

# Understanding Your EAP

## Guide for Employers

This guide is intended to provide you with the information that will assist you in the deployment, promotion and utilization of your employee assistance program. The handbook summarizes some of the useful tools and resources available through your EAP that will assist your worksite in addressing issues that impact employee performance, conduct and attendance.

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### **What is an EAP?**

An employee assistance program, or EAP, is a counseling service for employees and their eligible dependents who may be experiencing personal or work place problems. Everyone has problems from time to time. Usually, we work them out. But sometimes problems persist, becoming serious enough to affect us both off and on the job. At such times, an EAP counselor may be able to help.

### **Why do we have an EAP?**

First, it's smart business. If you're doing well and day-to-day problems aren't a distraction, you are more likely to be alert, motivated and concentrating on your job. This means you have a more productive organization. Second, it costs more to hire and train a new employee than it does to help and keep a current employee. And third, you care about your employees.

Anything that influences an employee's well-being will have an impact on that individual's work performance. To understand how true this is, just remember the last time you had a headache and how difficult it was for you to function well. It's the same when an employee comes to work with a personal or family concern, financial or legal difficulties, not to mention more serious issues like domestic violence, alcohol or substance abuse problems, clinical depression or other mental illness.

When your employees suffer personally, your business suffers financially. Providing EAP services is an investment in your workforce that pays by helping to keep your employees happy, healthy and productive.

An EAP provides a confidential company-wide program that quickly and professionally addresses all aspects of employee productivity problems.

An EAP:

- Addresses employees' personal and family problems affecting work performance and company profits
- Reduces absenteeism and turnover, and increases productivity
- Reduces accidents and costly mistakes
- Frees manager and human resources personnel time and energy for more profitable tasks
- Improves employee wellness resulting in lower overall health care costs
- Intercepts and resolves problems (sexual harassment, workplace suicide and homicide threats, fights, sabotage) before they result in negative publicity and expensive legal actions

#### How do we **access** our EAP?

- Access to your EAP can be done in several ways. For direct service you may call 706.549.6658 or 800.549.6658 (outside the Athens area). You may review EAP information online at [www.negeap.com](http://www.negeap.com) or submit inquiries through our ASK EAP service.
- Employees may schedule counseling appointments or access any EAP services by following the same guidelines above.

#### How do we **promote** our EAP to employees?

- To help you promote the EAP within your organization, here are some easy ways to increase awareness and communicate the EAP's features and benefits available to your employees and members of their households.
  - **EAP Brochures:** Available by request.
  - **EAP Wallet Cards:** Available by request and online.
  - **EAP Posters:** An array of one page printable 8x11 marketing posters. Available online.
  - **EAP Payroll Stuffers:** Series of 12 topics that can be placed in payroll envelopes. Available Online
  - **EAP Newsletter:** The information emphasizes EAP services and related health and wellness topics intended to educate employees about important family life and work issues. Available via email, website.
  - **Did You Know?** A monthly poster with information about health & wellness targeting employees and reminding them about EAP services available to them. Available via email and website.
  - **Health & Benefit Fair:** We can participate in your health or benefits fair to promote EAP services and wellness issues.

## How do we educate employees about EAP Services?

- **For Employees**
  - **Employee Orientations** – Providing a brief orientation about EAP services can allow employees to connect how EAP may assist in addressing their life issues. (In person/Online)
  - **Employee Seminars\*** – Your EAP can provide access to employee life and wellness seminars. Such seminars may cover topics such as Anger, Stress Reduction, Workplace Conflict or Violence, Sexual Harassment, Alcohol and Drugs, Holiday Stress and Relaxation Strategies.
  - **EAP Tip Sheets & Handouts** – A variety of handouts on various subjects that you may distribute to employees. Topics range from Job Burnout, Workplace Trust to Employee Grief.
- **For Leadership**
  - **Manager/Supervisor Orientations & Training Sessions\*** - equip your managers with tools to recognize, manage, and assist employees who may be impaired by personal problems that become apparent through job performance issues. We can also conduct training sessions that help managers and supervisors identify behaviors that indicate possible workplace use of drugs and alcohol.
  - **Frontline Supervisor** – This monthly two page newsletter, with a question and answer format, tackling tough on the job issues is designed to educate leadership and provide insight on how EAP services may assist in day to day management. We provide access to this newsletter via email, website, and mail.

(\*Live trainings may require additional fee)

# For Leadership...

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## How can our leadership utilize EAP?

Using an EAP as a **management tool** can be helpful in addressing the complex nature of employee management issues. The landscape of employee problems and concerns that a manager has to walk in everyday can be filled with problems. Accessing the EAP for information, coaching, input and guidance can allow leadership to address areas of employee performance and conduct with confidence.

- Management consultation services are available to assist managers and supervisors with workplace issues. Guidance to leaders can include concerns related to company layoffs, employee appearance, referring employees to EAP, critical incidents, employee grief and loss, employee drug and or alcohol policy issues, job-appropriate behavior, violence in the workplace, employee chronic/terminal illness etc.
- In some cases, however, further steps may be necessary and a Management Referral is warranted. If your program/policy includes Management Referrals, an EAP consultant will assist you, your manager, and the employee in question with an informal referral or formal referral process. Often in these instances a release of information will be necessary.

## Using your EAP as a management tool may help you avoid:

- Responding improperly to a situation and exposing your employer to severe legal consequences.
- Overlooking seemingly inconsequential issues that can snowball into more serious problems.
- Providing less effective assistance to an employee when proper assistance is needed most.
- Wasting valuable time trying to handle a situation alone.
- Underestimating the magnitude of an issue, allowing it to grow into a bigger problem with more negative workplace fallout.
- Inability to get to the real cause of a problem, focusing instead on what you erroneously think is the heart of the matter.
- Inappropriate involvement in (or being overwhelmed by) your employee's personal concerns.

