

Employee Assistance Program (EAP) - Policy and Procedures Public Service Commission

Preamble

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador promotes the personal well-being and productivity of employees throughout the public service. It is recognized that personal, family and work related problems can often be most effectively managed through early identification, intervention and support provided by a professional counselling service.

Policy Statement

The Public Service Commission (PSC) is responsible for administering the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Employees and family members of the public service experiencing personal and or work related problems affecting their well-being or job performance, may have access to professional and confidential counselling supports.

Scope

This policy shall apply to all employees of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador scheduled to the *Public Service Commission Act* and as well, employees covered under Memoranda of Understanding (MOU's).

Purpose

The purpose of EAP is to:

- provide confidential and professional assessment, referral and follow-up services to assist employees as well as their immediate family members experiencing personal problems associated with personal and work life;
- enhance the health and wellness and improve the productivity of employees; and
- promote the enhancement of individual and organizational psychological health and wellness through prevention and early intervention activities.

Procedure

Services provided under EAP are coordinated through the EAP Coordinators of the Employee Assistance and Respectful Workplace Division with support from professional external service providers/consultants contracted by the Division. The EAP Coordinator will complete an assessment to determine the nature of the personal issue and will identify and refer the employee to the appropriate external counselling agency/service provider for professional intervention.

Referral to EAP may be by a self-referral, a workplace-assisted referral or a management-initiated formal referral.

Types of Referrals:

1. Self-Referral:

A self-referral is made by the employee on their own behalf. All employees can seek assistance on a voluntary basis by contacting an EAP Coordinator of the program.

2. Workplace-Assisted Referral:

The manager and/or supervisor may identify an individual or work group in need of support and counselling and recommend contact with EAP. The manager and/or supervisor is not provided with any information regarding contact unless the employee(s) provides consent.

3. Management-Initiated Formal Referral:

A formal referral to EAP normally occurs at a point when work performance issues have been identified by the manager and/or supervisor to the employee. The employee is provided with a letter outlining the issues of concern within the workplace and offered the option of EAP support to assist in addressing the concern. Participation in EAP is voluntary. The employee maintains the right to confidentiality throughout his/her involvement in EAP.

The EAP Coordinator has a duty to provide confirmation of whether an employee is participating in a treatment program when this information is requested from the manager. The manager is responsible for maintaining contact with the EAP Coordinator to confirm the employee is participating and attending the program. The manager is also responsible for offering the employee support throughout the process. The EAP Coordinator maintains contact with the employee and the outside helping agency.

Confidentiality

A cornerstone of EAP is confidentiality with respect to all matters associated with professional services to clients. The EAP Coordinators demonstrate respect for the trust and confidence placed in them by clients by protecting the privacy of client information and respecting the clients right to control when or whether this information will be shared with third parties. All persons working with clients of EAP (e.g., medical personnel administrators, co-ordinators, counsellors, and support staff) are prohibited from disclosing any information unless consent of the individual employee is obtained.

The general expectation that EAP Coordinators will keep information confidential does not apply when there is a professional duty or obligation to disclose information, or where there is serious, imminent, or foreseeable harm to a client, employee, and/or others. These limits to confidentiality will be discussed with the employee at the earliest possible opportunity, normally during the intake appointment.

EAP files shall be handled with the greatest degree of confidentiality. Names shall not be used on these files or on the working notes contained therein. Other means of identification such as codes, numbers or letters will be used.

EAP files and working notes shall be retained in a secure and restricted area and shall be destroyed according to the Records, Retention and Disposal Schedule as per the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador Records Management guidelines. The confidential file of EAP shall be available for inspection by the employee at any reasonable time.

When an employee is referred by the EAP Coordinator to an appointed external service provider, sufficient information shall be released to that individual in order that he/she may provide the most appropriate counselling service to the employee.

Roles and Responsibilities

When an employee's work performance becomes unsatisfactory, the manager and/or supervisor's first response should be to provide the employee with feedback on performance and to clarify what is expected.

If the unsatisfactory work performance persists, the manager and/or supervisor shall consult with the Human Resources Manager or Director to review the employee's performance before making a formal referral to EAP. The employee has the right to have union representation at any meeting where there is a Human Resources Manager and departmental manager present to discuss concerns related to unsatisfactory work performance. The employee is advised of the following:

- the consequences of continuing the present unsatisfactory work pattern may lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal;
- EAP is available and how the program operates;
- the employee is given a choice of accepting a referral to EAP or not;
- the employee is encouraged to keep the appointment and to participate in EAP; and
- EAP does not interfere with management's responsibility to manage or the right to take disciplinary measures nor does it alter the union's prerogatives.

