

# Employee Assistance Program for Essex County



## Program Manual

Dated: August 1, 2016

### MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Essex Employee Assistance Program is to assist Essex County employees and their families in resolving work-related and personal problems in a confidential and professional manner in order to promote health and wellness at work and at home, and to assist agencies in maintaining a healthy and productive work place.

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## **Chapter 1**

### **EAP Program Overview**

#### **A. Introduction to Employee Assistance Programs**

Employees are the most valuable asset of any organization. When employees are unable to function successfully in the workplace because of problems at work or home, the cost to business, industry, and government in lost time, decreased productivity, medical expenses, low morale, and on-the-job accidents is estimated to be billions of dollars annually. Employee assistance programs (EAPs) are designed to help employees address and alleviate problems that affect their job performance so they can return to productive employment.

R.H. Macy and Co., the New York City department store, was one of the first employers to recognize the need to help employees with personal problems and in 1917, Macy's established one of the first EAPs in the country. In the 1940's, many more employers established EAPs, based on the Alcoholics Anonymous model, to deal with alcoholism in the workplace. EAPs in the 1970's broadened their focus to address any personal or family concern. Sources of referral shifted from supervisors, based on job-performance criteria, to self-referrals for personal concerns of which supervisors and managers might be completely unaware. There are currently over 10,000 EAPs in the United States. Research studies have shown that EAP services result in increased morale, improved productivity and attendance, and a decrease in illness and on-the-job accidents, leading to lower costs for sick leave, medical care, and workers compensation.

#### **B. Essex County Employee Assistance Program Overview**

The Essex County Employee Assistance Program (EC EAP) is a benefit designed to help county employees identify and resolve personal and work-related problems so they can balance the demands of work, home, and life. EC EAP services are confidential, voluntary, and offered at no cost to Essex County employees and their families. EAP helps employees by providing information, assessment and referral services, and support for a broad range of issues including anxiety and depression, relationship conflicts, workplace issues, gambling, substance abuse, grief, health and wellness, finances, elder care, parenting, domestic violence, legal, child care and stress.

#### **C. Essex County EAP Model and Training**

EC EAP is a peer assistance model. Services are provided by county employees who serve as EAP coordinators. The coordinators understand the unique culture of their agencies and are approachable and knowledgeable resources for other agency employees.

The county has an EAP committee with representatives appointed by labor and management. The EAP committee is an integral component of the peer model. Committee members are responsible for promoting their agency's EAP and selecting the coordinator from among their peers in the county. EAP coordinators are selected because they are compassionate, trustworthy, and committed to helping others.

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To ensure quality services, all coordinators receive ongoing training so they are able to skillfully assess an employee's situation and provide a referral to an appropriate community resource. In addition, new coordinators are required to attend the New Coordinator Institute (NCI) designed to provide them with the basic knowledge and skills needed to begin assisting employees.

## **AP Program Overview**

### **What is the Essex County Employee Assistance Program (EAP)?**

The Essex County Employee Assistance Program (EC EAP) offers a professional and confidential source of help for people who need assistance with personal problems or concerns:

The EC EAP is available to Essex County employees and their families. The program recognizes that employees are people first, and are subject to stress and pressures that affect their ability to be effective at work.

The EC EAP is sponsored jointly by labor and management. This benefit provides referrals to community resources tailored to individual employee needs. The program tries to offer a choice of resources which are low cost or no cost.

The EC EAP is comprised of an EAP committee and EAP coordinators trained to provide employee assistance services.

The program offers information, assessment, referral services, and a 24-hour, 7-day a week answering service.

Services may include:

- \*Assistance with family-related problems
- \*Assistance with emotional or physical illnesses, alcohol, and other drug-related problems
- \*Assistance with health insurance
- \*Information on resources for child care, elder care, legal, and financial support services
- \*Workplace, health education, and employee wellness programs

***Confidentiality is paramount.*** The only exceptions to confidentiality are when information is required by law or executive order to be disclosed, when a person is likely to harm him/herself or others, or when there is reasonable suspicion of child abuse.

There are a number of ways to access EC EAP services:

#### **Self Referral:**

Any Essex County employee may contact EC EAP directly at any time by calling the office phone number listed on this brochure.

#### **Supervisor Referral:**

A supervisor may recommend or suggest EAP to an employee, but it is ultimately the employee's decision whether or not to contact EAP. Supervisors are encouraged to contact the EAP coordinator to discuss work performance issues that may indicate a possible referral to EAP.

#### **Third Party Referral:**

Co-workers, friends, family, clergy, and counselors may suggest contacting EAP for assistance.

#### **Union Referral:**

Union representatives may also recommend or suggest EAP to an employee, but it remains the employee's decision whether or not to contact EAP. Union representatives are encouraged to contact the EAP Coordinator to discuss possible referrals to EAP.

**Web Site:**

A multifunctional EC EAP web site can provide on-line resources and assistance using EAP – find us at: [www.co.essex.ny.us](http://www.co.essex.ny.us)

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## Chapter 2 EAP Ethical and Legal Policies

### A. Overview

EC EAP establishes ethical and legal policies for EAP coordinators, committee members and EAP staff to ensure a high degree of professionalism and delivery of quality services. EAP coordinators and committee members who have a legal concern regarding employee assistance services should first discuss the issue with their EAP regional representative.

### B. Ethical Code of Conduct for EAP Coordinators

All EAP coordinators are required to comply with the Ethical Code of Conduct and the Essex County Ethics Policy. The following standards comprise the Ethical Code of Conduct:

1. Coordinators will provide clients with information, assessment, and referral services only. Coordinators will not provide treatment or counseling.
2. Coordinators will respect the confidentiality of those they serve, and will maintain confidentiality, except where limited by law or rule.
3. Coordinators will not discussing client information with EAP committee members.
4. Coordinators will explain the confidentiality policy to each client *before* engaging in any discussion of the client's personal situation or concerns and client will execute an acknowledgement that this has been done.
5. Coordinators will maintain neutrality and avoid involvement in agency activities that conflict with, or have the appearance of conflicting with their role in EAP.
6. Coordinators will maintain neutrality and avoid any relationships that conflict with, or have the appearance of conflicting with their role in EAP.
7. Coordinators will not retain ongoing EAP case records unless specifically required by the terms of a discipline settlement, and only with the written consent of the employee.
8. Coordinators will not accept gratuities or be persuaded to select particular resources as preferred providers.
9. Coordinators will abide by the policies and procedures of EC EAP and the Essex County Policy Manual, any existing Collective Bargaining Agreement, the Essex County Ethics Policy and any and all other Essex County, State or Federal law, rules and regulations.
10. Coordinators will maintain accurate statistical data and will submit this information to their representative in a timely manner.

11. Coordinators will contribute their knowledge and experience and work cooperatively with individuals, agencies, and organizations that adhere to the principles of employee assistance programs to enhance and improve the employee assistance field.
12. Coordinators will not discriminate because of race, color, national origin, sex, gender, religion, age, disability, or sexual orientation in rendering services or in the selection of community resources.
13. Coordinator shall not neglect their regular work duties while acting in their capacity as coordinators. Coordinators shall log the number of hours per month that they dedicate to their duties which log will be presented to the Essex County Board of Supervisors on a monthly basis.

### **C. Neutrality Policy**

#### **1. Policy Description**

EAP recognizes the importance of maintaining a position of neutrality in all matters pertaining to the delivery of employee assistance services. EAP's success is dependent upon employee, management, and labor confidence that EAP will provide employee assistance services in a neutral manner.

#### **2. Statement of Neutrality**

Labor and management have jointly agreed upon the following statement of neutrality:

- a. EAP coordinators must not be perceived as advocates or representatives of either management or labor while providing EAP services or representing EAP. Instead, they should function as facilitators of communication among all parties. EAP coordinators should avoid involvement in any activity or relationship that would compromise, or appear to compromise, their neutrality as EAP coordinators.
- b. EAP committees must also strive to protect the integrity of the EAP by assuring that all EAP activities are provided in a neutral manner. It is recognized that labor and management representatives will bring different, and sometimes conflicting, perspectives and concerns to the EAP committee process. However, once an EAP committee reaches a decision on a particular issue, direction, activity, or event, members of the EAP committee are responsible for promoting the EAP and its activities in their agency or facility in an impartial and neutral manner. Only when the EAP is viewed as neutral will all parties accept it.
- c. Employees may be referred to the EAP for work performance issues or as part of a return-to-work agreement. However, the focus of the EAP coordinator is to provide the employee with information, assessment, and, if needed, a referral, to address the employee's mental health, substance abuse, or other concerns. It

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is *not* to intervene, or be an advocate, in the discipline process for either the employee or the employer. The EAP seeks only to support employees in understanding their situations and determining the best course of action for resolution of their problems.

#### **D. Confidentiality Policy for EAP Coordinators**

##### **1. Policy Description**

Maintaining confidentiality is one of the most important aspects of NYS EAP and the foundation of the program. EAP coordinators shall keep all information confidential unless the client has signed a *Consent for Release of Information* form.

##### **2. Exceptions for Confidentiality Requirement**

There are three exceptions to the confidentiality requirement:

- a. The information is required to be disclosed by law, Executive Order, agency work rule, valid subpoena or any valid court order or judicial process.
- b. There is reasonable belief a client's conduct places the client, or another person, in *imminent* threat of bodily harm. Imminent threat is present if there is reasonable belief a client's conduct places the client, or another person, in immediate threat of physical harm.
- c. There is reasonable belief to suspect that child neglect or abuse has been, or will be, committed. This includes physical, emotional, and psychological abuse and neglect.

*IF YOU ARE UNSURE OF ANY OF THE ABOVE LIMITS TO CONFIDENTIALITY, CALL YOUR EAP REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE.*

##### **3. Confidentiality Procedure**

EAP regional representatives and coordinators must exercise reasonable and prudent judgment when deciding that a situation is excluded from the requirement of confidentiality.

- a. The EAP coordinator must explain the policy on confidentiality to clients before engaging in any discussion of the client's situation, problems, or concerns.
- b. If there is a question about confidentiality, coordinators must consult with their regional representative about whether information needs to be disclosed, and if so, how and to whom it will be disclosed, including how to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the NYS Child Abuse Hotline.

#### **E. Consent for Release of Information**

## 1. Policy Description

Clients may need the assistance of the EAP coordinator in contacting a resource provider, human resource department, supervisor, union representative, labor relations, physician, family member, or other person. In such instances, the client must sign a *Consent for Release of Information* form allowing the coordinator to share information with the designated person.

