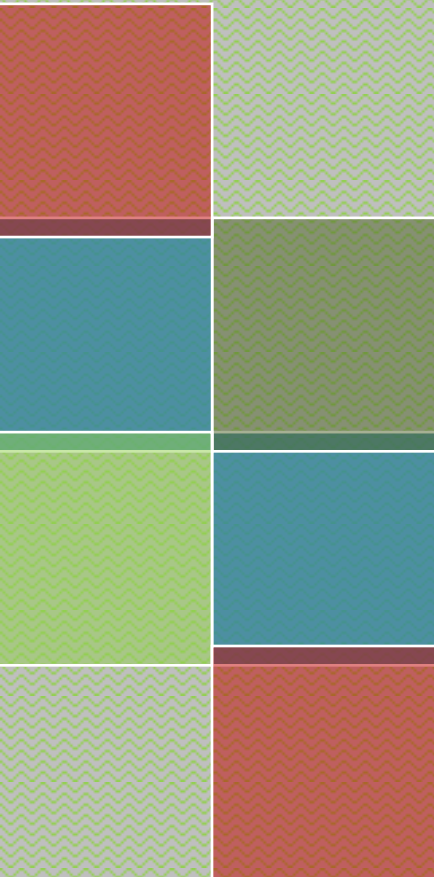




Employee Assistance Policy
for the
Belize Public Service
2013



MINISTRY OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE

Employee Assistance Policy For the Belize Public Service

MINISTRY OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE

OUR VISION

“To be the leading catalyst in facilitating the delivery of prompt and efficient service to our stakeholders in a professional manner”

OUR MISSION

The Ministry of the Public Service exists to provide sound human resource management and to promote good governance and public sector modernization for the Government and People of Belize.

OUR VALUES

***Integrity *Equity *Accountability *Rule of Law**
***Professionalism *Transparency *Quality Service**

- Integrity: Public Officers will not seek or accept gifts, favours or inducements in the course of discharging their duties. They will not use public property or official time for their own private purposes.
- Equity: Public Officers will be fair in the administration of their duties. They will not show favour or be prejudiced in the treatment of any citizen and customer.
- Accountability: Public Officers will be responsive and responsible in conducting business and answerable for their actions.
- Rule of Law: Public Officers will not commit any unlawful act in the course of their duties

- **Transparency:** Public Officers will not withhold information which the public has a right to know, or information which is needed by Ministers or other Public Officers. They will not divulge or misuse official information which is confidential, nor will they misuse resources entrusted to their care.
- **Quality Service:** Public Officers will strive to achieve the highest standards in their work and to actively seek opportunities to improve those standards.

TABLE OF CONTENT

I.	Introduction.....	7
II.	WHAT IS EAP?.....	8
III.	Purpose.....	11
IV.	Objective.....	12
V.	Endorsement.....	12
VI.	Basic Principles	12
VII.	Scope	14
VIII.	Programme Operation	19
IX.	Rights and Responsibilities.....	19
X.	Access, Referral and Offers of Assistance.....	25
XI.	Preliminary Screening and Referral BY EAP Coordinator	30
XII.	Confidentiality	31
XIII.	Conclusion.....	32
	Appendix A - Definitions	33
	Appendix B - Confidentiality and Privacy.....	34
	1. General	34
	2. Physical Security	36
	3. Release of Information	36
	Appendix C - Code of Ethics.....	37
	Introduction	37
	Conflict of Interest	39
	Competency.....	40
	 Figure 1: Resolution of Poor Job Performance Diagram Flow	 10
	Figure 2: PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION DIAGRAM FLOW	18

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME (EAP)

Policy Statement

I. Introduction

The Government of Belize encourages a Public Sector that is no longer straddled by outmoded mechanisms of long ago, but one that is a modern, vibrant and a proactive force that promotes and enables the sustainable socio-economic development of Belize. Based on this precept, Government has embarked on a Modernization Programme for the Belize Public Service. This programme focuses on people (human resources), organizational processes and structures as they relate to the realization of the modernization goals. Thus, the programme highlights a number of strategies for transforming and changing, in fundamental ways, the policies, systems, structures, attitudes and habits that pervade the public service. A main goal is to provide the support necessary to deliver quality service to all our customers.

The Government of Belize further upholds that its human resources are our most valued resource. As such, and in accordance with its responsibilities under section 106(3) of the constitution, care and investment are necessary to maintain the added value of our human resources. This becomes even more evident when we accept the fact that our modern society has become increasingly complex with changes in the traditional values and structure. Moreover, globalization, transformation in communication, education, and certain social factors (health, life expectancy etc.) has brought on added pressures and stress to today's

citizens. There is need to build in safety nets. One such proposal is the Implementation of an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) to ensure that adequate support is provided to all employees confronted with personal problems that may impact their performance in the work place. In undertaking this initiative, the Ministry conducted a Needs Assessment Survey that identified the psychosocial needs of employees. The information gathered gave a good indication of the demand for this Employee Assistance Policy as well as some broad indicators that will guide the Ministry in the design and implementation of a comprehensive and effective EAP.

