Corner Office: How to Recognize the Early Stages of Dementia in the Workplace

South Jersey Biz

November 2019

Karen Roberts, SHRM-SCP

- subtle short-term memory loss
- reduction in focus and concentration
- behavioral and personality changes
- increasing difficulty in performing typical work tasks These changes can affect someone's ability to perform normal job duties and make decisions. For instance, an employee who consistently performed well may begin to show signs of inconsistency and uncharacteristic mistakes. Colleagues may notice it takes them longer to complete tasks they previously performed seamlessly. They may miss deadlines, forget meetings or become unable to retain training or direction when learning new things. It is important to train managers on how to recognize these signs and how to respond. Managers who are highly engaged with their employees will be apt to notice when these subtle cognitive ripples occur. They must document the performance and keep track of the occurrences of changes in performance. They should also consult human resources to inform them of the issues and seek appropriate guidance. When addressing concerns with the impacted employee, it's important to be empathic, respectful and non-confrontational. Companies that offer resources such as employee assistance programs, benefits that support counseling and related medical options, as well as provide reasonable accommodations, will be positioned for success in managing and supporting employees who are faced with these life changes. *Karen Roberts, SHRM-SCP is the Human Resources Director at Flaster Greenberg PC. She manages all human resources functions within the firm, including employee relations and retention, benefits and compensation, employment, recruitment, planning and policy implementation, onboarding and orientation. Roberts was nominated by the Tri-State Human Resource Management Association as one of 10 finalists for the 2019 Delaware Valley HR Person of the Year Award and is currently Chapter President.*

RELATED PROFESSIONALS

Karen Roberts