## 2. Examples of Situations Requiring a *Consent for Release of Information*

- a. The client specifically asks the coordinator to contact another individual.
- b. The client is requesting treatment and asks the coordinator to call a resource provider.
- c. The client is about to be hospitalized or admitted to a rehabilitation program and is unable, emotionally or physically, to contact a supervisor, human resource department, union representative, or family member.
- d. The coordinator wishes, or is required, to consult with the EAP regional representative about a referral for the client and such consultation requires identifying the client by name.
- e. A supervisor permits the client to visit EAP during work hours and requests confirmation that the client has met with the coordinator. The coordinator may only provide the supervisor with the date and time of the client's appointment, unless the client specifically authorizes the release of additional information.
- f. The client seeks the coordinator's assistance regarding specific insurance information from the insurance provider.
- g. The client is told by a resource provider that the waiting period for treatment is extensive and the coordinator offers to contact the provider in an attempt to facilitate an earlier appointment. When an employee is referred to a provider, but is unable to make a timely appointment with the provider, the EAP coordinator should notify the employee's health benefits administrator who may be able to intervene on behalf of the employee.

## 3. Consent for Release of Information Procedures

- a. The *Consent for Release of Information* form must be kept in a locked file cabinet in the EAP office until such time as the expiration date specified on the form has passed or until revocation by the client.
- b. Upon expiration or revocation of the *Consent for Release of Information* form release, this form must be retained in secure storage by the EAP



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coordinator who thereby assumes responsibility for safeguarding its confidentiality.

#### **F. Conflict of Interest: Relationships with Clients**

##### **1. Policy Description**

In order to uphold the integrity of EC EAP and maintain high ethical standards, EAP coordinators shall avoid inappropriate relationships, actual or apparent, with clients. When an EAP coordinator/client relationship has been established, any other relationship such as a friendship, romantic involvement, outside social connection, family connection, or personal business involvement shall be avoided. The coordinator must consult with the regional representative when a potential conflict of interest is identified.

##### **2. Examples of Potential Conflict of Interest**

- a. Two employees in the same agency have been friends for a number of years. One employee is selected to be an EAP coordinator. The spouse of the other employee calls to request EAP services.
- b. Two employees have been dating for a year. One employee is selected to be an EAP coordinator. The other employee's son is charged with DWI while home from college and calls the EAP coordinator for assistance.

##### **3. Conflict of Interest Procedure**

Where a friendship, romantic involvement, social, family, or business relationship already exists between an EAP coordinator and a potential client, any request for EAP services must be referred to another EAP coordinator. If a coordinator has any question about such a referral, the coordinator must consult with the regional representative before providing EAP services to the potential client.

#### **G. Conflict of Interest: Relationships with Resource Providers**

##### **1. Policy Description**

EAP coordinators, committee members, regional representatives, and staff function in a very sensitive environment. Their impressions of resource providers and facilities govern the work they do with respect to the referral process. Care must be taken to ensure that referrals are not influenced by a reward of any kind when selecting or making a referral to a service provider.

In order to avoid conflicting relationships with resource providers, EAP coordinators, committee members, regional representatives, and staff must adhere to the following standards:

a. Gift Prohibition:

EAP coordinators, committee members, regional representatives, and staff are required to follow NYS Public Officers Law with respect to accepting gifts from resource providers.

NYS Public Officers Law §73(5) prohibits an employee from directly or indirectly soliciting, accepting, or receiving any gift having more than a nominal value (currently defined as equal to the value of a regular cup of coffee), whether in the form of money, service, loan, travel, lodging, meals, refreshments, entertainment, discount, forbearance or promise, or in any other form when it could reasonably be inferred the gift was intended to influence the employee in the performance of official duties, or was intended as a reward for any official action on the employee's part.

b. Adhere to and follow the Essex County Ethics Law.

2. Resource Provider Referrals Procedure

The EAP coordinator's role is to assess problems and provide the client with resource options deemed to be appropriate for the client's particular needs.

a. EAP coordinators must not refer clients to a resource provider that employs the coordinator, or a coordinator's family member, or otherwise offers monetary rewards or incentives for such a referral.

b. EAP coordinators make referrals to resource providers, but they may not endorse, promote, or recommend a particular provider or treatment facility. EAP coordinators should refer a client to at least two resource providers.

c. In order to avoid the appearance of impropriety or a potential conflict of interest, EAP coordinators should only visit or tour resource facilities within the same geographic region as the EAP coordinator's worksite.

3. Examples of Potential Conflicts of Interest

a. An EAP coordinator is working with her EAP committee on planning a Wellness Day event. The committee has secured a grant for a display and promotional materials. The EAP coordinator has a relative employed at a local marketing company that can provide the materials to be purchased.

b. A speaker invited by EAP to do a lunchtime seminar about nutrition wants to sell copies of her diet book after the presentation.

**H. Conflict of Interest: Coordinator Role**

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1. Policy Description

EAP coordinators must avoid a conflict, or the appearance of a conflict, with their role as EAP coordinator. Coordinators must not be perceived as advocates or representatives of either management or labor while providing EAP services or representing EAP. Their function is to assess and refer and to serve as facilitators of communication among all parties. Coordinators must avoid involvement in any activity that would compromise, or appear to compromise, their neutrality as coordinators.

2. Coordinator Role Prohibitions

- a. EAP coordinators are prohibited from serving as:
  - union officials
  - shop stewards
  - affirmative action officers
  - staff in personnel or human resource function

If a potential coordinator already holds such a position, the coordinator may still be considered for the coordinator position, but if selected, would have to relinquish the other position.

- b. EAP coordinators must not sell or promote services or products to EAP clients or the client's family members.
- c. EAP coordinators, committee members, and EAP staff must not promote their own private practice to EAP clients.

- I. Transportation of Clients**

1. Policy Description

EAP does not permit coordinators to transport clients to treatment facilities or other locations under any circumstances. This policy is designed to provide protection from legal liability and to ensure the safety of both EAP coordinators and the clients.

2. Transportation Procedures

- a. Coordinators should be knowledgeable about resources and assist clients in securing public transportation or transportation from family members, friends, agency personnel, medical personnel, or law enforcement.
- b. Coordinators must be knowledgeable about their agencies' policies regarding transportation of employees. If directed by the agency to provide transportation for a client, the coordinator must advise the

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agency that the coordinator does so as an employee of the agency, not in the capacity of an EAP coordinator.

## **J. Home Visit Prohibition**

### **1. Policy Description**

EAP does not permit EAP coordinators to meet with clients in either the client's or the coordinator's home under any circumstances. This policy is designed to ensure the safety of both EAP coordinators and clients.

### **2. Proper Meeting Locations**

- a. Whenever possible, EAP coordinators must meet with clients in the coordinator's EAP office or alternative worksite location that provides for the safety of the coordinator and the client and meets the need for confidentiality.
- b. A coordinator may meet with a client in a public location if private space is not available at the worksite or at the request of the client. However, due to safety and confidential concerns, the coordinator should refer a client to a coordinator at another agency or facility as a preferable alternative to meeting in a public location.
- c. The coordinator must make every effort to protect the client's confidentiality regardless of the location of the meeting.

## **K. Subpoenas**

### **1. Policy Description**

EAP maintains strict confidentiality of client information. However, information may be released in response to a subpoena in a legal proceeding.

A subpoena is a judicial process requiring production of testimony or documents, and gives the court the power to order a person to appear, or relevant documents to be submitted in a judicial proceeding. Refusal to respond to a subpoena issued by a court may result in contempt of court charges being filed. The person refusing to comply may have to pay damages or a fine.

Since the only written record permitted to be retained by an EC EAP coordinator, excluding information obtained in conjunction with a discipline settlement, is the *Consent for Release of Information* form, no other documents should be available in response to a subpoena of documents.

### **2. Subpoena Procedures**

- a. When an EAP coordinator receives a subpoena, the coordinator must contact the county attorney and follow his guidance.
- b. EAP coordinators must follow their agency's policies regarding receipt of a subpoena.
- c. A reasonable effort shall be made to notify the employee in advance of any information or records to be released.

#### **L. Media Communications Policy**

##### **1. Policy Description**

Positive and effective communications with the media are important to EAP's ability to promote EAP and EAP services, enhance the visibility of the program, and ensure accurate information is conveyed to stakeholders.

##### **2. Requests from the Media**

Coordinators may periodically receive requests from the media for interviews, comments, or information about EAP. Coordinators should discuss these requests with the EAP committee chairperson, who will review the request and forward it to the Essex County Public Information Officer to determine the appropriate response.

##### **3. Information Disseminated by EAP**

EAP coordinators who wish to publicize a significant achievement, activity, or event should discuss their intention with the committee chairperson and receive approval from the Essex County Public Information Officer.

In all cases, coordinators must follow Essex County's media communications policy and before disseminating any information, contact the Public Information Officer.

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## Chapter 3 EAP Structure, Roles, and Responsibilities

### A. Overview

The success of EC EAP can be attributed to, in large part, to the fact that labor and management have equal ownership of the program. Managers and union officials alike support EAP because both labor and management benefit when employees get help in resolving their problems or addressing their concerns so they can be more productive at work.

Through the cooperation of labor and management, EC EAP has been established to ensure all employees have access to EAP services.

### B. EAP Committee

#### 4. Role

The first step in establishing or strengthening an EAP is to form an EAP committee. EAP regional representatives are available to assist in establishing new committees and in rejuvenating existing committees.

EAP committees contribute to maintaining a productive work environment by promoting EAP services and by providing support to the EAP coordinator.

#### 5. Key Attributes

- a. Committee members should be knowledgeable about the culture of their agency or facility and the perspective of the constituency they represent.
- b. The committee should have sufficient authority to ensure committee decisions will be acceptable to unions, executive councils, and management.
- c. The committee should be a source of constructive and positive labor-management relationships and should respond to the needs of both labor and management.
- d. The committee is not, and should not function as, a grievance or negotiation committee.

#### 3. Ethical Guidelines

- a. Committee members will not disclose any confidential information they receive while serving in their role as EAP committee members and will not request the EAP coordinator share confidential information with them.
- b. Committee members will avoid involvement in agency activities or relationships that conflict with, or have the appearance of conflicting with, their role in EAP.

Committee members may serve in management positions and as union officers and in steward positions.