II. WHAT IS EAP?

In the broadest sense an EAP is a management support programme that recognizes that there can be extraneous factors that may detract employees from performing their best in the work place. Some of these factors/stresses – (e.g personal or job-related stress, family or marital problems, legal or financial difficulties, alcohol/drug abuse, and other behavioral problems) – while not necessarily originating from the workplace, can grossly affect productivity. If the tenet that ‘our human resources are our most valued resource’ is accepted, then managers will not merely “write-off” an employee nor will managers ‘pamper’ employees. In the interest of obtaining optimum productivity from employees, managers will employ ways and means to assist employees to alleviate or manage the life-impacting factors at minimum cost and in minimum time.

At the work place managers may coach or counsel employees. In simple terms, coaching is done to assist employees to learn and do a better job using knowledge and skills to enhance productivity. On the other hand, counseling comes into play when an employee's productivity is not at optimum and it is recognised that neither training nor coaching can address the issues. Counseling then, is a tool used to assist employees to improve their performance by addressing personal problems that affect their productivity.

The EAP looks at the wellness and well being of the employee to ensure productivity. When productivity is not related to a training deficiency the system is employed to reach out to the employee. While the manager may offer basic counseling, employees are encouraged to avail themselves of the programme and to develop personal plans to address their problems. The flow diagram below illustrates, in a simple way, how an EAP works.

