

# Employee Assistance Program

SUPERVISOR'S GUIDE



EAP





“I called the EAP for advice on helping an employee who was having difficulties at home. I immediately spoke with a professional who helped me make a plan of action. Now my employee and my whole team are thriving.”

#### **A Supervisor’s Guide to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP)**

Your organization depends on you to advance its mission. Your employees rely on you to provide consistent leadership. In today’s constantly changing work environment, this can pose a challenge. Being an effective leader means motivating your employees so they are productive, satisfied, and dedicated to their work. However, sensitive issues can arise occasionally and you may need some assistance in handling them. For example:

- A formerly reliable employee begins arriving very late several times a week
- A valued employee passes away
- Conflict arises between members of your work group
- You are notified of a pending reduction in force (RIF)
- Violence breaks out on the job

- You begin to suspect an employee is experiencing personal problems at home
- You suspect an employee is either drinking or abusing drugs on the job
- You are responsible for a new project and you’re not sure how to build a productive team

When unique issues arise, it can be hard to decide the best course of action. But you are not alone. The EAP has experienced, licensed, and trained professionals available to respond to a range of workplace issues 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

#### **WHAT IS THE EAP?**

Federal Occupational Health (FOH) provides your organization’s EAP. The EAP is a professional service that provides problem solving, coaching, information, consultation, counseling, resource identification, and support to all employees.

The EAP works in partnership with managers to complement and enhance your strengths.

The program helps improve productivity, morale, and employee motivation by providing timely support to both managers and employees.

The EAP is designed to help you with any concern or issue. Remember, the EAP is your 24/7 resource.

Remember, the resources of the EAP are available for you, as a manager and an employee, whether you have a personal issue or a management-related concern.

The EAP is completely confidential in accordance with state and Federal laws.

This guide gives you an overview of how the EAP can be used as a tool to support your work as a manager.

### **WHEN SHOULD I CALL THE EAP?**

The EAP is a proactive management tool that you can use for a myriad of situations.

It offers a private source of expert consultation quickly and conveniently. You should use the EAP whenever you encounter a work situation that makes you wonder: "How should I handle this? When should I talk to this employee? What is the most appropriate action for this situation?"

When you call the EAP, you will be connected to a master's level,

licensed EAP professional, who will listen to your concerns and help you make a plan for addressing them. The EAP consultant will help guide you, as a supervisor, to services you need, from making an employee referral for counseling to dealing with a workplace crisis.

### **The EAP helps you navigate:**

- Productivity concerns
- Relationship issues
- Performance and conduct concerns
- Managing crises in the workplace
- Alcohol and substance abuse issues
- Absenteeism concerns

### **The EAP helps managers:**

- Support employees and enhance productivity
- Choose the best response in difficult situations
- Consider legal and ethical concerns
- Identify issues before they become problems

### **AN OVERVIEW OF EAP SERVICES**

For Managers:

**Available 24/7** – You can call the EAP 24 hours a day, 7 days per week, 365 days a year.

**Consultation by Telephone** – Talk with experienced EAP consultants by telephone about management issues or concerns and they will help you develop and apply solutions.

**Management Coaching** – The EAP offers coaching to help managers

build strong leadership skills, improve team performance, and improve overall organizational performance.

### **On-Site Leadership Presentations**

– The EAP offers orientations and seminars for managers. Topics include coping with downsizing, the multigenerational workforce, and alcohol and other substance abuse.

### **Workplace Incident Management**

– When there is an incident or crisis that affects the workplace, the EAP is there to provide onsite support for managers and employees.

**Information and Resources** – The EAP provides information on many topics that will help you better understand situations affecting your co-workers and subordinates. Some of the topics include work/life balance, alcohol and other substance abuse, domestic violence, depression, communication, and grief and loss.

### **Assistance with Employee**

**Referrals** – The EAP is available to advise you when it becomes necessary to make an informal or a formal written referral to the EAP. We will help you through the process and coordinate related services as necessary.

**EAP Web Site** – You can access educational materials and an assortment of valuable resources through the EAP Web site, [www.FOH4You.com](http://www.FOH4You.com). You'll find child and eldercare providers in your local area, educational articles, self-

assessments, interactive presentations, and much more.

