



800.969.6162

Welcome to the Employee Assistance Program:  
An Orientation for Employees

### **CONTACTING THE EAP**

Please contact the HelpNet EAP central office at (800) 969-6162. You will be connected to an EAP office of your convenience (or you may refer to the HelpNet EAP brochure that lists all of the HelpNet office sites and their phone numbers).

### **BEFORE YOU BEGIN THIS ORIENTATION PROGRAM**

When you started this web-based orientation program, you should have been prompted to type your name in a text box to receive a personalized *Certificate of Completion*. If this DID NOT happen, and you would like to receive a certificate, reset the prompt for the certificate now by going directly to the end of the course (until you see the blank certificate). Close the course and restart it. You will then see the prompt for personalizing your certificate.

### **INSTRUCTIONS**

This orientation program will give you an overview of how the Employee Assistance Program works, and how you and your family can use it to remain happy, healthy, and productive. Be sure to view all the contents on each page by **scrolling** where indicated.

Use the **BLUE** forward and backward buttons to navigate the course. Print any page you would like to have for future reference.

If you must quit the course early, be sure to click the **SAVE button** in the left-hand margin to create a bookmark. When you restart the course, click on the **GO TO button** to return to where you left off.

Contact HelpNet if you have any questions about the EAP after completing the orientation program. Also, be sure to read about your organization's EAP policy. Top management endorses the EAP and encourages every employee to take advantage of this free service.

Enjoy the course and reap the benefits EAPs promise employees.

## 1.1 Welcome to the Employee Assistance Program

All of us experience personal problems at one time or another. When severe and distracting, personal problems interfere with our happiness, but they can also negatively affect our productivity on the job.

Personal problems can interfere with attendance or make us late for work. They can alter our behavior in undesirable ways, affect our attitude, cause us to be careless, increase our personal risk on the job, and adversely affect our decisions, demeanor, and interactions with others.

For these reasons, and because employees are every organization's most valuable resource, your employer has established an *Employee Assistance Program (EAP)*.



- An *EAP* is a structured approach for helping employees and their families identify and resolve personal problems and concerns that may affect job performance. These problems and concerns may include emotional and psychiatric problems, alcohol and other drug-related problems, marriage and family problems, financial and legal problems, interpersonal conflicts at work, stress, vocational issues----almost any personal concern.
- *Employee assistance professionals* are specially trained and experienced at listening, asking the right questions, gathering the correct information, and helping you decide the best course of action to take to resolve the issue or difficulty you face.

**It's True**

When you meet with an employee assistance professional, he or she will greet you, set you at ease, listen, and help clarify the problem that brought you to the EAP. He or she will then discuss options for resolving the problem or issue and formulate a plan of action most likely to help you.

## 2.1 Why Business and Industry have EAPs



- **It has been estimated that** between 12 and 18 percent of employees experience personal problems that lower their productivity; interfere with their attendance and availability; and adversely affect their attitude, conduct, and working relationships.
- **Smart employers know that** employees don't always leave their personal problems at the front door when they come to work. What affects an employee's personal life at home may affect the employee at work. Giving employees access to a free, professional, and confidential resource can help them resolve personal problems easier and more quickly. Research has shown that EAPs are an effective way of helping employees, and can reduce the risk and loss that can accompany unresolved personal problems---absenteeism, accidents, lower productivity, injuries and higher workers compensation costs, turnover, interpersonal conflict on the job, and low morale to name a few.

EAPs are pro-people and pro-organization. Everybody wins with an EAP.

- **In addition to helping** employees resolve personal problems, the EAP helps improve productivity in the organization in other ways. This includes working with groups of employees and work teams; providing education and training on health, wellness, and human relations topics; managing critical incident stress; making contributions to the development of organizational policies that affect employees; consulting with management to help employees improve productivity; and advising the organization on its behavioral health benefits/insurance plan.

**It's True**

**Early programs to help employees** in the workplace first emerged in the 1940s, and soon became popular nationwide. A national association of employee assistance professionals was eventually formed, EAP standards of practice were established, and a code of ethics was written, along with the certification of EA professionals. Today, most of America's workforce has access to an EAP.

### 3.1 Confidentiality is Key

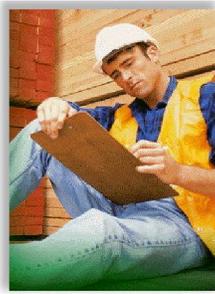


- EAPs are **strictly confidential**. The identities of EAP participants are protected by confidentiality laws or provisions and the right to privacy all employees share. Confidential protections have rare exceptions that permit disclosure in emergencies where a person's life is threatened or the abuse of a child or elderly person exists. Your organization's policy affirms the confidential nature of the EAP.
- Information about your personal problems or the issues shared in confidence at the EAP will not be shared with the organization or other persons without your written permission.
- A signed *Consent for the Release of Confidential Information* is required before the EAP can disclose to someone that you are a client. A release does not provide blanket permission to the EAP to release information. Only specific information you designate to a specific person can be released.

**It's True**

Management fully endorses the EAP and encourages employees at every level of the organization to take advantage of its services.