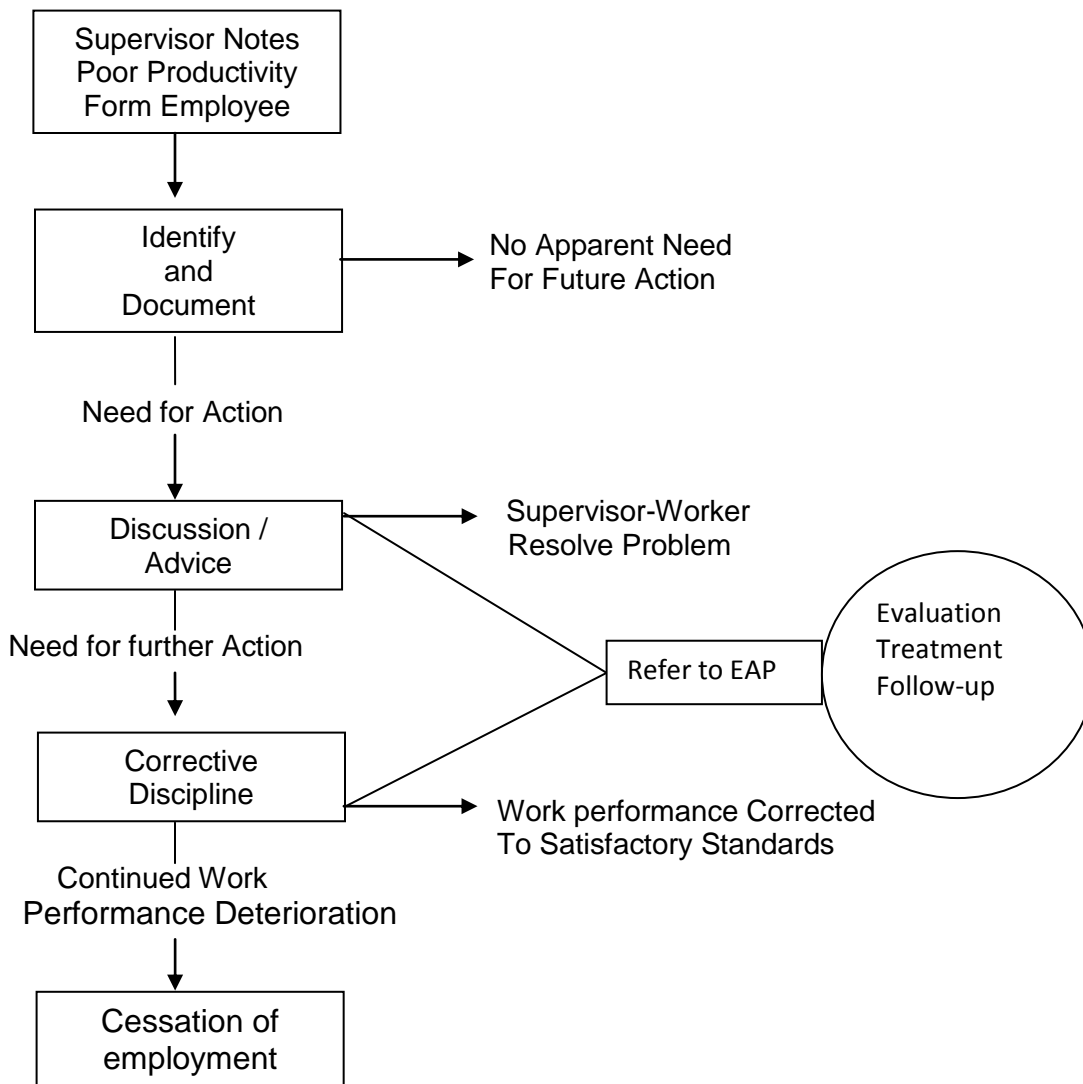


Figure 1: Resolution of Poor Job Performance Diagram Flow

Summarily it can be stated that the EAP is an assistance plan to offer confidential professional counseling to an employee to help resolve problems that affect his/her personal life and may affect work performance. The programme is completely confidential.

III. Purpose

The purpose of an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is to help employees understand and or overcome their personal problems that may affect their work performance. Introduction of an EAP will help employees develop coping skills and accept a greater degree of personal responsibility for improving job performance. It will:

- 1) Prevent/reduce severance of potentially productive officers.
- 2) Reduce socio-economic cost to society.
- 3) Humanise the approach to human resource management.
- 4) Help to establish open communication
- 5) Increase productivity through:
 - Reduction in absenteeism/tardiness;
 - Decrease in discipline cases;
 - Decrease in disruptive behavior;
 - Decrease in negative attitude.
- 6) Enhance individual image and self- esteem and the image of the Public Service
- 7) Foster the promotion of preventative measures.
- 8) Build confidence and trust between supervisors and employees.
- 9) Enhance social partnership among GOB as employer, employees, civil society, trade unions and the private sector.

10)Benefit the employer through retention of employees with valuable skills.

11)Enhance customer satisfaction.

IV. Objective

The main objective of the EAP is to offer confidential and professional assistance to employees whose job performance is adversely affected by personal problems. It is intended to assist with the resolution of personal problems, which may result in improved job performance.

V. Endorsement

The EAP is a joint venture of the Government of Belize and the Public Service Union. The parties believe that the programme can benefit everyone. The affected employee receives early assistance; Government benefits by retaining employees with valuable skills and knowledge and our customers get satisfaction.

VI. Basic Principles

- 1) EAP is strictly voluntary
- 2) Management and Union working together can help employees cope with personal problems, which can lead to deteriorating, work performance.
- 3) The EAP applies equality to all employees.
- 4) Early intervention is desirable in addressing any personal problem.

- 5) EAP is grounded in confidentiality and privacy of information.
- 6) Self-Referrals - employees voluntarily seek EAP for personal problems which may affect job performance. The employee is responsible for recognizing when his/her job performance is below standard. The employee takes responsibility for his /her personal problems while maintaining acceptable standard of performance.
- 7) Informal referrals, the employer's concern with employee problems is limited to efforts to address deteriorating work performance. The supervisor or manager is responsible for identifying with the employee when job performance is below standard. The supervisor is not responsible for diagnosing the nature of a personal problem and the EAP is not designed to interfere with an employee's private life.
- 8) The EAP offers assistance for a wide range of problems, which may include personal or job-related stress, family, or marital problems, legal or financial difficulties, alcohol/drug abuse, and other behavioral problems.
- 9) The supervisor or manager is responsible for identifying with the employee when job performance is below standard.
- 10) EAP does not alter management's responsibility to maintain discipline or the right to take disciplinary measures, within the framework of the Public Service Regulations, nor does it alter the Union's prerogatives.
- 11) The EAP is not designed to assist in "conflict resolution" between employees and/or supervisors. These matters should be resolved through established administrative procedures and/or Collective Agreements. The EAP can help

- the employee deal with personal consequences of conflicts which may be work related.
- 12) The EAP recognises the need for the granting of leave for the purpose of counseling and/or treatment.
- 13) An employee's current job and opportunity for promotion or advancement will not be jeopardised by having used EAP services.

VII. Scope

A. ELIGIBILITY

The programme is available to all public officers (including open vote workers).

B. AREAS OF ASSISTANCE

- The EAP will make assessment of employees' problem(s) and provide information and referral, if necessary.
- The programme will provide training to supervisors to educate them about the services of the EAP to assist them in identifying and referring public officers.
- The Programme will educate employees about the services of the EAP.