### **AN OVERVIEW OF EAP SERVICES**

For Employees:

- 24-hour access by telephone
- Identification of needs
- Brief face-to-face counseling
- Legal consultations
- Financial consultations
- Child and elder care resources
- Identity theft resources
- Health and wellness presentations
- Community resources and referrals
- Web site resources

### **HELPING YOUR EMPLOYEES**

How can you tell when an employee is in trouble? Usually, when employees are having difficulties, job performance or conduct suffers. The best way to determine whether your employees' personal problems are affecting job performance is to look for habitual patterns of behaviors in the following areas:

**Absenteeism** – Taking leave without authorization, frequent tardiness, leaving early, increase in requests for days off, patterns of calling in sick

**Presenteeism** – Being at work but not fully engaged and productive due to distractions with personal health, emotional, or life issues

**Decreased Productivity** – Work quality and/or quantity declines, inconsistent work practices, missed

deadlines, impaired concentration or confusion

### **Change in Attitude or Appearance**

– Unusual behavior, increased irritability, unexplained crying, isolation, increased agitation, extreme weight loss or gain, poor hygiene, change in appearance

**Change in Relationships** – Sudden complaints from co-workers about behavior, avoidance of others, unexplained oversensitivity, unexplained resentful behavior

**Safety Concerns** – Increased accidents, inattentiveness to safety procedures, behavior that suggests alcohol intoxication and/or drug abuse, violent behavior

### **DOCUMENTING PERFORMANCE ISSUES**

If you notice negative patterns of behavior or performance issues, you should:

**Document** – Document performance by keeping a written record of absences, conflicts with others, missed deadlines, changes in the quality of work, or other signs of poor productivity. Also document any conversations you have with the employee.

**Call the EAP** – Call the EAP at 1-800-222-0364 (1-888-262-7848 TTY) for consultation and coaching on how to talk with the employee about performance and how to make an EAP referral.

**Contact Your Manager** - Your manager will provide consultation and inform you of past practices.

**Contact Your Human Resources Department** - Your HR representative can inform you about policies and procedures you need to follow.

### **REFERRING EMPLOYEES TO THE EAP**

If you determine that an employee needs help, consult with the EAP to determine which type of referral is needed. Remember, referring an employee to the EAP for support and direction allows you to demonstrate your concern and compassion, while remaining squarely in the “manager” role with a focus on productivity and initiating disciplinary action, if need be.

When you and an EAP consultant conclude that an employee could benefit from one-to-one support, there are two kinds of referrals you can make.

**The Informal Referral** – Just let the employee know that you are concerned and provide him or her with the EAP phone number, EAP Web site address, and/or brochure. Tell the employee that the EAP contact is confidential and available for help and support.

If you need help making an informal referral, the EAP is available to walk you through the process.

**The Formal, Written Referral** – You can make a formal, written referral to the EAP as part of your effort to deal with employee job performance or conduct issues that seem to arise from personal problems.

The EAP can assist you in making a formal, written referral. While employee participation in the EAP is voluntary, your recommendation of the EAP, along with an employee’s concern about job stability, can be motivating factors for an employee to seek help. What is discussed between the employee and EAP consultant is confidential. However, if you allow the employee to use work time for an appointment you may be informed as to whether or not the employee kept the appointment, and the time frame involved. The duration of an appointment is typically one hour.

### **A WORD ABOUT CONFIDENTIALITY**

EAP consultants will only release information with the written consent of an employee, or as mandated by law in special situations. Under the law, the EAP is required to report abuse of children and vulnerable adults, threats of serious harm to others, potential suicide, and threats to national security. These situations are carefully outlined to employees during their first EAP session.

Sometimes, employees are hesitant to call the EAP because they are concerned about their privacy.

As noted, under certain conditions, the EAP may notify a supervisor that an employee kept an appointment with the EAP. The EAP consultant will not discuss any other personal information with an employee’s supervisor. If the employee signs a Release of Information or

Authorization to Use or Disclose Protected Health Information (AUD) form, the supervisor may be informed about follow through with appointments, the dates of the appointments, and whether the employee has complied with the EAP counselor’s recommendations

The EAP is a confidential service in accordance with Federal and local law. Reminding employees about this may help them feel more comfortable using the services of the EAP.

**Managing a Crisis** – When there is a crisis that affects the workplace, employees can be left with feelings of fear, grief, anxiety, and stress. These feelings are normal at such times; however, they can lead to a decrease in employee health and productivity.