- c. Committee members will promote EAP in an impartial and neutral manner.
  - d. Committee members will ensure services are delivered in an impartial and neutral manner.
  - e. Committee members will not endorse, promote, or recommend any particular resource provider for use by EAP clients.
  - f. Committee members will not discriminate because of race, color, national origin, sex, gender, age, disability, or sexual orientation in fulfilling their responsibilities as committee members.
  - g. Committee members will follow the Essex County Ethics Law.
4. Responsibilities
- a. Organization
    - (1) Committees must establish and adhere to bylaws.
    - (2) Bylaws must be reviewed annually and must establish, at a minimum, standards for meeting frequency, attendance, recording minutes, voting procedures, election of officers, and committee membership.
    - (3) Management and each union in the agency or facility shall have equal representation on the committee with management and each bargaining unit selecting its own representative(s).
    - (4) The committee shall be comprised of at least five (5) members and no more than seven (7) members with equal representation on the committee by management and labor.
    - (5) The committee elects a chairperson and may elect a secretary and such other officers as the committee deems necessary.
    - (6) The chairperson position may rotate so that all committee members have an opportunity to serve, or the committee may elect to have co-chairpersons or a vice-chairperson.
    - (7) Committees must meet at least quarterly, but are encouraged to meet more frequently.
    - (8) A secretary or other designated committee member must take minutes at each meeting and distribute them to all committee members before the next meeting.

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- (9) All committee members are expected to attend and actively participate in regularly scheduled EAP committee meetings.
  - (10) All committee members are required to attend EAP New Committee Member Orientation and are encouraged to attend other training offered to committee members.
  - (11) Decisions of the committees must be reached through consensus.
  - (12) The EAP coordinator may participate in committee meetings, on a non-voting basis, except when excused during executive session.
  - (13) The committee shall adhere to Robert's Rules of Order in its meetings.
  - (14) When a vacancy occurs during any member's term, it shall be filled as soon as practical for the unexpired portion of the respective term in the same manner as the original appointment.
  - (16) There will be one liaison on the committee from the Essex County Board of Supervisors or any representative/appointee/designee of the Essex County Board of Supervisors.

b. Selection of the EAP coordinator

- (1) The committee, in conjunction with the EAP regional representative, posts for a coordinator vacancy and interviews potential candidates.
- (2) The committee comes to a consensus on the best candidate(s), preferably at least two candidates, and forwards their recommendation to the appointing authority or to its designee for approval. Coordinators shall be equally selected from management and union/labor employees.
- (3) The committee notifies the regional representative of the selection, and arranges for orientation and training of the new coordinator(s).
- (4) The committee notifies other candidates, who were not selected, of the decision.
- (5) EAP Coordinators serve at the pleasure of the EAP Committee and may be removed by the committee for neglect of duty, misconduct in office, inability to discharge the powers or duties of office, conviction of a crime, or any other similar acts or omissions or deficiencies and as stated in the bylaws.
- (6) The position of EAP Coordinator is voluntary and unpaid.



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c. Assessment, Support, and Promotion

- (1) The committee assesses the needs of the coordinator, including the need for such things as release time, office space and location, office hours, and professional development, and makes appropriate recommendations to the appointing authority.
- (2) The committee reviews the EAP coordinator's *Monthly Statistical Report* and other information and reports as appropriate. Committee members are not entitled to any information related to individual client contacts.
- (3) The committee evaluates the coordinator annually.
- (4) The committee promotes EAP to both labor and management at union meetings, management meetings, and other meetings.
- (5) The committee initiates and implements periodic agency-wide supervisory training on the benefits of EAP, how to make referrals to EAP, and how to promote EAP to both employees and the organization.
- (6) The EAP committee writes an annual report, with input from the coordinator and EAP regional representative. A copy of the report shall be provided to the EAP regional representative and the Essex County Board of Supervisors.
- (7) The committee takes a leadership role in other promotional activities such as:
  - Poster campaigns
  - Paycheck mailers
  - Newsletters
  - Health fairs
  - Wellness programs
  - Information days
  - "Meet and greets"
  - Distribution of brochures and flyers
  - Celebration of EAP month (November)
  - Open house
  - Bulletin boards
  - Agency calendars
  - Lunchtime programs
  - EAP library

Committee members work in the agency and, therefore, they frequently hear about employee, union, and management issues and concerns. They are encouraged to convey this information to the committee so the committee can address the issues or concerns

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with orientation, training, wellness workshops, and other activities that also serve to promote EAP. Committee members can, in turn, report the planned activities and events back to their constituents and promote participation by all employees.

The EAP coordinator and regional representative can assist in identifying resources and information to promote EC EAP.

### **C. EAP Committee Chairperson**

#### **1. Role**

The EAP committee chairperson provides leadership to the EC EAP oversees the promotion of EAP, and supports and supervises the EAP coordinator. Where it is inappropriate or prohibited for the chairperson to supervise the coordinator, due to the grade levels or workplace relationship (ex., relative, co-worker in the same unit), the committee may elect to have another committee member or manager serve as the coordinator's supervisor. If possible, this should be done in consultation with the chairperson. The chairperson also ensures compliance with EAP policies and procedures and committee bylaws.

#### **2. Responsibilities**

- a. Facilitate regularly scheduled committee meetings and call special meetings when necessary.
- b. Develop an agenda for committee meetings. Ensure meeting minutes are taken and distributed before the next committee meeting.

### **D. EAP Coordinator**

#### **1. Role**

The role of the EAP coordinator is to provide confidential information, problem assessment, and referral services to county employees and their family members and to serve as a resource to agencies and facilities in addressing work-life issues.

#### **2. Responsibilities**

- a. Act in a professional and ethical manner.
- b. Maintain confidentiality except when authorized or legally obligated to disclose information.
- c. Avoid involvement in any activity that would compromise, or appear to compromise, neutrality as an EAP coordinator.
- d. Comply with all EC EAP policies and procedures.

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- e. Conduct assessments that are consistent with *EC EAP Assessment Guidelines*.
  - f. Create and maintain a resource file of local public and private services, and be familiar with those services and any fees or restrictions associated with those services, to facilitate appropriate referrals.
  - g. Be knowledgeable about health insurance benefits and other negotiated benefits for EC employees.
  - h. Maintain regular contact and open communication with the committee chairperson.
  - i. Attend EAP professional development training as required, as well as other recommended training, conferences, and workshops.
  - j. Attend EAP committee meetings and provide input on current issues to the committee, as appropriate.
  - k. Complete a monthly statistical report and submit it to the committee chairperson, to be reviewed at each committee meeting.
  - l. Collaborate with the EAP regional representative to provide orientations and training for supervisors, union representatives, and employees.
  - m. At the request of an employee, arrange a return-to-work meeting when the employee has been out of work for an extended period of time.
  - n. Assist the agency in formulating a response to critical incidents in the workplace.
  - o. Assist with other committee activities as requested.

## **E. EAP Regional Representative**

### **1. Role**

Regional representatives are employees of NYS EAP and are located in regional offices throughout the state. They oversee local programs and serve as consultants to local EAP committees and coordinators to ensure high quality employee assistance services. They are *not* supervisors of either EAP coordinators or committee members.

### **2. Responsibilities**

- a. Abide by the policies and procedures of NYS EAP.
- b. Maintain open communication with unions and management to foster an understanding of the role of EAP and to facilitate communication among all parties.

- c. Serve as consultant to supervisors, union representatives, and managers to help them address workplace issues related to EAP.
- d. Provide professional oversight to EAP committees and coordinators.
- e. Assist in establishing new local EAP committees and rejuvenating existing committees.
- f. Attend all EAP committee meetings and special meetings unless unable to do so because of a scheduling conflict.
- g. Monitor local programs and assist in addressing any issues that may be negatively impacting a local EAP.
- h. Participate in the interviewing process for a new coordinator and provide guidance in selecting a new coordinator.
- i. Monitor new coordinators and serve as a mentor for inexperienced coordinators.
- j. Provide guidance to all coordinators on sensitive or complicated cases including cases that involve exceptions to the confidentiality policy.
- k. Conduct regular business meetings for coordinators.
- l. Provide orientation to new coordinators, committee chairpersons, and committee members, as well as guidance to committees as a whole.
- m. Ensure coordinators and committee members adhere to EAP policies and procedures.
- n. Facilitate regular training for all coordinators and annual training for committee members.
- o. Assist committees in promoting *EAP Training for Supervisors*.
- p. Deliver supervisory and other training, and assist coordinators in delivering supervisory training, to agencies and facilities when requested.
- q. Assist agencies and facilities in developing a crisis plan when requested and formulating a crisis response in the event of a crucial incident.
- r. Consult and guide committees in promoting local programs and conducting wellness initiatives such as health fairs.
- s. Be knowledgeable about health insurance benefits and other negotiated benefits available to county employees.

- t. Be knowledgeable about how to access community resources and provide guidance to coordinators about how to identify community resources and establish a community resource file.

## **F. Management – Essex County**

### **1. Role**

The success of EAP is dependent upon the support of management. Management promotes EAP to employees and the organization, provides adequate release time for coordinators and committee members, ensures management representation on EAP committees, and works cooperatively with the unions to further the mission of EAP.

### **2. Responsibilities**

- a. Work cooperatively with the unions to foster the goals and objectives of EAP.
- b. Promote the local EAP and the EAP coordinator to all employees and the organization.
- c. Respect the confidentiality and neutrality of EAP.
- d. Appoint one of more management representatives to the EAP committee who represent management's interests and are committed to furthering the mission of EAP.
- e. Refrain from using appointments to the EAP to promote the agency's ofr facility's political interests.
- f. Ensure management representatives on the EAP committee understand the intent is to focus on the mission of EAP and not use the committee for a forum to address labor-management issues.
- g. Adhere to established EAP committee bylaws.
- h. Ensure coordinators and committee members have adequate release time to fulfill their EAP responsibilities.

## **G. Agency**

### **1. Role**

Agencies support EAP in their organization by ensuring EAP coordinators have appropriate space, equipment, and resources to provide quality employee assistance services.

### **2. Responsibilities**

Agencies are responsible for allocating resources for the coordinator and committee members including the following:

- a. Appropriate office space for the coordinator that is suitable for confidential assessment interviews, preferably not near the human resources or personnel offices
- b. Office furniture
- c. EAP business cards
- d. Office supplies
- e. Telephone installation, including voice mail
- f. Expenses for EAP committee-approved professional development training, journal subscriptions, and memberships are not required but may be considered.

## **H. Unions**

### **1. Role**

Union support is vital to the success of EAP. Unions promote EAP to their members, ensure union representation on EAP committees, and work cooperatively with management to further the mission of EAP.