1. Education Services

EAP training sessions for managers and supervisors should cover, at a minimum:

- The scope and limits of EAP, the confidentiality aspects, the procedures for accessing the programme;
- The administrative role with respect to EAP and referrals;
- The concepts and methods that allow for early detection of problems that interfere with job performance;
- Constructive methods to deal with employees experiencing performance problems due to personal or behavioral problems; and
- Support approaches to assist the employee.

Every new employee should receive a brochure, information sheet or other appropriate format containing information that describes the scope and means of accessing the EAP services.

2. Counseling Services

The EAP provides short term counseling, in a broad range of personal concerns, including, but not limited to:

- a) Marital, family and relationship problems
- b) Substance abuse (alcohol, drugs, prescription medication) and other addictive behavior such as gambling.

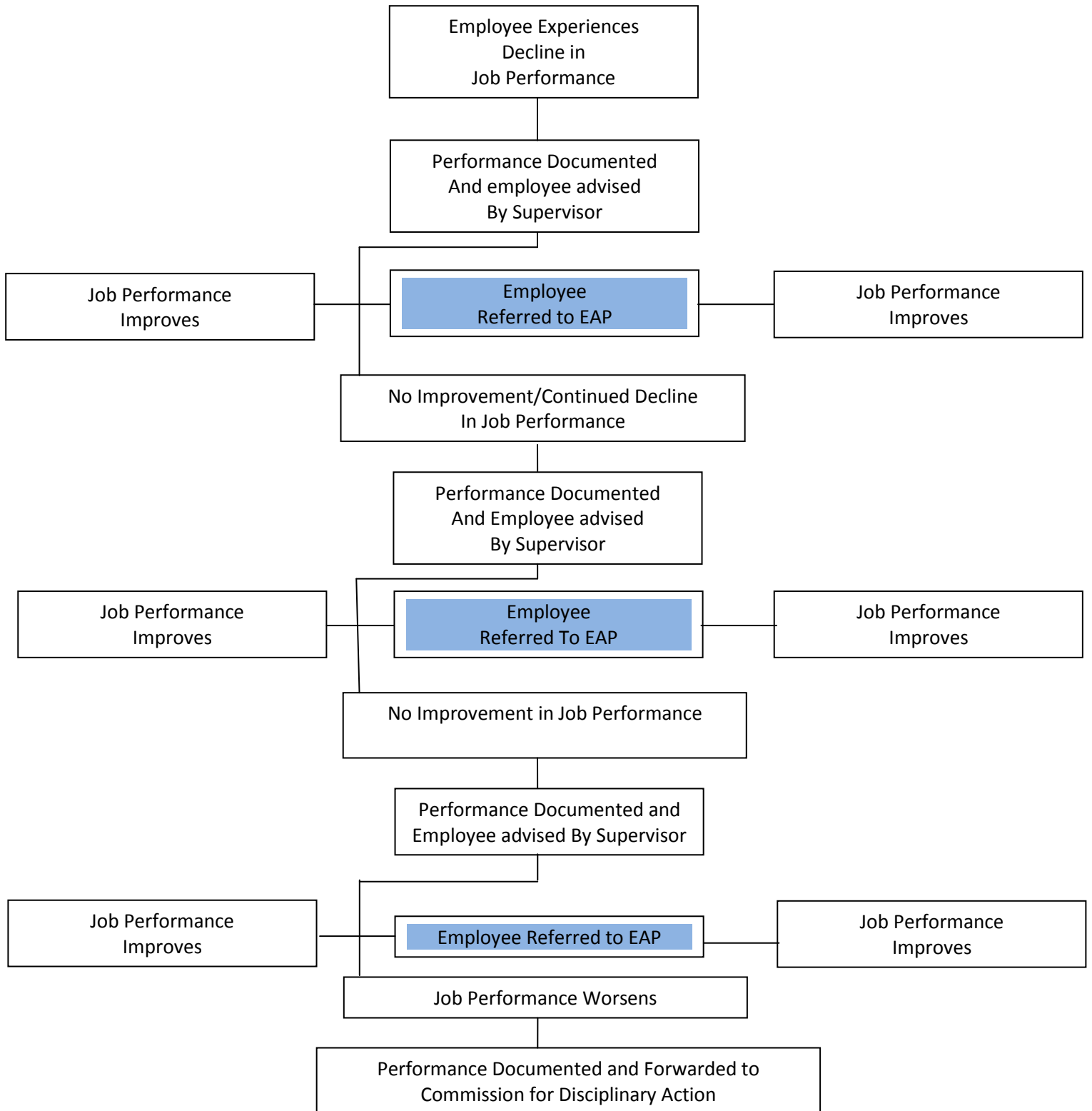
- c) Personal debt and financial management problems.
 - d) Stress (family, social, job)
 - e) Family violence
 - f) Mental / Emotional problems
 - g) Work related conflicts
-
- A response to a request for service should occur as soon as possible, preferably within one working day.
 - The first counseling session should occur within two weeks unless unforeseen circumstances arise.
 - Follow-up should be an integral part of the EAP service, usually by meeting with the client. Sometimes a letter or telephone call is appropriate.
 - The programme normally offers up to six sessions for each **new** case. The need for additional sessions will be determined by the professional counselor.
 - Where employees are likely to be involved in critical incidents because of the nature of their work, the department must develop a procedure for initial counseling and follow-up with an external counselor if requested by the client. The same can apply to cases that involve threats of violence or suicide.