Crises that affect the workplace include natural or other traumatic disasters, sudden or violent death of an employee (on or off the job), violence or threat of violence, or workplace aggression.

Stress responses to a crisis can result in increased absenteeism or presenteeism, disability issues, and/or increased workplace accidents and errors.

The EAP will provide onsite assistance when there is an incident affecting the workplace.

FOH's EAP has a national cadre of licensed mental health professionals who are specially trained in trauma and crisis response, generally called Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM). Crisis response or CISM activities may include emotional first aid, debriefings, stress management, grief support, management and business consultation, and educational information.

### **WORKPLACE INCIDENT MANAGEMENT**

EAP's workplace incident response services are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

These services include:

- Critical incident needs assessment
- Management consultation on incident response
- Responsive onsite support services by licensed clinicians
- EAP and community resource referrals
- Organizational and workplace recovery consultations
- Educational sessions on stress, grief, and coping
- Reduction in force or reorganization planning and services

Examples of workplace incidents may include:

- Workplace injury or accident
- Natural or other traumatic disaster
- Robbery, assault, rape, or suicide of an employee
- Serious or terminal illness of employee
- Major organizational changes

### **COMMON QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

**Q:** What should I do if I think an employee has an alcohol or other substance abuse or misuse problem?

**A:** As a manager, you are responsible for ensuring that the workplace remains productive. Therefore, any concerns that you have about an employee should directly relate to workplace performance or conduct.

Document workplace behavior and performance issues, such as absenteeism, diminished performance, and changes in co-worker relationships. Recognizing signs of substance abuse isn't always easy, and remember it is not your role to diagnose. Call the EAP to discuss your concerns. It is also a good idea to contact your Human Resources department to determine if there are any other steps you should take.

**Q:** What should I do if there is a threat or actual violence?

**A:** This poses real risks to your staff. Violence can take many forms and

includes aggressive and intimidating behavior; harassment; verbal, physical, and insinuated threats; actual assault; throwing objects; destroying property; and vandalism. Also, domestic violence can follow an employee to the workplace and pose a threat to the entire staff.

Consult with HR and security personnel. Consult with the EAP about how our consultants can partner with other agency resources. If a critical incident has already occurred, the EAP will respond quickly with necessary resources.

In an emergency, call 911 immediately or the emergency number designated by your agency or facility.

**Q:** An employee is really down. I think she's depressed and it's affecting her work. What should I do?

**A:** As a manager, you are responsible for ensuring workplace productivity. This employee's workplace performance has deteriorated, so it's appropriate for you to take some action.

Depression, which can be a complex and prolonged illness that should be diagnosed and treated by a mental health professional, can take a toll on an employee's health, personal life, and professional life. If you address an employee's performance or conduct problems, it can prompt the employee to examine underlying health issues. Call the EAP for more information about how to talk to an employee who may be depressed.

### **EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS**

Educational materials and resources are available as a complement to the EAP services we provide. Many are available in both print and electronic format. Please call the EAP or your Human Resources department to request materials.

Our publications include:

- EAP posters
- EAP wallet cards
- EAP brochures, including information on our other services, like legal and financial
- Wide-ranging educational materials are available on the EAP Web site, [www.FOH4You.com](http://www.FOH4You.com), including:
  - Library of articles
  - Interactive self-assessment tools
  - Financial calculators
  - Legal resources
  - Library of podcasts and webinars on various topics
  - Quarterly newsletter with helpful behavioral health and wellness information for employees
  - Monthly email campaigns to raise health and wellness awareness

### **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

The EAP offers a variety of health and wellness presentations that cover subjects such as stress management strategies, contending with change,

effective communication, civility in the workplace, navigating loss, and the dynamics of addictions. Call today for information on available presentations and how to schedule one.

Online Presentations at [www.FOH4You.com](http://www.FOH4You.com):

- We Care, Just Call Employee Orientation to the EAP
- A Supervisor's 24/7 Resource Supervisor Orientation to the EAP
- Stress Management: Building Resiliency
- When Life Changes
- And more...

**MORE QUESTIONS?  
CALL THE EAP**

Remember, whenever you have a concern about how to address a management issue, call the EAP at 1-800-222-0364 (TTY 1-888-262-7848) or visit the Web site at [www.FOH4You.com](http://www.FOH4You.com).



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or visit our website at [www.FOH4You.com](http://www.FOH4You.com)

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