### **2. Responsibilities**

- a. Work cooperatively with management to foster the goals and objectives of EAP.
- b. Promote the EC EAP and the EAP coordinator to constituents.
- c. Respect the confidentiality and neutrality of EAP.
- d. Appoint one or more union representatives to the EAP committee who represent the union's interests and are committed to furthering the mission of EAP.
- e. Refrain from using appointments to the EAP committee to promote the union's political interests.
- f. Ensure union representatives on the EAP committee understand the intent is to focus on the mission of EAP and not to use the committee for a forum to address labor-management issues.
- g. Adhere to established EAP committee bylaws.

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## Chapter 4 EAP Coordinator Basics

### A. Overview

This chapter describes some of the basic tasks of an EAP coordinator and how to perform them including how to conduct an assessment, make a referral, and facilitate a return-to-work meeting. It also describes the coordinator's role in the discipline process, the importance of staying in touch with the regional representative, the importance of documenting a critical incident, and some basic training tasks. Not all the tasks of an EAP coordinator are described in this chapter. Coordinators should refer to the appropriate chapters of the Program Manual for specific policies and procedures related to fulfilling all of the responsibilities of an EAP coordinator.

### B. Assessment and Referral

#### 1. Policy Description

One of the primary responsibilities of the EAP coordinator is to provide confidential assessment and referral services to clients. The purpose of an assessment is to gather accurate and relevant information about a client's situation so the coordinator can understand the client's problems and concerns and provide appropriate assistance.

EAP coordinators must provide employee assistance services in a neutral and confidential manner. They are neither an advocate for the client nor an advocate for the employer. The coordinator's role is to help the client identify and explore available options to resolve the client's problems or concerns.

#### 2. Procedure

- a. The potential client contacts an EAP coordinator. Although referrals to EAP can be made by a supervisor, peer, family member, union representative, or other concerned person, the call for an appointment or assistance *must* come from the client. Participation in EC EAP is *voluntary*. The EAP coordinator may *not* initiate contact with an employee, even at the request of the employer's supervisor.
- b. The client and the EAP coordinator meet at a mutually agreed upon time and place to discuss the client's situation and concerns.
- c. The EAP coordinator explains EC EAP's confidentiality policy to the client *before* beginning an assessment. The coordinator must inform the client that all information will remain confidential with the following exceptions:
  - a. (1) There is a violation of law, Executive Order, or agency work rule or the information is required to be disclosed by law, Executive Order,

agency work rule, valid subpoena or any valid court order or judicial process.

- (2) There is reasonable belief a client's conduct places the client or another person in *imminent* threat of bodily harm. Imminent threat is present if there is reasonable belief the threat is *immediate*.
- (3) There is reasonable belief to suspect that child has been, or will be, committed. This includes physical, emotional, and psychological abuse and neglect.

If abuse or neglect is suspected, the coordinator should report the child abuse to the NYS Child Abuse Hotline.

- d. The coordinator completes an assessment with the client allowing sufficient time for the client to discuss any problems or concerns. Coordinators should assure clients that any notes taken during the meeting will be destroyed in the client's presence and are taken only to aid in the assessment process.
- e. The coordinator assesses the client's needs based on the information provided by the client in the interview. Generally, the coordinator completes the assessment in the initial meeting. Occasionally, more than one meeting may be necessary, but this is the exception rather than the rule.
- f. The coordinator works with the client to identify appropriate referral options for resolving the client's problems or concerns. Factors to consider include:
  - Client's financial situation (including insurance coverage)
  - Geographic location of resource providers
  - Client preferences (ex. Gender, language)
  - Appropriateness of resource providers for client's needs
  - Availability of provider (ex. Evenings, weekends)
  - Availability of health insurance and whether health insurance will cover required services

Coordinators must know and respect the limits of their knowledge. When they do not have the answer to a client's question, they should tell the client they will need to research the question and get back to the client. If a coordinator needs to research a referral for a client, the coordinator should establish an acceptable timeframe for responding to the client and an acceptable way for the coordinator to contact the client such as permission to leave a message or call a cell phone.

- g. The coordinator provides the client with the names of at least two referrals, preferably three, including a referral to the client's health insurance, if appropriate.



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Note: EAP coordinators must maintain neutrality when making referrals. They may *not* accept *any* gifts from resource providers, including travel, meals, or meals provided as part of a tour of a resource facility.

- h. The client accepts or rejects the referral options presented.
- i. If the client asks the coordinator to contact anyone regarding the referral, the client must sign a separate *Consent for Release of Information* form and separate HIPAA release. If the coordinator is contacted by anyone, for example, a supervisor, requesting information about the client, the coordinator may not provide any information without a signed *Consent for Release of Information* form.

The client must sign a separate *Consent for Release of Information* form for each person with whom the coordinator is authorized to speak. (When asked for information about a client and the coordinator does not have a signed *Consent for Release of Information* form, it is suggested the coordinator say, "I can neither confirm nor deny...")

- j. Before the client leaves the EAP office or meeting place, the coordinator should ask the client if his or her supervisor requested confirmation of the client's appointment. If so, the client should sign the appropriate releases before leaving the office. In such cases, the coordinator may only provide the date and time of the client's appointment. The coordinator may be asked to provide this information on letterhead, but may also write it on the back of a business card.
- k. With the client's permission, the coordinator may follow up to make sure the client is satisfied with referrals or needs further assistance. The coordinator and client should agree on an acceptable means of contacting the client to follow up.
- l. Coordinators must consult with the EAP regional representative about *all* cases until they have completed the New Coordinator Institute (NCI).
- m. All coordinators must consult with the EAP regional representative about cases involving homicidal or suicidal ideation, domestic violence, and child abuse, as well as other sensitive or complicated cases.

## **C. Resources**

EAP coordinators provide a critical link between the employees served by EAP and the resources available to assist them and their family members. Coordinator should strive to develop a cooperative, professional relationship with providers, especially in the communities they serve.

## **D. Employee Leave and Return-to-work Meetings**

### **1. Policy Description**

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EAP coordinators may, at times, interface with agency management and labor representatives to assist employees in getting help for mental health, drug, alcohol, or other problems. EAP coordinators are *not* authorized to grant leave under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) or other leave requests. Coordinators are available to assist an employee in clarifying agency leave policies and to explain health insurance benefits, and to provide them with information about whom to contact for additional information. Such assistance can make it possible for an employee to leave the workplace for evaluation and treatment and to return to the workplace with the least amount of stress for the employee, the employee's coworkers, and the workplace.

## 2. Facilitating Employee Leave

At the request of an employee and with the employee's written consent, the EAP coordinator may contact human resources personnel or a union representative on behalf of the employee to discuss the employee's health benefits, time and accruals, and appropriate agency or Civil Service policy regarding the use of sick leave or family medical leave, or to discuss other leave arrangements.

## 3. Facilitating a Return-to-Work meeting

If an employee is out of the workplace for an extended period of time (ex., participating in a treatment program) and requests assistance from the EAP coordinator to return to the workplace, the coordinator may schedule a return-to-work meeting. A *Consent for Release of Information* form must be signed by the employee for each participant in the meeting.

The purpose of the return-to-work meeting is to provide a safe, confidential place for the employee and supervisor to discuss the employee's return to work, including job expectations and any agreements about accommodations such as a change in work schedule to accommodate participation in treatment. If such an accommodation is granted, the coordinator may be asked to monitor the employee's participation in, and successful completion of, treatment. This may be done only with appropriate *Consent for Release of Information* forms signed by the employee.

Note: EAP coordinators should encourage management or human resources personnel to contact the treatment provider directly for information related to the employee's participation in treatment and compliance with treatment recommendations and may offer to facilitate this communication.

The return-to-work meeting includes the employee and supervisor, and may include the EAP coordinator. The meeting may also include the treatment provider, human resources representative, affirmative action representative, or other individuals as requested by the employee. Prior to the meeting, appropriate Consent for Release of Information forms must be signed by the employee.

#### 4. Follow-up and Aftercare Services

The EAP coordinator may assist an employee with arranging for follow-up or aftercare services. At the employee's request, the coordinator may facilitate communication between the aftercare provider and the employer. However, the coordinator is encouraged to have management or human resources personnel contact the treatment provider directly for information related to the employee's participation in aftercare.

### E. EAP and the Disciplinary Process

#### 1. Policy Description

The Essex County disciplinary process is a negotiated labor-management procedure used to correct poor job performance either through New York State Civil Service Law Section 75 or arbitration. However, both labor and management recognize that in order to improve job performance, the employee may need assistance with a personal problem and an EAP referral is appropriate. The EAP coordinator may assist the employee by meeting with the employee to assist the employee's situation and offer an appropriate referral to help the employee resolve the problem that led to the discipline.

#### 2. Procedures

When a referral to EAP is made, either by a union representative or management, information obtained from the client will be kept confidential. If information needs to be disclosed to anyone, written authorization to disclose information must be obtained from the client.

#### 3. Informal and Formal Referrals to EAP

Employees may be referred to EAP by either an informal referral or a formal referral.

##### a. Informal Referral

A supervisor, union representative, human resources representative, or labor relations representative can *suggest* an employee contact EAP for assistance based on job performance problems before the situation requires formal disciplinary action. The referral is generally made during a discussion about deteriorating job performance, during a counseling session, or in writing as a follow-up to the counseling session.

##### b. Formal Referral

When an employee is involved in a formal disciplinary process, labor and management may agree to settle the discipline matter or hold the penalty in abeyance in order to give the employee an opportunity to address any personal

problems that have led to the disciplinary action. In either case, labor and management may incorporate a referral to EAP into the settlement agreement and require the employee to follow through on an action plan arranged through EAP.

A formal referral is written, signed by the appropriate parties, and offered in lieu of discipline with specific requirements agreed to by the employee, or the referral may be included in a legal settlement document signed by the employee, the employee's union representative, and a management representative.

Participation in EAP is *always* voluntary. An employee who signs a settlement agreement that includes a referral to EAP does so voluntarily and thereby agrees to contact EAP and to follow the recommendations of the EAP coordinator.

The EAP coordinator may not attend disciplinary meetings or hearings, but may review the draft of any settlement agreement involving EAP *before* it is signed for the sole purposes of determining whether EAP services are available. The coordinator is not required, and should not, sign the agreement. The coordinator may be asked to confirm the employee's participation, and completion of, treatment. However, coordinators are encouraged to facilitate communication between the employer and the treatment provider regarding the employee's participation in treatment and compliance with treatment recommendations. If information needs to be disclosed to anyone, the employee must sign a *Consent for Release of Information* form.

c. Settlement Agreement at Arbitration

Settlement of disciplinary cases at arbitration may also incorporate a referral to EAP. A formal agreement is written, signed by the appropriate parties, and handled as in a Formal referral. Ultimately, it is the employee's responsibility to resolve the issues and to correct the job performance problem.