Prevention Activities

Consistent with the programme design and the organizational mandate, preventive programmes should be held to educate employees about personal problems related to life style and work environment, and the possible responses. This may involve cooperation with other governmental and non-governmental agencies in the community.

C. FLOW FOR ADDRESSING DETERIOATING PERFORMANCE

Figure 2: PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION DIAGRAM FLOW



VIII. Programme Operation

The programme acts as an intake and referral system, using agencies in the community and within the Public Service to provide ongoing assistance as required. Early recognition of problem is its goal, to enable an employee to receive help before a crisis develops.

The programme is not an escape from discipline nor is it to be used by management as a disciplinary measure. The intent is to allow employees the chance to voluntarily seek help to cope with personal problems that may affect work performance.

Any employee can consult with EAP Coordinator concerning access to or obtaining general information about the programme.

IX. Rights and Responsibilities

A. INTRODUCTION

Maintenance of acceptable job performance is a shared responsibility. The supervisor along with the employee must therefore set performance goals. Achievements must then be measured against those goals. It follows that the employee, coached by the supervisor, responds by accepting responsibility for maintaining satisfactory job performance. In this regard, the EAP can be used as a safety net for the performance management system.

B. MINISTRY OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE'S RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Personal information concerning participants is maintained in a confidential manner. No information related to an employee's participation in the programme is entered into his/her personal file. The Coordinator uses only coded files. An employee may review his/her coded EAP file at any reasonable time. The EAP file is destroyed after two years of inactivity.
2. An employee's current job and opportunity for promotion or advancement will not be jeopardised by having used EAP services.
3. The employee shall have the right to time off for the assessment with the EAP Coordinator. Additionally, leave may be granted in accordance with respective conditions of employment, on the advice of the EAP Counselor.
4. It is the responsibility of the employee to maintain satisfactory job performance. If personal problems cause work deterioration, the employee has a responsibility to obtain the necessary help to bring job performance up to an acceptable level. The EAP provides the means to obtain this help.

C. SUPERVISOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Address performance problems through normal supervisory procedures.
2. Be consistent and treat employees fairly.
3. Be knowledgeable about the EAP and the referral procedure.
4. Promote the understanding and acceptance of the EAP within the Public Service.
5. Make employees aware of EAP in instances where declining job performance has been determined, if appropriate.
6. Serves as a confidential referral source to employees who are experiencing personal problems.
7. Liaise with EAP Coordinator to identify and provide support needed based on referrals
8. Refrain from diagnosing personal problems of the employee.
9. Refrain from requesting employee to divulge the nature of his/her problems when requesting leave for an appointment with EAP Coordinator.
10. Provide performance assessment of employees to verify their return to satisfactory performance, or need for follow-up action, as required.
11. Maintain strict confidentiality with all cases.

D. MINISTRIES' RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Be knowledgeable about the EAP and the referral procedure.
2. Encourage members to use the EAP including recommendations for self-referral to the EAP.
3. Employee representatives and associations representing employees are consulted and provided with the opportunity to participate fully in the application of the EAP, including its referral, educational and promotional aspects.
4. Maintain strict confidentiality with cases, for which they have knowledge.

E. EAP COORDINATOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Oversee the EAP to ensure effective and consistent application of the policy and procedures.
2. Conduct information and consultation sessions with management and union personnel regarding the EAP.
3. Promote the EAP in the workplace.
4. Develop and maintain an accurate, current data bank on "helping" resources and services in the community and within the Public Service including a brief description of services available and the cost, if any, of the service.
5. Liaise with service providers to ensure service standards are acceptable and meet the requirements of clients.