## 4.1 Important Things to Know about the EAP



- **The EAP is non-disciplinary.** A referral to the EAP by a supervisor based on job performance problems is not a substitute for disciplinary action. Whether an employee uses the EAP may not be the cause for a disciplinary action or a reason for a disciplinary action.
- **EAPs cannot interfere with administrative or supervisory practices.** The EAP cannot advise your supervisor on disciplinary matters or protect you from disciplinary actions. It is not a "safe harbor." You are still responsible for satisfactory job performance, even if you are an EAP client.
- **There are no fees for EAP services.** The services of the EAP are paid for by your employer. If you require a referral to other sources of help, the EAP will consider your ability to pay for those services, and whether your health benefits plan will apply.
- **The EAP is not a psychotherapy service or a treatment program.** EAPs specialize in identifying problems, assessment and interviewing, motivational counseling and problem-solving, and referral to the right source of help.
- **The EAP is voluntary.** Employees cannot be "forced to go to the EAP." However, policies or regulations governing certain workplace infractions (drug-free workplace, violence, etc.) may mandate that management make a supervisor referral to the EAP if the employee is to be accommodated for the possible existence of a health/psychiatric problem.
- **Seeking help from the EAP** cannot adversely affect you. You cannot have your job security or promotional opportunities jeopardized as a result of participating in the EAP.

## 5.1 What Kind of Problems, Issues, and Concerns?

The EAP is available to help you or your family members resolve any personal problem. There are many types of personal problems that affect employees. Some may require only a phone call to the EAP to resolve them. Others may require that you meet in person with the EA professional for one or more sessions.

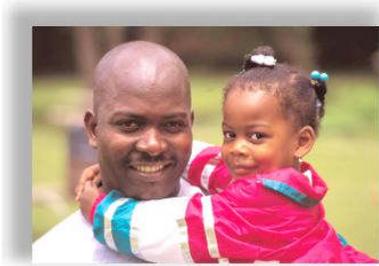


- ***Life management issues***----marital and couples conflicts, sexual and intimacy issues, parenting skills, social and relationship issues, financial issues (credit problems, debt collections, loss of income, budgeting, and conflict over money.); legal problems; fear and anxiety over medical conditions; eldercare issues and caregiver stress; loss of a loved one and bereavement/grief issues; landlord-tenant issues, homelessness or threatened homelessness; personal relationship and peer conflicts, domestic/partner abuse, and victimization.
- ***Emotional problems and mental health issues***----depression, anxiety, medication management issues for psychiatric conditions, eating disorders and compulsive eating, social issues and relationship problems, adult child-parent relationship issues, and parenting concerns over teenagers.
- ***Alcohol and drug-related problems***----alcohol-related problems, drug-use problems and drug addiction, family members affected by the drug or alcohol use of another family member, relapse issues or maintaining or re-establishing an abstinence program and/or program of recovery from addiction and codependency; teenage substance abuse.
- ***Job-related problems***----getting to work on time, coworker conflicts, issues in working with your supervisor, performance concerns, career counseling, difficulties making decisions, stress, exhaustion, work pressures, being affected by downsizing, pre-retirement planning and related concerns, difficulties of a new position.



Exploring a personal problem with the EAP may lead to the discovery of solutions to other problems and concerns that have interfered with your life.

## 6.1 Other Information about the EAP



- **An important EAP service** is follow-up. Follow-up helps ensure that you did not have trouble accessing the resources to which you were referred by the EAP. Follow-up also helps you troubleshoot problems or issues that get in the way of using those services or following through with the plan of action that you and the EAP decided upon together.
- **The EAP won't compete** with other resources in the organization that are available to help you. Instead, the EAP will refer you to those resources when appropriate.
- **The EAP is not a** substitute for the advice and counsel of your personal physician; however, the EAP can help you locate health and medical resources in the community.
- **The EAP is not a provider** of medical care or health services, and it is not an emergency medical service. If you experience a medical emergency, however, be sure to contact the EAP later for support or other help.
- **If you didn't see a** problem listed on the previous page that concerns you, it doesn't mean the EAP can't help you. When in doubt, ask! The EAP will direct you to the proper source of help.

## 7.1 Referral to the EAP

The EAP is accessed by employees and their family members primarily by self-referral. You do not have to be recommended to the EAP by someone, or receive anyone's prior approval.

Supervisors or managers may also refer employees to the EAP when job performance problems exist. Here is a closer look at the different types of referrals to the EAP:



- **Self-referral:** The employee or family member makes a personal decision to contact the EAP without being referred by another person, such as a supervisor.
- **Supervisor/Management Referral:** Your supervisor or manager recommends that you participate in the EAP based upon your job performance problems.

If you are referred to the EAP by your supervisor, it can be helpful to sign a release so your supervisor can be notified of your participation. No personal information will be disclosed, only notice of your attendance and participation in the EAP's recommendations.



Some violations of company work rules such as using alcohol or drugs on the job are serious performance concerns and can lead to termination. The organization's policy may require the referral of an employee to the EAP in such instances. Typically an employee is asked to cooperate with the EAP's recommendations to avoid termination for the infraction. This is an accommodation, not a punitive act or a "forced use" of the EAP.



A referral to the EAP is a good thing, not something to fear or to cause you to feel offended. In effect, the organization is allowing you an opportunity to resolve a personal problem possibly interfering with work performance. The hope is that you can avoid the consequences of continued unsatisfactory performance by resolving it and improving your productivity.