**F. Critical Incident Response**

A complete description of Critical Incident Response can be found in Chapter 8.

**G. Relationship with the EAP regional Representative**

1. General Policy

The role of the EAP regional representative is an important one. The EAP regional representative oversees local programs and provides consultation to local EAP committees, chairpersons, and coordinators. EAP coordinators should be aware of the regional representative's role and responsibilities and should maintain regular and frequent contact with their regional representative.

2. When to Call the EAP Regional Representative

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The coordinator should call the regional representative whenever the coordinator has a policy question or concern. For example:

- New coordinators must review all cases, until they have completed the NCI
- There is a difficult client situation and the coordinator is unsure how to proceed
- Client confidentiality must be broken
- When any question arises concerning confidentiality, neutrality, or voluntary participation in EAP that the coordinator cannot resolve with the EAP committee, management, or the unions
- If labor or management requests something that may violate the ethical, voluntary, neutrality, or other policies of EAP
- There is a critical incident at the agency or facility
- If *EAP Training for Supervisors* is being presented in the agency or facility
- When there is a question about the appropriateness of a particular topic for a lunchtime seminar or other workshop
- Any situation where direction is needed.

## H. Reports

### 1. Monthly Statistical Reporting

Coordinators must submit a Monthly Statistical Report by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month following the month for which the statistics are reported.

### 2. Critical Incident Reporting

A *Critical Incident Report* form must be submitted when an EAP coordinator assists an agency or facility in responding to a critical incident.

When more than one coordinator responds to a critical incident, only *one* coordinator should submit the *Critical Incident Report* form and report the incident on the *Monthly Statistical Report* form. Other EAP coordinators who assist with the response should record only the time they spent responding to the critical incident on the *Monthly Statistical Report* form. This will prevent duplication in reporting the number of critical incidents.

## I. Promoting EAP Programs

### 1. Policy Description

EAP committee members are responsible for promoting EAP services to employees. Committee members should also bring any concerns of their constituency to committee meetings and should keep their constituency informed about updates, plans, and activities.

EAP committee members are encouraged to promote EAP at union meetings and other appropriate functions. They are encouraged to take leadership roles in

promotional activities such as developing paycheck mailers, newsletters, employee orientations, poster campaigns, wellness activities, information days, and health fairs.

While the EAP committee is responsible for promoting EAP, the coordinator may also be involved in promoting the program.

## 2. Promotional Activities

The following are examples of successful promotional activities:

- Distribute EAP brochures throughout the agency or facility.
- Place a sign on the EAP coordinator's office door with the coordinator's name and office hours.
- Attach an envelope to the EAP coordinator's office door with business cards or a few brochures in it so employees who stop by can take information if the coordinator is not available.
- Order business cards with the EAP coordinator's picture on them.
- Purchase books, pamphlets, or newsletters on appropriate topics for distribution to employees.
- Place EAP posters throughout the agency or facility.
- Distribute topical flyers in mailboxes, through email, and on bulletin boards.
- Arrange a health fair or EAP awareness event at the agency or facility.
- Sponsor a blood drive or food drive, or collect cell phones or eye glasses for a local charity.
- Add a signature line to the EAP coordinator's email promoting EAP.
- Celebrate EAP month in November.
- Use the EAP logo on promotional materials whenever possible.
- If the agency has a newsletter or online communication method, ask if the EAP logo and phone number can be routinely included.
- Maintain an EAP bulletin board.
- If the EAP office is new or has recently moved, hold an Open House; if not, hold an annual Open House.
- Provide orientations to new employees, unions, management, supervisors, and human resources personnel.
- Conduct *EAP Training for Supervisors*.
- New coordinators can meet with stakeholders such as human resources and labor relations personnel, directors and superintendents, and union representatives to introduce themselves.
- Hold a lunch-time seminar or workshop for employees.
- Follow up after a critical incident to ask for feedback on EAP services.
- Sponsor a walking program.
- Start an EAP lending video or book library on EAP and wellness topics.
- Have an EAP website on the agency's Intranet.

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## Chapter 5 Administrative and Personnel Policies

### A. EAP Personnel Policies

The EAP committee, in consultation with the EAP regional representative, is responsible for recruiting, interviewing, and recommending a candidate to serve as the EAP coordinator. The appointing authority reviews the recommendation and if the proposed candidate is acceptable, follows the agency's official appointment process.

The EAP committee chairperson is responsible for supervising and evaluating the EAP coordinator, with input from the committee and the regional representative. When a coordinator leaves the EAP coordinator position, the committee, in cooperation with the EAP regional representative, must ensure an orderly transition. In the event, the coordinator's work performance is ineffective the coordinator is subject to removal.

#### 1. Selection of the EAP Coordinator

The EAP committee or subcommittee must reach a consensus on the best candidates and forward the recommendation of at least two (2) candidates, whenever possible, to the Essex County Board of Supervisors.

- a. The announcement for the vacant EAP coordinator position is posted consistent with the posting procedure of the agency. All employees are eligible, regardless of bargaining unit affiliation, except for union officials, shop stewards (or the equivalent), employees of the personnel or human resources functions, and affirmative action officers. These employees are not eligible because of a possible perception of the lack of neutrality and then potential for a conflict of interest.
- b. The EAP committee, in consultation with the EAP regional representative, reviews the applications and identifies the most qualified applicants.
- c. The EAP committee schedules and conducts interviews. The entire EAP committee may conduct the interviews or the committee may designate a sub-committee to interview applicants. The EAP regional representative attends the interviews as a non-voting participant.
- d. The EAP committee, or sub-committee, must reach a consensus on the best candidates and forward a recommendation of at least two candidates, whenever possible, to the appointing authority.
- e. Once the appointing authority has appointed the new EAP coordinator, the EWAP committee notifies the non-selected candidates.
- f. The EAP regional representative makes arrangements for orientation and training of the newly selected coordinator.

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- g. The newly selected EAP coordinator is required to attend the New Coordinator Institute (NCI) as soon as practical after being appointed.
2. Supervision and Evaluation of the Coordinator
- a. Supervision

The EAP committee chairperson is responsible for supervising the EAP coordinator with respect to the coordinator's role and responsibilities. Where it is inappropriate for the committee chairperson to supervise the coordinator due to the grade levels or workplace relationship (ex., relative, co-worker in the same unit) or prohibited for the chairperson to supervise the coordinator, the committee may elect to have another committee member or manager serve as the coordinator's supervisor. This should be done in consultation with the chairperson, if possible. Questions about supervision of the coordinator should be referred to the EAP regional representative.

Among other things, the coordinator is expected to:

- Maintain confidentiality and neutrality
- Act professionally and ethically
- Comply with EC EAP policies and procedures
- Respond to requests for services in a timely manner
- Maintain a current resource file
- Attend mandatory training
- Submit monthly statistics in a timely manner
- Attend EAP committee meetings
- Maintain open communication with the EAP chairperson
- Maintain open communication with the EAP regional representative

An EAP coordinator's responsibilities are basis for the performance evaluation.

- b. Evaluation

(1) Six-Month Evaluation (Optional)

When there is a new EAP coordinator, the EAP committee chairperson may meet with the EAP coordinator six months after the coordinator's appointment to discuss the coordinator's performance and provide feedback or take corrective action if needed. A committee may decide to evaluate a coordinator more frequently if there have been concerns about the coordinator's performance. Either the EAP chairperson or the committee may request feedback from the EAP regional representative regarding the coordinator's performance.

(2) Annual Evaluation



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The EAP coordinator must be evaluated annually with input from both the EAP regional representative and the EAP committee.

### 3. Resignation or Retirement of the EAP Coordinator

When an EAP coordinator resigns or retires it is important to ensure a smooth transition between the outgoing coordinator and the incoming coordinator. The following procedures should be followed to effectively transfer knowledge and information, safeguard confidential materials, preserve resource materials, and secure the EAP office:

- a. The coordinator notifies the EAP chairperson, the committee, and the regional representative as soon as possible when the coordinator intends to leave the position.
- b. Before leaving, the coordinator completes an exit survey which includes the reason for leaving, a summary of the coordinator's experience in the position, and any recommendations for possible improvement to the program.
- c. The EAP regional representative conducts an exit interview with the coordinator. The coordinator secures all confidential materials or gives them to the EAP regional representative when they meet for the exit interview.
- d. The coordinator inventories and secures the EAP office so that materials are left intact for the coordinator's successor. The office key should be left with the EAP committee chairperson or another appropriate person at the agency or facility to protect the confidentiality and privacy of the EAP office and any materials, documents, or equipment in the office.

### 4. Dismissal of an EAP Coordinator

EAP coordinators are expected to act professionally and ethically in fulfilling their responsibilities. They are expected to follow EAP policies and procedures, comply with the *Coordinator Ethical Code of Conduct*, Essex County Ethics Law and all municipal, state and federal rules, procedures and laws, maintain neutrality and confidentiality, avoid conflicts of interest, attend training, and fulfill their responsibilities as outlined in Chapter 3, EAP Structure, Roles, and Responsibilities.

If a coordinator's performance in the role of EAP coordinator is ineffective or the coordinator fails to fulfill the responsibilities of the position, the coordinator is subject to removal from the EAP assignment. However, before removing a coordinator, the EAP committee and EAP regional representative should make every effort to discuss their concerns with the coordinator and to resolve the problem. If the regional representative or committee has questions or concerns regarding a coordinator's performance, the following steps should be taken:

- a. The EAP committee chairperson schedules a committee meeting as soon as possible to discuss concerns about the coordinator's work performance, and any other concerns

about the coordinator, without the EAP coordinator in attendance. The EAP regional representative attends this meeting. All discussions at this meeting must be kept confidential.

