Tip #2 - Rule out Rule:

When an employee’s attendance and/or performance becomes problematic, you may wish to **consider whether medical reasons might explain the employee’s behaviour before taking disciplinary action.** Often when an employee experiences a disruption in mental health, changes in behavior, appearance and performance can occur.

If you are concerned about changes in performance and behaviours such as tardiness, missed deadlines, interpersonal conflict, multiple mistakes, and what you may be interpreting as a bad attitude, you may be observing signs and symptoms of a mood disorder such as anxiety or depression.

Prior to taking any disciplinary action, consider sharing your observations and concerns with the employee—not that you suspect that they have a mental illness, but that you are concerned about changes you’ve noticed in their behavior and performance at work. Use specific, concrete examples and objective language that avoids judgment and blame. You may want to advise them about the services offered by your company’s EAP or community resources, or raise the point that outside help exists.

One approach is to ask the employee, “How can I help you be successful at work?” You may wish to explore with the employee accommodations that may be available to help him/her to be productive at work.