The following questions help sort out the details of the supervisor's involvement with the EAP:

### **What is the supervisor's role?**

- As usual, the supervisor's role is to assess work performance and take appropriate management action when improvement is required. Supervisors should be sensitive to the possibility that a personal difficulty may be the reason for a downturn in an employee's performance.
- If there are personal difficulties affecting job performance, the supervisor should encourage the use of EAP but at the same time, the supervisor should take corrective action. Usually, this takes the form of a discussion or a written letter outlining performance concerns. In such a letter, the supervisor should mention the availability of the Employee Assistance Program. A supervisor's corrective action about job performance could provide some of the motivation required by the employee to resolve the personal difficulty.

### **Are there other ways for the supervisor to be supportive?**

- Naturally, the supervisor should be patient, sympathetic and understanding when an employee uses the EAP. Another key part of the support is to insist that progress is being made toward meeting performance requirements. This can be a crucial component of the motivation needed by the employee to resolve the personal difficulty.

### **Does the supervisor have the right to know the details of the assistance being given through EAP?**

- No. Confidentiality of this information is a cornerstone of the EAP program. However, if counseling requires any absence from work, the supervisor has the right to know that EAP sessions are being attended and that progress toward problem resolution is occurring.
- It is up to the employee to demonstrate progress. If necessary, the supervisor can ask the employee to have either his/her EAP counselor reassure the supervisor about the general progress of the counseling program.

### **What is the most difficult aspect of EAP for supervisors?**

- The biggest challenge for the supervisor is to focus on work performance rather than delaying corrective action because of sympathy for the troubled employee. Too often, the supervisor mistakenly delays taking the appropriate action because the employee indicates that his/her personal difficulties are the root cause of the performance problem and will soon be resolved. The supervisor should be steadfast under this inevitable pressure and take the appropriate corrective action encourage the use of the EAP

# Services...

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## **What services does the EAP offer?**

Your EAP will help your organization to educate supervisors, managers, and employees about the potential for human problems to disrupt productivity and the importance of seeking help early.

**Administrator/Supervisor Training** - All of your supervisory staff will be trained as needed in the appropriate ways of dealing with and referring troubled employees to your Employee Assistance Program.

**On-Site/Online Orientation Seminars.** All of your employees will be invited to an Employee Assistance Awareness presentation to familiarize them with this benefit.

**Promotional Materials and Service.** To keep your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) visible to employees and their families, we offer a variety of promotional materials. In addition, we are more than happy to work with your organization to create promotional material that supports and enhances your image to your employees.

**Consultation.** Ongoing, we provide coaching by phone or in person to administrators and supervisors to assist them in working with a troubled employee and utilizing the EAP within your organization.

**Confidential Assessment, Referral and Brief Counseling.** When problems arise, all covered employees and their family members may contact the EAP for assessment, brief counseling and, when necessary, referral free-of-charge to them. All contact is strictly confidential.

**On-Site Visits.** Periodically throughout the year, an EAP representative may meet with you to evaluate the status of the program.

**Reports.** You will receive annual reports on program utilization by employees and their families. Quarterly reporting is also available.

# CORE Technology...

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Rest assured that your EAP is providing quality and trustworthy service. More specifically, the EAP services are driven by and align with national best practice standards known as the EAP CORE Technology. These CORE services include:

## **EAP Core Technology**

- 1.** Consultation with, training of, and assistance to work organization leadership (managers, supervisors, and union stewards) seeking to manage the troubled employee, enhance the work environment, and improve employee job performance; and outreach/education of employees/dependents about availability of EA services;
- 2.** Confidential and timely problem identification/assessment services for employee clients with personal concerns that may affect job performance;
- 3.** Use of constructive confrontation, motivation, and short-term intervention with employee clients to address problems that affect job performance;
- 4.** Referral of employee clients for diagnosis, treatment, and assistance, plus case monitoring and follow-up services; organizations, and insurers;
- 5.** Assistance to work organizations in managing provider contracts, and in forming and auditing relations with service providers, managed care organizations, insurers, and other third party payers;
- 6.** Assistance to work organizations to support employee health benefits covering medical/behavioral problems, including but not limited to: alcoholism, drug abuse, and mental/emotional disorders; and
- 7.** Identification of the effects of EA services on the work organization and individual job performance.

# Employee FAQ...

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## **What is an EAP?**

An EAP is a confidential counseling and referral service available through your employer that can help you, your family members and dependents.

## **Who can use an EAP?**

The services are available not only to you, but to your spouse, your family members, and dependants as well.

## **When can I call the EAP?**

If you would like an appointment or further details call: 706-549-6658 (our outside Athens call 800-286-2207) between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Appointments are arranged at your convenience.

## **Can I call the EAP if my concern is not a crisis?**

YES. The EAP is a life management tool, designed to help you sort through whatever is happening in your life. Call your EAP when you need a new perspective on things. Call when you need help identifying your options and making informed choices. EAP services have provided to help you live health and work well.

## **Will I be charged for using EAP?**

NO. The EAP is prepaid by your employer. If you need help beyond the scope of the EAP, your counselor may refer you to another resource. You would be responsible for any fees associated with your use of additional resources outside the EAP. We understand that every problem and every budget is different, and will help you identify an affordable solution.

## **Is the EAP just for workplace problems?**

NO. You can use the EAP to help you deal with any number of v concerns, big or small, whether or not they have a direct impact on your work environment.