- b. The chairperson schedules a second meeting as soon as possible after the first meeting, but no later than two weeks after the first meeting, that includes the coordinator. The EAP regional representative attends the meeting as well. This meeting provides the coordinator with an opportunity to discuss the committee's or the regional representatives concerns.
  - c. The committee makes a written record of the outcome of both meetings and provide copies of the minutes to the EAP regional representative. If the concerns are of a serious nature, the management representative on the committee and the chairperson should discuss the situation with the appointing authority's Human Resources department.
  - d. After considering all of the information, and in consultation with the EAP regional representative, the EAP committee recommends possible solutions to the problem.
  - e. If possible, the EAP committee tries to retain the coordinator. Members of the EAP committee and the regional representative must reach consensus prior to dismissal of the EAP coordinator.
  - f. In the event the EAP committee and EAP regional representative disagree about whether or not to dismiss a coordinator, either the committee or the regional representative may request a written decision from the NYS EAP program manager. This decision may be appealed to the NYS Work-Life Services Advisory Board.
5. EAP Coordinator Release Time

Any time EAP coordinators spend on EAP work is expected to be done on county time. EAP is not a volunteer program or charitable organization. All EAP work, programs, and activities must be done in accordance with county rules, regulations and policies with respect to work time.

- a. is the responsibility of the EAP committee to assess the needs of the coordinator, including the amount of release time needed for the EAP coordinator to successfully perform their duties and responsibilities of the position.

EAP coordinators need time to meet with clients, develop resources, attend training, complete reports, respond to critical incidents, prepare presentations, conduct orientations and training, attend committee meetings, promote the program, and to fulfill their other responsibilities.

- b. After determining the recommended amount of release time, the EAP committee makes a recommendation to the department head for review and a determination.
- c. The EAP committee should regularly review the coordinator's monthly statistical report to evaluate the adequacy of the coordinator's release time.

Note: Staff restrictions due to job commitments and declining staff coverage are legitimate considerations that can affect release time determinations.

- d. Additionally, all EAP Coordinators shall log the time that they spend in their capacity as coordinator and shall log the times that they spend in their capacity as coordinator and will provide that information to the committee which in turn shall be provided to the Essex County Board of Supervisors.

#### 6. EAP Coordinator Time and Attendance

- a. Coordinators must comply with their agency's time and attendance rules and policies.

### **B. EAP Office Administration Policies**

#### 1. EAP Coordinator Forms of Identification

- a. Photo Identification

EC EAP provides a photo identification card for all EAP coordinators.

- b. Business cards

EC EAP is responsible for providing standard business cards. These should include the coordinator's name, title ("EAP Coordinator"), name of the agency, phone, fax, and email address.

- c. Posting Coordinator's Name and Hours on the EAP Office Door

It is helpful to potential clients if the EAP coordinator's name is posted on the EAP office door along with the regular office hours.

*Tip: Coordinators can attach an envelope with business cards or brochures to the door for employees to take when they stop by and the coordinator is busy or not in the office.*

#### 2. EAP Office

- a. Office Space and Location

The agency is responsible for providing confidential space for an EAP office. The EAP office must not be located in or near the Human Resources or personnel office.

b. Office Equipment and Supplies

The office equipment provided by the agency or facility should include a desk and chair, a small table, several comfortable chairs, a file cabinet that locks (for confidential documents), a telephone with voice mail or an answering machine, and a fax machine. In addition, the agency provides basic office supplies such as paper, file folders, pens, and postage.

c. Office Appearance

The EAP office should be neat and comfortable. EAP coordinators must not display any pictures or materials in the EAP office that would violate the *Coordinator Ethical Code of Conduct* or could be considered offensive, controversial, political, or religious. The *Confidentiality Policy* should be clearly posted.

3. Telephones and Email

a. Responding to Clients

EAP coordinators must respond to client phone calls or email messages within 24 hours, excluding weekends and holidays.

b. Answering the EAP Office Telephone

When answering the phone, EAP coordinators should state their name, title (“EAP Coordinator”), and the name of the agency or facility.

c. EAP Standard Voice Mail Message

The following is the standard voice mail message for EAP coordinators: “Hello. You have reached (name), Essex County EAP Coordinator. My regular office hours are (\_\_\_\_\_). If this is a crisis, please call (insert name and number for local crisis service) or 911. Otherwise, you may leave a message and your call will be returned as soon as possible. Thank you.”

d. Voice Mail When Coordinator is Out of the Office

When an EAP coordinator is out of the EAP office for more than 24 hours (ex., vacation, training, illness) the EAP committee chairperson and EAP regional representative must be notified. The voice mail message and the Out-of-Office-Auto-Reply for email should provide the expected return date of the EAP coordinator providing backup coverage. The voice and email messages should be changed again when the EAP coordinator returns.

4. Appointments

a. Scheduling Appointments

Appointments must be scheduled within 24 hours of a coordinator's receiving a request for services and sooner in emergency situations.

b. Location of Appointments

It is preferable for a client to meet the EAP coordinator in the EAP office. The coordinator may arrange to meet the client at an alternative site in the agency or they may refer the client to another EAP coordinator if privacy or security is a concern.

If the client prefers to meet in a public place, the coordinator must take appropriate steps to ensure the safety of both the coordinator and the client, as well as to ensure the client's confidentiality. The coordinator should discuss such requests with the EAP regional representative.

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## Chapter 6 EAP Training Program

### A. Overview

Mandatory training for EAP coordinators and committee members is designed to enhance the skill of EAP coordinators, committee members, and chairpersons, so they are able to perform their EAP duties effectively and professionally.

Training is delivered to EAP coordinators by subject experts, local resource providers, and EAP staff. EAP coordinators deliver orientation to new employees, management and union personnel and deliver *EAP Training for Supervisors*.

### B. Policy Description

Training is a core function of EC EAP. The objectives of the EAP training are to:

1. Develop core competencies for coordinators.
2. Emphasize to agency supervisors, managers, and union representatives the ways in which early identification of poor job performance and prompt referral to EAP can benefit the employee, the supervisor, the agency and the state.
3. Promote a variety of prevention and wellness seminars and events to improve the quality of life for all employees.

### C. EAP Training Components

#### 1. New Coordinator Orientation

The new Coordinator Orientation is an individual orientation session provided by the EAP regional representative. The objective is to equip the newly appointed EAP coordinator with the basic knowledge and skill needed to begin assisting employees.

#### 2. New Coordinator Institute (NCI)

The New Coordinator Institute is a mandatory, multiple-day program. Using EAP staff, experienced EAP coordinators, and consultants to present the workshops, the NCI provides an introduction to program operations, helping skills, and the core competencies related to the provision of EAP services.

The workshops at the NCI provide the new coordinators with an understanding of:

- a. History of EAP
- b. Collaboration between management and labor
- c. EAP policies, ethics, procedure, and practice

- d. Basic interviewing and assessment skills
- e. Coordinator core competencies
- f. Confidentiality and neutrality policies
- g. Role of coordinator
- h. Role of the committee, chairperson, management, union
- i. Program promotion
- j. Wellness initiatives
- k. Resource gathering skills and linkages
- l. Practical tips for quality service
- m. Coordinator role in critical incident response
- n. Assessment strategies for mental health issues
- o. Assessment strategies for alcohol and drug misuse and abuse
- p. Assessment strategies for domestic violence
- q. Union benefits
- r. Practical application of material learned through case studies and sharing best practices

### 3. Foundational Training

Foundational Training is mandatory for all coordinators. The content builds on the knowledge and assessment skills gained during the NCI. These training classes offer content from a variety of subjects and focus on the issues that are most frequently encountered by EAP coordinators. Topics are also selected in response to feedback elicited from training participants and regional representatives.

Note: Committee members do not attend the NCI or Foundational Training; the content is designed specifically to build coordination assessment and referral skill.

Foundational topics focus on the areas of physical and mental health, substance abuse, family, legal, community, financial, and workplace issues, and include:

- a. Interviewing and assessment skills
- b. Physical health and wellness issues
- c. Mental health issues, including suicide prevention and awareness
- d. Dealing with grief and loss
- e. Alcohol and substance abuse
- f. Behavioral addictions
- g. Eldercare concerns
- h. Change and resilience
- i. Relationships
- j. Parenting
- k. Domestic violence
- l. Violence in the workplace
- m. Diversity

- n. Creating, evaluating, and updating a resource file
- 4. Regional Resource Training

Each year, Regional Resource Training is arranged by the EAP regional representative and presented by local subject experts on topics of regional interest that are directly related to the coordinator role and resource development.

- 5. New EAP Committee Member Orientation

All new EAP committee members must attend the *New Committee Member Orientation*. This training is offered in each training region on a quarterly basis, but may be delivered onsite at the agency when a new committee is formed, there is substantial turnover on the committee, or the EAP committee requests it.

The *New Committee Member Orientation* includes:

- a. Overview of EAP
- b. Role and scope of the EAP committee and chairperson
- c. Role of the coordinator
- d. Ethics and legal issues
- e. Coordinator interviews, selection, supervision, evaluation, and dismissal
- f. Reporting requirements
- g. Program promotion

- 6. New Chairperson Orientation

In addition to the *New Committee Member Orientation*, each new committee chairperson will receive an orientation by the regional representative. The orientation will describe the responsibilities and the scope of the chairperson's role on the EAP committee.

- 7. EAP Training for Supervisors

*EAP Training for Supervisors* provides an introduction to EAP policy and enhances the supervisors' ability to make early referrals to EAP based on job performance indicators. The training may be presented by EAP coordinators or EAP regional representatives. Topics include:

- a. Benefit to the client of early problem identification and referral
- b. Benefits of EAL services to labor, management, families and the organization
- c. Roles and limits of the EAP coordinator and the EAP committees
- d. Recognizing deteriorating job performance
- e. Approaching an employee about accepting a referral



- f. Referral resources and linkages
- g. Providing support to the EAP
- h. Confidentiality and neutrality policies
- i. Required forms
- j. Return-to-work meetings
- k. Formal and informal referrals
- l. Disciplinary process and settlement

#### 8. Orientation for Management and Unions

This overview of EC EAP policy and procedure explains the benefits of EAP services for the employee, the supervisor, the unions, and the County, as well as outlining the role of labor and management.

#### 9. Human Resources Orientation

The *Human Resources Orientation* is an overview as it relates to the collaboration between EAP and the Personnel Department. The orientation focuses on return-to-work meetings, disciplinary settlements, critical incident response, and other areas in which EAP can provide a service to the department.

## Chapter 7 Coordinator Monthly Statistical Report

### A. Overview

EC EAP understands the importance of demonstrating the value of the Employee Assistance program and collects data about the program for the sole purpose of program analysis, evaluation, and planning. Data is collected so that labor and management can assess the services being provided to employees and family members. At no time is an individual employee identified.