6. Ensure that EAP practitioners abide by the Code of Ethics in Appendix C.
7. Conduct preliminary assessment of persons contacting the EAP for assistance and provide full information regarding participation in the programme.
8. Make referral to a professional counselor for detailed assessment and treatment, as appropriate.
9. Follow-up as appropriate with the individual to assure assistance was beneficial.
10. Assist the employee in his or her return to the work environment as appropriate.
11. Organise and facilitate, on an ongoing basis, information sessions for employees about the EAP services.
12. Maintain all information on employees participating in the EAP in a confidential and secure manner.
13. Prepare and submit an annual report on the programme to the Ministry of the Public Service.
14. Provide specific feedback to Ministry of the Public Service regarding where special attention or training is required.
15. The EAP Coordinator is strictly prohibited from initiating first contact with potential employee.

F. EMPLOYEE'S RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Be knowledgeable about the policy and programme with specific attention to the referral procedures.
2. Encourage public officers to use the EAP, if appropriate.

G. SERVICES COMMISSIONS' RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Review established policy and programmes to ensure agreement and understanding of procedures and practices.
- B. Develop and recommend changes in programme policy and programme as necessary after receiving input from relevant stakeholders.
- C. Develop strategies in conjunction with the EAP Coordinator to ensure the success of the programme.

H. UNION'S RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Ensure that supervisors within all Ministries are required to facilitate the EAP.
2. Ensure that employees are provided with EAP services that conform with this policy including definitions in *Appendix A*.
3. Ensure that confidentiality and privacy of EAP information is maintained in accordance with *Appendix B*.
4. Ensure that EAP services are accessible to all employees, and free of all discriminations and prejudices, including but not limited to professional rank, education, age, gender, disability, race or sexual orientation.

5. Ensure that employees are fully informed about the programme and the services available to them.
6. Ensure that managers and supervisors avail themselves of training and education on all aspects of the EAP programme and be fully aware of their responsibility to refer employees with work performance problems related to personal difficulties to the EAP Unit.
7. Ensure that leave for treatment and rehabilitation are used in accordance with existing Public Service regulations.
8. Provide feedback to Ministry of the Public Service on effectiveness of the EAP.

X. Access, Referral and Offers of Assistance

A) INTRODUCTION

Access to the EAP can either be self-initiated or employer initiated. The decision to seek assistance through the EAP is always voluntary. When an offer of assistance through the EAP is made by the employer, it is not mandatory for the employee to accept the offer.

B) SELF-INITIATED REFERRAL

An Employee recognises that a problem exists and seeks assistance by calling the PSU or the EAP Coordinator directly. This may have resulted from a process of self-realisation or from a family member, friends, co-worker or supervisor sharing concern for the employee and informally suggesting the use of the EAP.

These self-referrals are treated with strict confidentiality. The employee's supervisor will not be informed of the nature of the problem unless at the request of the employee. The employee is responsible for obtaining approval for any required time off associated with the use of the EAP.

C) EMPLOYER-INITIATED REFERRAL

The supervisor is responsible to address, with the employee, deteriorating work performance and provide guidance to help the employee improve work performance. An employee accepts responsibility for keeping job performance at a pre-established acceptable level. If job performance does not improve or shows continuing deterioration, then the supervisor or the PSC may initiate a Formal Offer of Assistance; it is not mandatory for the employee to accept this offer. Prior to initiating a Formal Offer of Assistance, the supervisor should consult with the EAP Coordinator concerning the appropriateness of the offer.

The following steps will govern an employer-initiated Offer of Assistance:

a) Informal

The supervisor will ensure that the employee receives an informal offer of assistance prior to initiating a Formal Offer of Assistance. Such offers will be documented.

Note: Certain workplace behavior could result in an employer-initiated Formal Offer of Assistance without, there being previous informal offers.

b) Formal

If a supervisor notices a persistent performance problem and has taken progressive disciplinary action, the supervisor can refer the employee to the EAP Coordinator.

The employee who attends the Counseling or Training Sessions recommended by the EAP and follows treatment recommendations must be given a reasonable amount of time (i.e three to six weeks) to show some improvement of job performance problems. It is the responsibility of the supervisor to continue disciplinary procedures if performance problems persist.

Refusal of EAP assistance does not constitute grounds for disciplinary action. On the other hand, acceptance of an EAP referral does not remove an employee's responsibility to improve work

performance. Ultimately, the employee's job performance must improve whether or not he/she contacts the EAP and whether or not he/she accepts treatment recommendations.

If the employee signs a release form and a request is made by the supervisor, the only information released will be attendance and compliance with the treatment recommendations. Under no circumstances will the nature of the problem or specifics of referral be released unless otherwise required by law. No information will be released without a signed release form.

Supervisors will be encouraged to refer the employee to the EAP for further evaluation should job performance problems persist.

With signed release forms, the EAP Coordinator will maintain contact with the treating employee and/or personnel for an appropriate amount of time to ensure that the employee is receiving necessary care.

