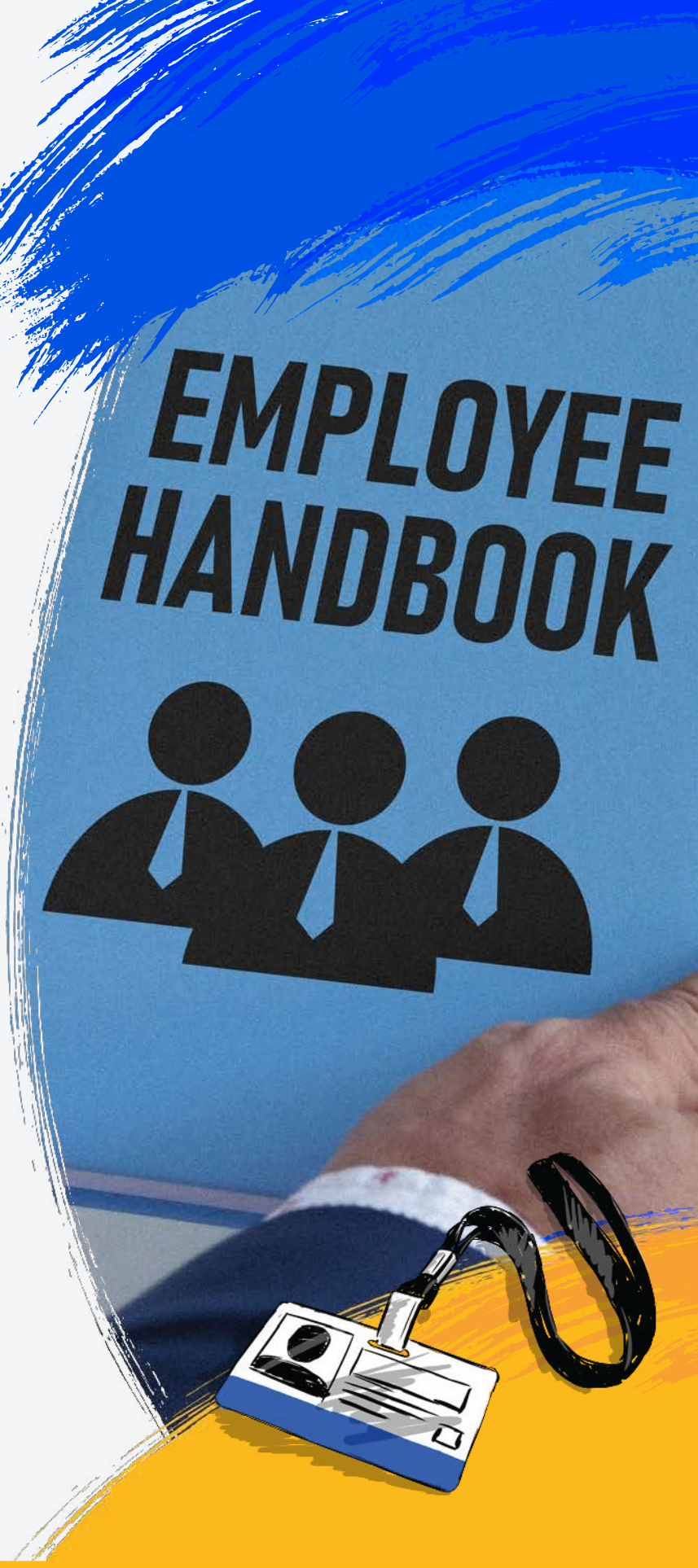
WHEN SMALL CHANGES ADD UP



MOST MANAGERS DON'T SET OUT LOOKING FOR SIGNS OF A GAMBLING PROBLEM.

They notice an employee who was once focused is starting to miss deadlines. Someone who was always on time begins arriving late. A team member seems distracted, checks their phone constantly, or suddenly can't stop talking about betting, odds, or the weekend's games.

Any one of these changes could have many explanations.

But when several begin appearing together, they may be a sign that something bigger is affecting the employee's well-being.

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Research shows that gambling-related problems often appear in the workplace before a financial crisis becomes known. Sometimes the first signs show up at work. Warning signs may include increasing distraction, difficulty concentrating, missed deadlines, or declining work performance. **Gambling can also affect physical and emotional health, contributing to financial stress, chronic worry, disrupted sleep, headaches, anxiety, panic attacks, irritability, mood swings, and depression.** After a big win, an employee may appear unusually energized or overconfident; after significant losses, especially following weekends filled with sporting events, they may return to work discouraged, withdrawn, irritable, or unusually stressed. [1]

No single behavior proves someone has a gambling problem. One change usually doesn't tell the whole story. However, the cumulative effect of many small choices—one bet, one notification, one weekend, one paycheck—can gradually develop into a habit that affects health, relationships, finances, and job performance.

Focus on observable behaviors rather than assumptions and remind employees about available resources such as the Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

Small changes may begin as whispers, while larger problems can eventually become a shout. When we notice the small changes, we are given an opportunity to help. Take some time and check in.

LEAD AND EXPLORE WITH GENUINE CURIOSITY

"I've noticed a few changes lately. What do you think has contributed to those changes?"

"What has been taking more of your time, attention, or energy than you expected?"

"What type of support, if any, would be most helpful right now?"

REFERENCES

[1] American Psychiatric Association. (2022). Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (5th ed., text rev.; DSM-5-TR).

[2] Potenza, M. N., Balodis, I. M., Derevensky, J., Grant, J. E., Petry, N. M., & Verdejo García, A. (2019). Gambling disorder. Nature Reviews Disease Primers, 5(1), 51.



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