remarks in team meetings, asking the team how this behavior affects them and learning about its negative impact on their enjoyment of the work environment or ability to be productive — or even how it undermines team members' confidence — is what's needed to create effective documentation. Can the EAP help? Yes, this is one of the employee issues that are most commonly referred to it.



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Q. My employee has been late too often over the past several months. I mentioned it to him several times in passing, and recommended he called EAP for an appointment. What is my next step?

A. Tardiness of employees is a frustrating problem for supervisors. Oddly enough, a common missing piece of the solution is sitting down in private with the employee to discuss the matter and, most importantly, express disappointment. So try this approach. Be sincere. You may be angry and feel like lecturing, but simply express your disappointment. Contrast this disappointment with what you envision for the worker. This can trigger a stronger awareness of responsibility and guilt (which is a good thing). Employees with chronic behavioral issues use defensive mechanisms like denial and rationalization to avoid experiencing any anxiety caused by their improper behavior. Healthy anxiety is the "juice" of change. Your expression of disappointment can overpower this self-reinforcing process.