D) SERVICES TO FAMILIES (OPTIONAL)

Ministries have the option of expanding EAP services to the dependants of all their employees. Services may be offered to dependants separately or at the same time as the employee. They may also be offered generally or only when EAP practitioners perceive a need. Finally, Ministries may decide not to provide family services beyond the policy requirements.

Where family services are offered, these are limited to assessment and referral services with very short-term counseling (see definitions), in keeping with the intent of the EAP. The counseling is intended primarily to assist employees to recognize the need to obtain appropriate counseling services from a specialist in the community. It is not intended to replace community counseling services that are available for families.

Enquiries

Enquiries about this policy should be directed to:

- 1. *Ministry of the Public Service***
- 2. *The EAP Coordinator***

XI. Preliminary Screening and Referral BY EAP Coordinator

PRELIMINARY SCREENING

The employee is responsible for making contact with the EAP Coordinator. During this initial contact, the EAP Coordinator will explain the EAP, including confidentiality of the programme and the exceptions, the employee's rights and responsibilities and full information about participation in the programme.

The Coordinator and the employee will conduct a preliminary assessment of the problem. The Coordinator will provide information and, if appropriate, encourage the employee to accept referral for counseling and treatment. Upon completion of the preliminary assessment, the Coordinator and the employee will discuss the options, which appear to be most realistic and attainable for the employee in resolving the problem. The employee may choose the treatment service and a referral will be facilitated.

REFERRAL

The EAP Coordinator will conduct a preliminary assessment of the problem with the employee. The Coordinator will be knowledgeable about the appropriate services in the community and within the Public Service and will assist the employee with making referral arrangements.

COORDINATION AND FOLLOW-UP

The EAP Coordinator will maintain an informal but planned follow-up procedure. The Coordinator will work with the employee to ensure appropriate services are received in a timely manner. Contact with any treatment agency of the employee, will only be at the request of the employee.

XII. Confidentiality

A primary principle of EAP is to maintain confidentiality throughout every level of the programme. Consistent with this principle, every reasonable effort will be made to maintain the EAP office away from major worksites.

EAP files will contain the minimum amount of information required. Names shall not be used on these files – codes or numbers will be used. Files will be available for review by the employee at any reasonable time.

When an employee is referred to a community agency or an agency within the Public Service, only relevant information to enable that agency to help the employee shall be shared. In an employer-initiated offer of assistance, the employer will be advised only of the employee's participation level in the programme, through a prescribed form.

All persons employed within the EAP and the Ministry of the Public Service are bound by the conditions of confidentiality of the EAP.

Individual EAP files shall be destroyed after two years of inactivity.

XIII. Conclusion

The Ministry of The Public Service and the Public Service Union are committed to the maintenance of an EAP as a service for employees requiring help. In order to maintain this commitment, it must have support from managers and union representatives, as well as the willingness of employees to participate in the programme.

EAP can benefit everyone. The employees obtain help with problems that can/are affecting work, family, and their well-being. The employer benefits by retaining employees with valuable skills and knowledge. Early use of the programme can contribute to the prevention of serious problems for the individual employee, family, and employer.

Appendix A – Definitions

Critical incident - a traumatic event that produces a strong emotional reaction that could affect one's ability to cope

Dependent – includes spouses and children

Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) - a programme to identify and provide short-term counseling and referral service to employees with personal or work-related problems to resources within the Public Service or the community. These services include training in life skills, coping skills and other personal development topics.

EAP practitioner - an individual qualified by training or certification in the techniques of assessment of problems, particularly in respect of Counseling and Personal Development Training. This includes, but is not limited to, social workers, occupational health nurses and physicians, and volunteer peer counselors and mentors trained in EAP

Referral - an oral or written recommendation to use EAP services or other comparable services to assist in resolving personal or work-related problems that may affect performance

Short-term Counseling - discussions leading to the identification of clients' problems and referral, normally up to six sessions

Appendix B - Confidentiality and Privacy

1. General

- 1.1.** In accordance with this policy, departments shall have policies and procedures that safeguard employees' information in records or gathered in counseling sessions.
- 1.2.** Individual employees' case files are required only where documentation is necessary for practitioners to carry out their EAP functions. When information is recorded, it should be kept to a minimum and it may include dates, the general nature of problems, minimal progress notes, recommended referrals and non-medical reports related to an employee's work capability or limitations. Practitioners should refrain from recording in an individual's case file personal information relating to a third party. Individual case files shall be designated sensitive and marked as CONFIDENTIAL - EAP.
- 1.3.** To enhance confidentiality, personal identifiers such as the employee's name, title and address may be replaced with a number that is cross-referenced to a master file that contains this information separately.
- 1.4.** At the outset of the initial interview, the practitioner shall advise the employee, orally or in written format, of the confidentiality policy and its limitations.
- 1.5.** If personal information is collected, the employee is advised that it will be treated in accordance with the privacy provisions of this policy. This includes advising employees of the following:

