**What are work behavior issues?**

Work behavior issues are issues that arise from inappropriate behavior on the job. Such behavior can cause an individual to be disciplined, passed by for promotions, or even fired.

Work behavior issues may relate to:
- Punctuality and attendance
- Personal appearance
- Conformity to rules
- Negative responses to change
- Productivity
- Accepting supervision
- Working with coworkers

**Example**

Chris has been a sales clerk at a retail chain store for eight months. During this time:
- On three occasions, he failed to report for his shift.
- He has been late to work at least once each month.
- He has been written up three times, with the understanding that he will be fired the next time he is late.

Today Chris shows up one minute late for work. He is called into the manager’s office and is fired.
How do I identify work behavior issues?

The easiest way to identify work behavior issues is to observe the individual at his or her place of work. Because this is not always possible, here are some other options:

- Observe the individual in non-work settings, such as Church meetings.

- Interview the person. Ask questions such as:
  - Why did you leave your past jobs?
  - Have you ever been let go from a job? What happened?
  - Have you ever been disciplined at work? What happened?
  - Have you ever had a performance review? What feedback did you get from your supervisor?

- Talk to those who are close with or have worked with the individual before.

Example continued

Chris’s elders quorum president calls you to tell you Chris lost his job. He also tells you Chris has been attending elders quorum sporadically and, when he is there, is often disoriented.

You arrange to meet with Chris to discuss his situation. He discloses that he has been drinking heavily and using marijuana daily. As a result, he has a hard time waking up early and remembering what he needs to do during the day. You quickly realize Chris’s alcohol and substance abuse problems are having an impact on his work behaviors.
How can I help someone address a work behavior issue?

- Help the individual recognize his or her own problematic behavior by asking questions such as:
  - What happened when you engaged in the negative behavior?
  - What were the consequences of your behavior?

- Help the individual explore alternative behaviors that are appropriate by asking questions such as:
  - What could you have done differently in that situation?
  - What would have been the consequences of the alternative behavior?

- Ask the individual to commit to practicing alternative behaviors. Enlist the support of a leader or home/visiting teacher to model positive behaviors and coach the individual in changing his or her behavior.

- Help the individual identify supports, such as coping mechanisms or back-up plans, that will help him or her improve behavior.

Example concluded

- You direct Chris to the Addiction Recovery Program in his stake and to a local outpatient treatment center. As Chris’s alcohol and substance abuse problems improve, you meet with him to discuss what he needs to do to find employment and improve his attendance problems.
- Chris decides to buy a reliable alarm clock to help him wake up on time and to keep a calendar with his appointments in his bedroom where he will see it often.
- Chris finds a new job at a clothing store. You ask Chris’s home teacher, for the first two weeks of his job, to call him the night before he is scheduled to support and encourage him.
- Chris successfully completes his first month on the job without any absences or tardiness.