

Supervisor's Guide

Employee Assistance Program

August 2011



EAP Resources for Management

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is an important resource for supervisors and managers. This guide is designed to help supervisors and managers understand the value of EAP and the scope of EAP services. Effective workplace management promotes employee development and engagement. Supervisors and managers are encouraged to:

- Use the EAP as a resource for themselves.
- Provide information about EAP services to their employees.

This dual objective will assist supervisors in strengthening their own skills, while providing employees an avenue to overcome personal problems that may be affecting their job performance.

The cornerstone of EAP services is providing assessment, referral, and short-term counseling to Postal Service™ employees and their families.

The EAP also offers the resources of consultation, coaching, and crisis response. These services are tailored to needs of workplace supervisors and managers and the challenges of the work environment.

- *Management consultation and coaching* are not counseling; they are services that provide managers with opportunities for personal and professional growth in their leadership role.
- *Crisis response* means the EAP offers support and guidance when a traumatic or unexpected event affects employees.

This guide provides managers and supervisors with an overview of how to access and use the services available from the EAP. For information and assistance 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, call:

1-800-EAP-4-YOU
(1-800-327-4968)
TTY: 1-877-492-7341

Or log on to: **www.EAP4YOU.com**

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EAP Services

Consultation

Consultation, like all EAP services, is voluntary and confidential. You can talk with an EAP Consultant about the workplace and workforce challenges you encounter and collaborate to identify solutions. Consultation focuses on solving present-day issues and is usually situation-specific. Examples of situations appropriate for consultation are:

Dealing with an employee whose work performance may be affected by personal problems.

Considering the human aspect during a workplace crisis.

Coaching

Coaching is not counseling, it is a private and personal service designed to help supervisors and managers enhance their effectiveness in the workplace, while also balancing the demands of work and personal life. Coaching can assist managers to gain insight into their work performance, enhance their management skills, and develop self-awareness.

Counseling

The voluntary and confidential counseling services of the EAP provide an excellent opportunity to help employees address personal and family problems. EAP counseling helps employees with relationship concerns, depression, anxiety, divorce, death of a loved one, financial concerns, stress, substance abuse, and other personal issues. Services are available to Postal Service employees and their immediate family members.

Crisis Response

Employees in the workplace may be impacted by events such as the loss of a coworker or dealing with the aftermath of a natural disaster, such as a tornado, flood, or earthquake. The EAP can provide on-site response to educate employees about EAP services, reinforce personal wellness, and provide information about coping skills for specific events.

TTY: 1-877-492-7341

The Role of Management

As a supervisor or manager, you are responsible for ensuring that work gets done and that employees are doing their jobs according to job standards. When you identify unacceptable performance or behavior, or you notice that an employee is developing a pattern of deteriorating attendance, job performance, or other behavior, meet with the employee to address what you know best: the job and the performance required to be successful in that job. Then you can suggest the EAP.

Occasional incidents of poor job performance do not necessarily mean that there is a serious problem. Most employees bounce back from personal pressures, and ideally, employees will self-refer to the EAP before their performance affects the job.

An important management action is to promote information and awareness of EAP services during service talks, staff meetings, and by having brochures available (Publication 519, *Employee Assistance Program (EAP): Information and Services*).

Early identification and intervention is important and can help resolve problems before they become too advanced or complex. Some signs that may indicate personal or job-related stress:

- Tardiness.
- Absenteeism.
- Decreased efficiency or quality of work.
- High error or accident rate.
- Irritability, moodiness, or anxiety.
- Avoidance of coworkers and supervisors.
- Odor of alcohol.
- Changes in usual behavior or routine.

Any time an employee's behavior becomes aggressive or intimidating in the workplace, contact your district's Threat Assessment Team (TAT). The TAT can work with you in deciding on a proper course of action, including whether or not to refer the employee to the EAP.

EAP Referrals

Types of Management Referrals

The first type is used when a supervisor or manager becomes aware that an employee is experiencing personal problems, even though these problems have not yet affected performance or behavior on the job. Early identification of problems and immediate and effective EAP referral benefits both employees and employers.

As soon as you detect the warning signals of a work or personal problem, such as absenteeism, chronic lateness, personality change, decline in work quality, or unusual behavior or appearance, talk to the employee. Consider an EAP referral. Remind the employee about the availability of EAP and reassure him or her that it is free, voluntary, confidential, and private. By providing this information, you will help employees to feel confident about EAP services and help them to overcome problems that may affect the workplace.

The second type of referral occurs when a supervisor identifies work performance problems. In these cases, the supervisor or manager should contact the EAP, schedule an appointment, and offer it to the employee. Remember to emphasize that the EAP is free, voluntary, confidential, and private.

Employee's Option

The employee has the option to accept or decline the offer of help. Employees cannot be disciplined for refusal to use EAP services.

Exception: If the employee has signed a Last Chance or Settlement Agreement and commits to participate in the EAP, the employee can receive corrective action for noncompliance within the terms of the signed agreement.

On-the-Clock Sessions

An employee's first visit to EAP is on the clock, whether the visit is initiated by management, the union representative, or the employee (unless the employee prefers to visit the EAP on his or her own time).

Subsequent consultations are on the employee's own time. If a reasonable period of time has elapsed since a management referral or a previously disclosed self-referral, the manager or supervisor may, on a case-by-case basis, approve an additional on-the-clock session.

Things to Remember!

Here's a list of important things to know about EAP:

- Offers assessment, referral, and short-term counseling.
- Provides management with personal and private consultation and coaching.
- It's free, voluntary, confidential, and private.
- First session can be on the clock. (Formal referrals usually involve the supervisor scheduling the appointment and for self-referrals an employee's first visit to the EAP may be on the clock, provided the manager receives advance notice and the appointment is scheduled so as not to adversely affect operational efficiency).
- To obtain maximum benefit from the EAP:
 - Make sure your workforce knows about the EAP. Talk about EAP during service talks, meetings, and provide informational posters or brochures.
 - Consult with your local EAP Consultant to discuss your questions and concerns.

The EAP is an integral part of the employee benefits of the United States Postal Service, and it supports workplace environment improvement initiatives.

Remember, the EAP is both an employee and management resource. When you or your employees need assistance, the EAP is here for you. For further information, contact your District EAP Consultant, the EAP national service center, or www.EAP4YOU.com.

For information, consultation, or assistance 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.



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