- 1) The type of information that will be collected, the purpose for which the information was obtained and the length of time it will be kept in the individual case file before being destroyed;
- 2) The right to review information contained in the file, to request corrections or to attach notes;
- 3) The right to complain to the Privacy Commissioner about any decisions on access to personal information collected for EAP purposes, whether for delays, requested exemption, language of choice or any irregularity affecting the collection, use, disclosure, retention and disposal of this information;
- 4) The practitioner cannot promise confidentiality in the following situations:
 - a. A suspected case of child abuse; or
 - b. A threat of suicide or illegal activity.

When such information is received, the practitioner is advised to consult the departmental EAP Coordinator immediately.

1.6. Personal information collected by an agency providing EAP services under contract to the Ministry of the Public Service is deemed to be personal information under the control of the Ministry of the Public Service.

2. Physical Security

2.1. All employee case files and sensitive programme information require the use of approved locked storage space and containers. Only authorized personnel have access to EAP case files.

3. Release of Information

3.1. Personal information relating to individual case files of the EAP employees is released only with the written consent of the employee or where the law requires or permits the release of that information.

3.2. Written consent shall include the following:

- a) The name of the person or agency to whom the information is to be released;
- b) The specific information to be released;
- c) The date of consent;
- d) The employee's signature; and
- e) The expiry date of the consent.

Appendix C - Code of Ethics

Introduction

This Code sets out the ethical attitudes expected of Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) practitioners in the Public Service regardless of their formal preparation, place of work or population focus.

Respect for the dignity and rights of persons

Fundamental to the principle of respect for the dignity of persons is the belief that all persons have a right to appreciation of their innate worth as human beings.

Every EAP employee must be respected regardless of race, national or ethnic origin, religion, age, sex, marital status, family status, disability, sexual orientation, political affiliation, social or economic status, or physical or mental capabilities or characteristics or other similar grounds.

Employees of EAP have a right to consent to matters that affect their treatment and that are within their control. Moreover, EAP is directed at decreasing the dependency of employees who seek advice and sponsoring positive personal control.

A practitioner must:

1. Respect all employees regardless of their personal characteristics.
2. Respect the employee's right of self-determination by encouraging active involvement in decisions related to treatment and referral;
3. Respect the employee's right to privacy and confidentiality by collecting only personal information that is relevant and by sharing it only to the extent required for referral, with the informed consent of the client.
4. Respect the employee's right of informed consent by providing all the information necessary so that a reasonable person in similar circumstances would be able to make a reasoned and informed choice;
5. Obtain, except in those instances where the law requires or permits the release of information*, signed consent forms from the employee in all situations where the release of personal information is requested.
6. Honor commitments made to the employee;
7. Not exploit relationships with employees to enhance the practitioner's own self-worth or position in the department, agency or community;
8. Encourage respect for the dignity of others and avoid practices that are inconsistent with the legal, civil or human rights of others;

9. Respect the social norms and moral attitudes of the community in which the practitioner works; and

10. Respect the right of the employee to discontinue participation in the programme at any time.

Conflict of interest

Practitioners must conform to the government's Conflict of Interest and Post-Employment policy.

A practitioner must:

1. Remain within the scope of the programme;
2. Resist exploiting of the professional relationship with the employee to further any social, political, economic, personal or business interest;
3. Refer an employee to another resource when the practitioner, for a personal reason, cannot provide service to the employee;
4. Inform concerned parties of possible or actual conflicts of interest;
5. Initiate steps that precipitate a reasonable solution without causing undue harm to the employee or the organization; and
6. Remain neutral in conflicts between the employee, the union, or management.

Competency

A responsible counselor recognizes the need to make continuous efforts to upgrade and refine skills. Practitioners should acknowledge their limitations and provide services that are consistent with their skills.

A practitioner must:

1. Offer services that are within his or her established competence and the programme's defined parameters. When the problems of employees are beyond these limits, practitioners must refer employees to an appropriate resource;
2. Seek consultation with fellow practitioners or other appropriate resources in managing cases when the practitioner encounters employees or situations that are beyond the programme's parameters or the practitioner's expertise;
3. Ensure that appropriate referrals are made to recognized resources;
4. Continually evaluate his or her own background, experiences and values so as to assess their influence on interactions with others and attend, in accordance with departmental policies, educational programmes directed at improving performance; and
5. Accurately represent his or her own professional qualifications, competence and purposes of the programme.



Ministry of the Public Service

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