EAP Coordinators and/or the Director:

The EAP coordinators and/or the Director are responsible to:

- thoroughly understand and consistently apply the principles of EAP;
- interview all employees who request assistance through EAP and to provide them with full information regarding participation in the program;

- provide direct help in assisting employees, to advise employees of other helping services available and to arrange for referral for assessment or treatment;
- monitor the progress of employees referred to EAP, where appropriate;
- provide general information and statistics to the Joint Labour Management Committee (JLMC) upon request;
- be responsible for program administration, policy development, program design and promotion, EAP training and education, monitoring and evaluation of EAP;
- develop EAP education programs and provide training to management/employee groups and departments;
- assist with management-initiated referrals and follow up with managers, union representatives and Human Resources;
- maintain a credible list of external service providers;
- maintain service agreements with external service providers;
- develop and maintain EAP contract service policy guidelines with external service providers;
- assist with return to work and workplace accommodations for employees seeking support through EAP;
- provide Psychological First Aid (Trauma Response Services) intervention to employees, managers and senior executive in consultation with departmental officials;
- review and monitor invoices for professional counselling costs; and
- ensure professional information is kept confidential unless there is a professional duty or obligation to disclose information.

Managers and/or Supervisors:

The Managers and/or Supervisors are responsible to:

- establish and communicate to their employees the level of work performance that will be considered satisfactory;
- observe and document instances of unsatisfactory work performance; and
- where, in the opinion of the manager, work performance is unsatisfactory and there may be a potential need for counselling services, the manager should inform the employee of EAP.

Designated Human Resources Manager:

The Designated Human Resources Manager is responsible to:

- understand and to distribute up-to date information about EAP to all employees in their department or agency; and
- ensure that all employees are aware of EAP and the application of confidentiality practices.

Union Representatives:

The union representatives will play a supportive role in the referral of EAP to bargaining unit members. Union representatives will need to:

- fully understand the roles and responsibilities outlined in the operational procedures and operations issued by the Director of EAP in consultation with the Joint Labour Management Committee (JLMC);
- ensure that the employee’s rights under the collective agreement and under EAP are clearly explained;
- Upon the request of an employee, become involved in any interview so that both the union/association and the employer can encourage the employee to accept help through EAP; and
- provide support to the employee during their participation in EAP.

Employees:

The responsibilities of the individual employee who is a participant in EAP are:

- to have knowledge of EAP;
- to actively participate in EAP; and
- if an employee requires treatment that results in time away from the workplace, the employee will need to refer to the Provincial Government Leave Policies.

http://www.exec.gov.nl.ca/exec/pss/working_with_us/policies.html#4g

Definitions & Acronyms

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)	A short term employee benefit program which provides confidential professional assistance for a wide range of personal and workplace issues to help employees and their immediate family to achieve good mental health.
Employee	Any full time, temporary, part time, contractual service employee or paid student

	working for the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, those scheduled to the <i>Public Service Commission Act</i> , and employees covered by Memoranda of Understanding (MOU's). Retired employees are covered up to 12 calendar months following their last day of employment.
Immediate Family Member	A family member who is up to 25 years of age living in the same household as the employee. Also the employee's spouse/partner.
Formal Referral	A formal referral process whereby a manager or Human Resources representative can refer an employee to the Employee Assistance Program to support that employee in addressing behaviours impacting work performance.
Eligibility	The program is available to all employees (as defined above) as well as their immediate family members. Employees and family members may be eligible for funding for clinical services, which will be assessed and determined by the EAP Coordinator based on the Funding Policy.
Confidentiality	The expectation that information shared in a relationship of trust will not be divulged to others in a manner that is inconsistent with the understanding of the original agreement unless permission to do so is granted. Client confidentiality means that personal health information given to a health care provider will not be disclosed to others unless the client has given implied or explicit consent.
Implied Consent	Consent that is inferred from signs, actions or facts, or by inaction or silence, and where the information is clearly used to benefit the individual and the organization's expectations are reasonable.
Explicit Consent	Where an individual is clearly presented with an option to agree or disagree with the collection or disclosure of personal information.
Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) * see EAP Trauma Response Protocol	A program designed to respond to and support individuals and/or groups following a critical event that may interrupt usual coping mechanisms.

