Ask the Expert: Can You Make Workers Get Anger Management?



QUESTION

Can an employer make a worker involved in a workplace violence incident take anger management’

ANSWER

Yes, if you handle it right.

EXPLANATION

First, you must do it in good faith for the purposes of helping the worker. Be aware that telling a person that he/she needs anger management may be seen as an insult, harassment and/or attempt to humiliate. You also run the risk of being sued for discrimination if the worker belongs to a protected class under human rights laws stereotypically seen as being violent. Thus, for example, African-Canadian employees required by their employer to take anger management have successfully sued for racial discrimination.

You also need documentation showing that:

- Requiring anger management is an appropriate response for what the worker did, e.g., engage in or threaten

violence; and

- You require anger management for all workers who engage in such behaviour regardless of race, nationality, etc.