### B. Procedures

1. The EAP coordinator completes the *Coordinator Statistical Report* each month.
2. If there is more than one coordinator, each coordinator completes and submits separate report.
3. After submitting the monthly statistics, the coordinator provides a copy of the submitted statistics to EAP committee chairperson for review at the next EAP committee meeting.
4. The deadline for submitting the *Coordinator Statistical Report* is the tenth of the month following the month for which the statistics are reported.
5. Failure to submit the report in a timely manner may result in re-evaluation of a coordinator's status.
6. Detailed instructions for completing the *Coordinator Statistical Report* can be found in the appendix.

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## Chapter 8 Crisis Response

### A. Overview

Critical incidents are highly stressful events that can overwhelm an individual's normal coping mechanisms. A critical incident can occur either in the workplace or outside of the workplace and often produces significant, adverse reactions for the affected employees. Critical incidents include events such as the death of an employee, resident, inmate, client, or customer, serious workplace injury, suicide or homicide, workplace violence, and natural disasters. EAP is available to provide assistance to employees and agencies affected by critical incidents.

Examples of critical incidents:

- Employees witness the accidental death of a coworker
- A supervisor goes to the home of an employee who fails to show up at work and finds the employee dead
- An employee has a heart attack in the workplace
- Several employees are seriously injured in an automobile accident
- An employee commits suicide over the weekend and coworkers learn of this Monday morning when they arrive at work
- Employees witness a coworker being removed from the workplace by police
- Employees discover an inmate has hanged himself in a cell
- An electrical fire destroys part of a facility as well as files and other documents
- A well-liked employee dies at home after a prolonged illness
- An employee is assaulted by a resident
- An employee's child is murdered
- Major floods destroy the homes of several coworkers

In the event of a critical incident, EAP coordinators can help coordinate crisis response services including needs assessments, referrals to resources, individual assessment and referral services, "walk-a-rounds", individual grief sessions, and training. They are also available to assist agencies with policy and resource development.

### B. Policy

1. If an agency has a crisis policy, that policy should be followed. The EAP coordinator should know whether the agency has a crisis policy and should be familiar with the policy. The EAP coordinator should understand the role of EAP and the EAP coordinator as delineated in the crisis policy.

Note: Some agencies include the crisis policy in their workplace violence policy.

2. If an agency does not have a crisis policy, the following guidelines should be followed:

- When a critical incident occurs, management or a union official should inform the EAP coordinator and, if needed, request assistance with formulating a response to the event.
- If the EAP coordinator learns of a critical incident, the coordinator shall contact management to offer EAP services, including a needs assessment.
- Immediately following a critical incident, the EAP coordinator may meet with employees individually or in groups to offer support, explain the role of EAP, and provide information and educational materials on issues such as stress or grief and what to expect after a critical incident.
- Coordinators may offer assessment and referral services and may meet individually with employees to help them move through the grieving process.

EAP coordinators may *not* provide critical incident stress debriefing (CISD) or conduct *group* grief and loss sessions. These services require special training that is currently not offered to EAP coordinators.

Note: Some coordinators have been trained to provide critical incident stress debriefing (CISD) and group grief and loss sessions. If an agency asks an EAP coordinator to provide these services to employees, the EAP coordinator does so *only* under the authority of the coordinator's agency and is *not* acting under the authority of EC EAP.

### **C. Critical Incident Response: Agency**

The EAP coordinator, in consultation with designated agency staff, should gather information about the critical incident, conduct a needs assessment, decide on the most appropriate response, and develop a plan of action based on the nature of the event.

In conducting a needs assessment, the EAP coordinator should consider such factors as the seriousness of the event, whether or not the event was expected, the number of employees affected, and the impact of the event over time. EAP coordinators are able to assess these and other factors and help management decide what, if any, action to take.

The EAP coordinator may be asked to assist in arranging for debriefings, grief and loss sessions for groups of employees, and other crisis services. The EAP coordinator should maintain a current list of community resources and professionals who are available to respond to critical incidents and provide these services.

EAP coordinators can also conduct "walk-a-rounds" to increase awareness of the availability of EAP services, continue to evaluate the situation, and identify employees who may need to follow-up to address concerns arising from the critical incident.

Upon request, the EAP coordinator may assist in the development of an agency crisis policy and may assist with the development and provision of training to address issues arising from the critical incident.

**D. Critical Incident Response: Employees**

EAP coordinators can offer the following assistance to employees who have been affected by a critical incident:

- Listening – this is often one of the most important and effective ways to help and support someone who has experienced a traumatic event.
- Sharing information about EAP services including information about how to access EAP and confidentiality.
- Providing general information related to the critical incident such as information on suicide, a pandemic, or workplace violence.
- Providing information about common reactions to grief and loss and what the employee can expect after a critical incident, as well as healthy ways to cope with the trauma.
- Meeting with individual employees to help them address the grief and loss associated with the critical incident or past losses that may be triggered by the current incident.
- Assessing an employee's individual concerns and, if needed, providing a referral to community resources for additional help in coping with the critical incident.

**E. Documentation of Critical Incidents**

The EAP coordinator should complete a critical incident report (CIR) within one week of the incident.

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## Chapter 9 Providers and Resources

### A. Overview

EC EAP provides a critical link between employees seeking assistance and the resources they need to help them address their problems and concerns. The success of the assessment and referral model adopted by EC EAP is dependent upon the quality of these resources. EAP coordinators are required to have an extensive knowledge of local community resources. Their positive relationships with resource providers enhance their ability to refer employees to the most appropriate and effective services.

Note: EC EAP does not endorse or promote any particular provider or service, nor does EAP guarantee the quality or effectiveness of the service provided.

### B. Resource Development

#### 1. Policy Description

One of the primary responsibilities of EAP coordinators is to research the resources in their region to determine what services are available for employees and their family members. Resources should include services to address the broad range of problems and issues presented by employees such as financial, legal, family, mental health, and substance abuse. Coordinators are expected to establish and maintain resource files of local community resources in their regions. EAP regional representatives also research resources and maintain resource files which they share with coordinators.

#### 2. Procedures

- a. EAP coordinators are encouraged to meet periodically with providers to learn about the services they offer and to develop lines of communication for future referrals. Many providers will visit with the coordinator in the EAP office to share information about their practice, organization, or facility. Coordinators should obtain permission from the EAP committee or chairperson before meeting with any provider outside the EAP office.

Note: Coordinators are not expected to spend an inordinate amount of time visiting providers. Good judgment about the use of time must be exercised by the EAP coordinator and the EAP committee.

- b. EAP coordinators will establish and maintain a resource file of local community resources and update the file annually.
- c. Research into the types of insurance accepted by the provider will be invaluable in the referral process. Coordinators should refer employees to their insurance provider for referral to a provider within the plan.

- d. EAP coordinators must avoid any conflict of interest in the selection of resources. Coordinators may not refer employees either to their own private practices or to any agency, facility, or organization where the coordinator or a family member is employed. In addition, EAP coordinators and EAP staff may not accept gifts from resource providers, including transportation costs and meals as part of a visit to a facility. Visits to facilities must be approved by the EAP committee.
3. Information to be included in a resource file
    - Contact information, location, and hours
    - Availability and flexibility in scheduling routine and emergency appointments
    - Payment options, including a sliding fee scale, and acceptance of various insurance plans
    - Feedback from employees who have used a service and other EAP coordinators who have referred to a provider
    - Diversity
    - Population served (ex., adolescents, children)
    - Specialties (ex., eating disorders, substance abuse)
    - Any conflicts of interest
- C. Provider Request for Distribution of Information
1. Policy Description

EC EAP may receive letters or phone calls from providers who wish to distribute information about their services. These types of requests complement EAP's objective of maintaining a comprehensive resource file. Accordingly, distribution of provider information is permissible, although EAP does *not* endorse or promote any particular provider or service over another nor can EAP speak to the quality or efficacy of the service provider.
  2. Procedures
    - a. When a provider submits information to EC EAP, it will be forwarded to the EAP committee for inclusion in the EAP coordinator's resource files.
    - b. When EAP coordinators receive information directly from a provider, they may include the information in their own resource file.



## Essex County Employee Assistance Program

# Confidentiality Policy

Essex County EAP coordinators must keep all information **confidential** unless they have written permission from the client to disclose information.

There are three exceptions to the confidentiality requirement:

- The information is required to be disclosed by law, Executive Order, or agency work rule;
- There is reasonable belief a client's conduct places the client, or another person, in *imminent threat* of bodily harm. Imminent threat is present if there is reasonable belief the threat is an *immediate* threat of *physical harm*;
- There is reasonable belief to suspect that child abuse has recently been or will be committed. This includes physical, emotional and psychological abuse and neglect.

Please discuss any questions you have about this confidentiality policy with the EAP coordinator.





## Essex County Employee Assistance Program Assessment Guidelines

### First

Remind the client that all information will remain confidential with the following exceptions:

- 1) If there is a violation of law, executive order, or agency work rule
- 2) If there is concern about imminent harm to self or others
- 3) If there is reasonable suspicion of child abuse or neglect.

### Then

Assure the client that any notes will be destroyed in their presence and are taken only to aid in the assessment process.

### Self-Referred Client

What concerns brought you to EAP?

What needs to come out of this meeting so that you can say this was helpful?

What have you done to try and resolve your concerns?

What would it take for you to overcome this problem?

### Referred Client

Who referred you to EAP?     Supervisor     Union Rep     Family Member     Coworker  
 Other

If you have been referred for a performance problem, is it for:     Absenteeism/Tardiness

Safety     Work Relationships     Quantity/Quality of Work

Other \_\_\_\_\_

What will convince \_\_\_\_\_ that you don't need to see me?

What does \_\_\_\_\_ expect to come out of your coming to EAP?

Are you here as a result of a disciplinary settlement?

### Health Information

Do you have health insurance? If so, name of plan \_\_\_\_\_

Date of last physical exam:

Current medical conditions:

Current medications:

Any sleep problems? Diet problems?

Any history of emotional problems?

If “yes”, how was it treated? Any complications?

### **Risk Assessment**

Have you thought about killing or hurting yourself or someone else?  past  present

**Suicidal Risk:**  Intent  Plan  Means  Attempt

**Homicidal Risk:**  Intent  Plan  Means  Attempt

### **Domestic Violence:**

Do you ever feel unsafe at home?

Are you in a relationship in which you have been physically hurt or felt threatened?

Have you ever been or are you currently concerned about harming your partner or someone close to you?

### **Work Situation**

### **Home Situation (including any caregiver situation)**

### **Support System**

### **Relevant Legal History**

### **Financial Concerns (including frequency of gambling)**

### **Grief/Loss Issues (including any recent grief/loss)**

### **Alcohol/Substance Use**

Do you use alcohol or drugs?

