



LifeServices EAP

**SUPERVISOR  
MANUAL**

**1-800-822-4847**  
[www.LifeServicesEAP.com](http://www.LifeServicesEAP.com)

*Personal Service Every Time*

# SUPERVISOR MANUAL

## WHAT IS THE EAP?

When an employee brings problems to the workplace, his/her job performance can suffer. Dealing with personal problems such as marital concerns, family death, job stress, or financial difficulties can hamper an employee's productivity and cost employees and their employers money.

LifeServices EAP (Employee Assistance Program) is an employer-sponsored benefit providing a confidential counseling and referral service designed to assist employees and their families in dealing with personal problems. The EAP has been implemented at your company to not only assist your employees but also to assist you as a supervisor or manager of your company. You as a supervisor and your LifeServices EAP professional can work together to respond to the variety of employee needs, problems, and concerns.

## WHY YOUR COMPANY PROVIDES AN EAP

At one time or another, life is difficult for all of us. Sometimes the problems are minor or temporary, and sometimes they are significant and longer lasting. Any or all of these problems can have a damaging impact on our quality of life and our ability to perform our work. A primary reason for your company to provide the EAP is to offer quick and easy access to professional help for their employees (and family members) and for the organization. The majority of employees will contact the EAP on their own. Your company's only involvement is providing this important benefit. On occasion, you as a supervisor and/or your Human Resources Department may identify and refer an employee that will benefit from the EAP. Through self-referral to the EAP or referral by you as a supervisor, your company's goal is to minimize the negative impact that personal problems have in the workplace. By using the EAP, the employee (or family member) has the opportunity to access a professional counselor who will assist them with their problem and your company reaps the benefit of more productive employees.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

The confidentiality of your EAP program is critical to its success. LifeServices will never release information regarding employees who utilize the EAP without their written permission or as required by law. This means that unless we have a Release of Information Form signed by the individual, no one within your company will be provided identifying information regarding the visit to the LIFESERVICES staff, except as required by law. What is important to stress is that the EAP provided by LIFESERVICES is an extremely confidential program.



## WHO USES THE EAP?

Individuals access the EAP for a variety of reasons and most (over 90%) of the people who use the EAP are voluntary or self-referrals. Those employees (or family members) who take advantage of the services offered by LIFESERVICES most often call for the following:

- Job or career concerns
- Depression
- Grief and loss
- Relationship problems
- Alcohol and Drug related problems
- Family problems
- Financial pressure
- Parenting concerns
- Stress
- Legal concerns

However, it is important to remember that, regardless of the issue, if it is bothering the employee, then there may be an impact on their job performance, and therefore, the EAP should be accessed to assist that employee in resolving the problem.

## EAP AS A MANAGEMENT TOOL

permits a supervisor to request an employee to seek EAP services when a personal problem is thought to be the cause of deteriorating job performance, or when a pattern of declining workplace behavior occurs without an obvious explanation. Valued employees may be retained when they agree to seek assistance and their work performance returns to an acceptable level.

### THE SUPERVISOR'S ROLE

Intervention with an employee whose performance is impacted by personal problems can be daunting. When confronted with an employee who is experiencing emotional, family, or other personal problems (such as alcohol or drug use), you may be uncertain concerning your role in helping the employee find appropriate help.

#### **Your role IS to:**

- Be concerned with job behavior and performance.
- Remain alert to changes in normal work pattern/behavior/productivity.
- Take action when the welfare of the employee and/or the organization is at risk.

#### **Your role is NOT to:**

- Diagnose the employee's personal problem.
- Take on the employee's problem and try to handle it alone.
- Be a "counselor".
- Cover-up for the employee or ignore work performance problems.

Despite your human feelings of concern for somebody under your supervision, you are responsible for their work performance. The EAP counselors are trained to deal with any personal problems that an individual might have-problems that may underlie the work performance problems you have observed. Your role is to address the job performance. Let the EAP address the personal problems with the individual.



## **LifeServices' ROLE**

It is the role of the LIFESERVICES counselor to assess the difficulties or personal issues, which bring individuals to the program, and to determine the best way to address them. In the case of a supervisory referral, the hope is that the referral will mobilize the individual to confront issues affecting work performance and improve declining work performance. It is the EAP's role to:

- Assess what may be contributing to the work performance difficulties.
- Help the client to develop strategies to improve performance.
- Help the client to identify and address underlying issues.

With the employee's written permission, LIFESERVICES can communicate with the employer regarding the employee's situation.

- When the assessment uncovers serious workplace issues that contribute to the employee's performance, the EAP can intervene in the workplace through consultation with Human Resources/Personnel. (But only to the extent that they have the client's written permission to reveal pertinent information.)
- The EAP can help the employer plan for return-to-work for an employee who has been on leave of absence during treatment or recovery.
- The EAP can help the supervisor develop effective strategies for managing the returning employee.

## **PLEASE NOTE:**

**Being seen by the EAP does not protect an employee from further disciplinary actions.**

**These decisions are based on work performance, not whether an employee is seeing the EAP.**

## **THE REFERRAL PROCESS**

In many situations, discussions between the supervisor and employee regarding poor job performance will be sufficient to restore the employee to full productivity. However, there may be cases where personal problems are impacting job performance. In these cases the supervisor can encourage the employee to use the EAP (a self-referral) or decide to make a management (or mandatory) referral to the EAP. In the latter case, the supervisor should check with the company's Human Resources Department regarding the company's policy on mandatory referrals to the EAP. If it is determined that a mandatory referral is appropriate, LifeServices EAP recommends the following four-step process for that referral.



