

DEALING WITH ABSENTEEISM

WORKSHOP GUIDE



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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This session aims to help managers tackle absenteeism within their teams. Absenteeism costs organisations billions in revenue every year. But when someone calls in sick, it doesn't necessarily mean that they're unwell.

This guide is designed for a manager or a facilitator to deliver a short workshop featuring videos from the Video Arts Management Essentials Series. Each video comes with a series of activities around the following structure:

LOOK - watch the video and reflect on the content and message.

THINK - activities and questions linking the video to their own experience and workplace.

REMEMBER - a summary of the key learning points.

Each section relating to the video will last around 15 minutes.

ACTION PLAN - At the end of the series of videos and activities delegates should be encouraged to share the most important actions they will take and record actions on their Personal Action Plan sheet.

FEATURED VIDEOS

- Recognise absenteeism
- Reasons for absenteeism
- Solutions to absenteeism

VIDEO 1 – RECOGNISE ABSENTEEISM

LOOK (play video, 3 minutes)

The first step to solving an absenteeism problem is to realise that there is one. Then, look for patterns and keep records.

THINK (10 minutes discussion)

Ask the group if they have ever made assumptions about an employee's absenteeism only to find they've been completely wrong? How can we stop assumptions clouding our judgement?

Responses could include:

- As a general rule, when morale decreases, absenteeism increases. Mostly, employees want to do well at their jobs, so be willing to listen to problems that are getting in their way.
- Employees may be bored, struggling with their jobs, or have personal problems which affect the number of days they are absent from work.
- It's your responsibility as a manager to get to know your team and know all aspects of the team members' jobs, including any difficulties they have in their roles

REMEMBER (2 minutes recap)

Recognise absenteeism:

- Acknowledge the problem.
- Look out for signs and patterns.
- Keep records so you have the facts.
- Tackle absence as soon as possible.

VIDEO 2 – REASONS FOR ABSENTEEISM

LOOK (play video, 3 minutes)

Sometimes, you may find that it is difficult to get employees to open up and speak about the reasons for their absences. In these cases, you should try asking open questions (starting with why, what, who, where and how) to encourage them to share information. To check facts and details, ask closed questions. These are questions which can be answered with a simple 'yes' or 'no'.

THINK (10 minutes discussion)

Ask the group to if their annoyance about an employee's absenteeism ever spilt over into confrontation? What's the best way to stop this from happening?

Try to reinforce the following points;

- It's very important that conversations with employees about absenteeism do not become confrontational. Make sure you keep your emotions in check.
- By probing, you are much more likely to uncover the truth than by making accusations. These will only make the employee defensive and, in the case of a sensitive situation, you could do a lot of damage.
- By focusing on facts, your probing will sound less like an accusation. Until you get the information you need, keep asking questions.

REMEMBER (2 minutes recap)

Exploring the reasons for absenteeism

- Do it face-to-face.
- Prepare your emotions and the facts.
- Ask what is wrong and probe.

VIDEO 3 – SOLUTIONS TO ABSENTEEISM

LOOK (play video, 3 minutes)

It is a manager's job to address problems with absence and decide whether this needs to be done through a quick word or a more formal action plan.

THINK (10 minutes discussion)

Ask the group to discuss how they resolved their last absenteeism issue? With hindsight, was it the best way to resolve the issue?

Try to reinforce the following points in the discussion;

- Asking questions and showing genuine concern can often help you and the employee come up with a comprehensive action plan to solve the problem; and help the employee take responsibility for the solution.
- Plans need to be agreed by both parties and a time period should be set so you can both monitor progress.

REMEMBER (2 minutes recap)

Agreeing a solution for absenteeism:

- Get them to take responsibility.
- Agree a plan of action.
- Be prepared to be flexible.
- Monitor.

DEALING WITH ABSENTEEISM – ACTION PLAN

- Ask the group to spend 5 minutes completing an action plan.
- Ask for some examples of how those who have taken part intend to improve their managing of absenteeism.
- Ask for and answer any final questions.
- Remind the group of the key learning points from Absence Minded: Managing Absenteeism.
- Thank the group for their participation and bring the course to a close.