## **STEP ONE: Observation**

It is widely held that, at any one time, one out of five workers is subject to emotional issues that may have a visible, negative impact on their work. Under the right circumstances, any employee can become a problem performer. While signs and signals may be obvious on some occasions, at other times, trouble may not be immediately apparent. However, over time, the cues and indicators that an employee is troubled begin to emerge. The employee with serious personal problems often shows a pattern of unsatisfactory work performance over a period of time. As a supervisor you must pay attention to the following observable performance behaviors:

- Absenteeism and/or tardiness
- Erratic work patterns
- Difficulty in concentrating
- Changes in behavior or relationships
- Difficulty in making changes
- Confusion
- Signs and symptoms of potential substance abuse
- Violations of company policy
- Lowered job efficiency

## **STEP TWO: Documentation**

Documentation is an important resource when making any decision regarding an employee and is essential for any disciplinary or corrective process. When you observe problem behavior or performance patterns, you should document them. Documentation should conform to the personnel procedures of your organization.

Be very specific about instances where performance and behavior fail to meet acceptable standards. You will be more effective if you have specific examples to refer to when speaking with the employee. Remember, you are documenting work performances, not an employee's personal life. And you are doing so with concrete facts and incidents. There are legal considerations: documentation of poor performance or misconduct should be filed at the time the alleged events occurred, and the employee should be notified of that action. Creating documentation after making the decision to take disciplinary action, a practice known as "building a file," is inappropriate.

In most cases your 'running log' should include the following information:

- A. Who, when, where, what. These should be specific, concrete, objective observations, e.g., what someone said; NOT what you think they said.
- B. Specific interventions you make. Action plans.
- C. Expectations and time frame of improvement.

### **Why document?**

The pattern of behavior you suspected may not be there after all.

Your Human Resources department will need documentation to take any actions, should that be necessary.

The documentation will be helpful during the next meeting with the employee.





### **STEP THREE: Preparing for the Employee Interview**

Confronting an employee whose job performance has deteriorated is rarely easy. It is especially hard when previous efforts to handle the situation have not worked, where tensions have built or where communication has become strained or blocked. The key to a constructive interview is being prepared.

#### **Planning the interview:**

The following are recommended actions to be taken before the interview:

- A. Write down work-related behavioral concern(s) or refer to the documentation you have already written.
  - Are your concerns and documentation observable, concrete, and specific?
  - Can you support your position?
  - Can you cite events or examples?
- B. Talk to your supervisor. Keep the focus on the performance issues.
- C. Talk to Human Resources/Personnel so that you can have a clear understanding of your organization's policies and protocols.
- D. Call LifeServices EAP for a supervisory consultation. A supervisory consultation provides coaching to you regarding the management of troubled employees.
  - The EAP counselor can help you determine the best approach to take with the employee.
  - Your call alerts the EAP that an employee may be referred to the program due to work performance problems.
- E. Be prepared for the employee to respond in various ways. For example, the employee may:
  - Accept responsibility for performance problems.
  - Become defensive, deny, or minimize.
  - Have emotional responses, such as anger or crying.
- F. Prepare to listen for new information about:
  - Work-related behavior.
  - Organizational issues that can impact an employee's work.
  - Personal issues that the employer is experiencing.
- G. Schedule time to meet with the employee.
  - Don't make the employee wait.
  - Allow enough time to conduct the interview.
  - Ensure that there is privacy.



## **STEP FOUR: The Employee Interview**

Assess the situation from the employee's point of view. Whether on your own or through a consultation with the EAP, you can try to anticipate how the employee is likely to respond to what you have to say.

### **Conducting the Interview**

A. Help the employee understand:

- The specific job performance problem(s).
- What the employee needs to do is to correct the problem(s).
- That he/she is expected to improve job performance.

B. Maintain support for the employee during the interview.

- Look for and acknowledge the employee's strengths.
- Listen to their point of view.
- Listen to their explanations and excuses.
- Bring the focus back to job performance.

C. Set a time period in which you expect the employee to improve job performance.

### **Offering the EAP**

Recommending the use of the EAP or making a mandatory referral can be difficult for some of us, particularly where the performance issues seem unconnected with a severe or deeply-rooted problem. The referral to the EAP should flow from the exploration of the causes for the substandard performance or behavior. Clearly, the EAP must be presented as a way for the employee to deal with any personal problems that may be affecting job performance-and not as another "stick" in the disciplinary process.

Please note that no information about the employee's involvement with the EAP, including attendance, can be released to you or a designated person in your organization, without the employee's written consent.

### **Closing the Interview**

- A. Make sure that the employee clearly understands what the job performance problem is and what you expect him/her to do to correct it.
- B. Clearly explain the consequences for failure to improve job performance.
- C. Develop a supportive statement to close the interview.
- D. Provide a written summary documenting the plan of action.
- E. Set up a specific time to meet again for review.
- F. Be sure to meet again with the employee and continue to monitor the employee's job performance.



## MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIONS

From time to time, situations arise in which a supervisor is not sure whether the EAP is the appropriate resource for a particular employee or work group issue. We are always available to consult with you and we encourage you to call for discussion or consultation. If we cannot offer services, we may be able to refer you to other resources. Some of the kinds of calls we receive include such questions as:

- Whether or not to refer an employee to EAP.
- How to manage the termination interview of an emotionally distressed employee.
- How to handle the termination interview of a potentially violent employee.
- How best to respond to and manage difficult behavior in the workplace.
- Whether training or some other form of group intervention (such as organizational intervention, teambuilding, or a critical incident debriefing) may be helpful for a particular situation.

We hope the information provided in this manual has been helpful. If you have any questions about the management (mandatory) referral process, please give us a call. Remember, LifeServices EAP is always available to you and your Human Resources staff!

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