On average, how many days per week do you drink alcohol?

On a typical day when you drink, how many drinks do you have?

What is the maximum number of drinks you had on any given occasion during the last month?

- C** – Have you ever felt the need to **CUT DOWN** on your drinking and/or drug use?
  - A** – Have you ever been **ANNOYED** by criticism of your drinking and/or drug use?
  - G** – Have you ever felt **GUILTY** about your drinking and/or drug use?
  - E** – Have you ever felt the need for an **EYE OPENER** (alcohol/drugs) first thing in the morning to steady your nerves, i.e. to be able to function at work or at home, or get rid of a hangover?
- One or more positive responses indicate probable abuse or dependence. Refer for normal evaluation.**

**Family History of Alcohol/Drug Abuse or Mental Illness**

**Other**

**Is there anything that I haven't asked you that might be useful for me to know in helping you?**

<p><b>ESSEX COUNTY EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM</b></p> <p><b>CONSENT FOR RELEASE OF INFORMATION</b></p> <p><b>See Reverse Side for Instructions</b></p>	<p>NAME: _____</p> <p>DOB: _____</p>
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**Part I - Consent To Release Information**

Extent or Nature of Information to be Disclosed						
Purpose or Need for Information						
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>INFORMATION WILL BE RELEASED AND EXCHANGED BETWEEN THE FOLLOWING:</b></p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; border: none;">Name: _____</td> <td style="width: 50%; border: none;">Name: _____</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: none;">Title: _____</td> <td style="border: none;">Title: _____</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: none;">Agency/Facility/Program: _____</td> <td style="border: none;">Agency/Facility/Program: _____</td> </tr> </table>	Name: _____	Name: _____	Title: _____	Title: _____	Agency/Facility/Program: _____	Agency/Facility/Program: _____
Name: _____	Name: _____					
Title: _____	Title: _____					
Agency/Facility/Program: _____	Agency/Facility/Program: _____					

I hereby authorize the *ONE TIME* release of the above information to the person/organization/facility/program identified above. I understand that the information to be released is CONFIDENTIAL and the release to the entity identified does not authorize EAP to disclose the same information to any other entity without an additional consent form signed by me (see reverse side for exceptions). I understand that EAP is not prevented from clarifying information already given to the entity at a later date in order to ensure accuracy. I also understand that I have the right to cancel my permission to release information at any time by signing Part II on the reverse side of this form in the presence of the EAP Coordinator.

**My consent to release information will expire when acted upon, or 90 days from this date, whichever occurs first.**

Signature of Employee/Person Acting For Employee	Relationship	Date Signed	Signature of EAP Coordinator/ Representative	Date Signed
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I hereby authorize the *PERIODIC* release of the above information to the person/organization/facility/program identified above as often as necessary to monitor participation in and successful completion of treatment and/or return to work. I understand the information is *CONFIDENTIAL*. The release to the entity identified does not authorize EAP to disclose the same information to any other entity without an additional consent form signed by me (see reverse for exceptions). I understand that EAP is not prevented from clarifying information already given to the entity at a later date in order to ensure accuracy. I also understand that I have the right to cancel my permission to release information at any time by signing Part II on the reverse side of this form in the presence of the *EAP Coordinator*.

**My consent to release information to the person/organization/facility/program identified above, will expire 90 days from date of signature unless said release is cancelled prior to that date as stipulated on reverse side. Continuation of release of new information beyond 90 days requires that a new Release Form be completed.**

**Part II Cancellation / Refusal To Release Information**

<p>I hereby <b>CANCEL</b> my permission to release information Indicated in Part I to the person/organization/facility/program whose name and address is:</p>	<p>I hereby <b>REFUSE TO AUTHORIZE</b> the release of information indicated in Part I to the person/organization/facility/program whose name and address is:</p>
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Signature of Employee/Person Acting For Employee	Relationship	Date Signed	Signature of EAP Coordinator/ Representative	Date Signed
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Use this space if additional room is needed to complete any of the items on the reverse side

**INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Employee signs Part I A if the Release of Information is for a *SINGLE EVENT*.
2. Employee signs Part I B if Information is to be released *PERIODICALLY* during an episode of service.
3. If the client is under 18 years of age, only the responsible parent, relative, or guardian must sign.

### **EXCEPTIONS TO CONFIDENTIALITY**

All information regarding EAP contacts other than as specified below will be kept strictly confidential.

1. Where information is required by law or executive order to be disclosed; or
2. Where there is reasonable belief that an employee's conduct places him or her or another person in imminent threat of bodily harm; or
3. Where there is reasonable cause to suspect child abuse has been or will be committed.



**Essex County Employee Assistance Program  
Critical Incident Report (CIR)**

**Contact Information**

EAP Coordinator: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional EAP Coordinators assisting:  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Critical Incident Information**

Agency (Facility) name:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Agency (Facility) contact: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date and time of the incident: \_\_\_\_\_ Location:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Did this happen in the workplace?  Yes  No

Who was involved?  Employee  Coworker(s)  Family Member  Other (Check all that apply)

Description of the incident:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Actions Taken**

Date of EAP Coordinator initial response: \_\_\_\_\_

Who notified the EAP coordinator (name and title)? \_\_\_\_\_ Date:  
\_\_\_\_\_



## Essex County Employee Assistance Program EAP Coordinator Position: Sample Interview Questions

The following sample interview questions are designed to help EAP committees identify candidates who have the potential to become successful EAP coordinators. Each agency or facility should adapt these questions to their own unique culture and needs.

- 1. Knowledge of EAP and the EAP coordinator position**
  - a. What do you know about EAP?
  - b. Why are you interested in becoming an EAP coordinator?
  - c. What characteristics or qualities do you possess that would make you a successful coordinator?
  - d. What experience or training have you had that would contribute to your ability to serve as an EAP coordinator?
  
- 2. Interpersonal Skills**
  - a. Why do you believe employees would be comfortable confiding in you with their problems?
  - b. How would you encourage a timid or nervous client to discuss a problem with you?
  - c. How would you respond to a client who is resistant or negative towards you?
  - d. Do you feel comfortable speaking before groups?
  
- 3. Ethics and Confidentiality**
  - a. How would you define confidentiality and how does it relate to your role as an EAP coordinator?
  - b. How would you respond to pressure to disclose confidential information?
  - c. Why do you think it is important to maintain neutrality as an EAP coordinator?
  
- 4. Release time**
  - a. All new EAP coordinators are required to attend the New Coordinator Institute (generally a four-day, residential training). Do you anticipate any difficulty in attending this training?
  - b. An EAP coordinator needs time to meet with clients, develop resources, attend meetings and training, respond to critical incidents, conduct employee orientations, arrange lunchtime seminars, etc. Have you discussed the need for release time from



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your regular work assignment to fulfill your EAP coordinator responsibilities with your supervisor?

### **5. Miscellaneous**

- a. Are you familiar with any community resources that might be helpful referrals for employees?
- b. How would you promote EAP to employees?
- c. Being an EAP coordinator may change your work relationships in ways you can't imagine. You may be treated very differently by other employees, especially those who have been your clients. Is this something you think you would be able to accept?
- d. Employees must feel comfortable approaching a coordinator who, for example, engages in gossip or espouses strong political, religious or other opinions. What would you do to ensure employees were comfortable coming to you?

### **6. Do you have any questions for the Committee?**

Sample scenarios:

What would you do if.....

1. A client says "I just can't go on like this anymore?"
2. A supervisor asks about a client and says he is just asking because he is concerned about the individual?
3. A client says, "My supervisor told me to come here. She thinks I have a (drinking problem)(problem getting to work on time)?"
4. A client acknowledges having a problem, but refuses a referral?
5. An employee comes to you and you notice large bruises around her neck and when you ask what they are, she states 'my husband tried to strangle me last night'
6. A client discloses he is having an affair with an inmate?
7. A supervisor contacts you and said "I smell alcohol on one of my employees" and asks you to come over to speak to the employee?
8. An employee comes to your office and you smell alcohol on her breath?
9. An employee calls your office and tells you that he was arrested for DWI last night and asks if he will lose his job?
10. An employee asks you to write a letter stating why he needs to change his shift?



## Essex County Employee Assistance Program Coordinator Statistical Report Instructions

### 1. Client First Contacts

A “client” is a person who contacts EAP for information or assessment and referral services.

A “first contact” is a client’s initial contact with EAP to request assistance in resolving a problem. A “first contact” may be a phone call, an in-person visit, or an email. Every “first contact” should be recorded so the total number of clients seeking assistance from EAP is recorded. Record *one* “primary assessed problem/issue” for each client.

Examples of a first contact:

- An employee called to request information about summer programs for children. A summer camp catalog was provided.
- An employee emailed a coordinator requesting information about elder care for a family member and information was provided.
- A supervisor called requesting help in dealing with a troubled employee. Suggestions for dealing with the employee were provided.
- A family member called asking for assistance in dealing with his depressed daughter (who works for Franklin County). Information was provided and various options were discussed.

Examples of what is NOT a first contact:

- An employee called to schedule an appointment.
- An employee called to ask for office hours so she could stop by and get information about summer programs for children.
- An employee emailed the coordinator asking if the coordinator knew of any elder care resources. No resources were provided, just confirmation that EAP can help.
- A supervisor called to schedule an appointment.
- A family member called to see whether EAP would be a place to start to find help for his depressed daughter.

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**NOTE:** If an employee schedules an appointment only, and does not discuss details of the problem/issue, and fails to keep the appointment, it is NOT a first contact.

**NOTE:** The totals in Sections 1, 2, and 4 (Primary Issue) must be the same.

## 2. Sources of Referral:

Self – The client was aware of EAP and chose to contact the coordinator himself or herself.

Supervisor – The supervisor recommended the client seek EAP services.

Union – A union official recommended the client seek EAP services.

Co-worker – A co-worker recommended the client seek EAP services.

Family – A family member or significant other recommended the client seek EAP services.

Other – A person who does not fall into the above categories, e.g., physician, teacher, mental health provider, recommended the client seek EAP services.

**NOTE:** The total in Sections 1, 2, and 4 (Primary Issue) must be the same.

## 3. Follow-up Contacts:

Follow-up contacts are any subsequent contact with a client related to the client's initial presenting problem/issue. If the client returns with a different problem/issue, it is considered a "first contact."

### Examples of a follow-up contact:

- An employee is returning to work after treatment and calls the coordinator to let the coordinator know.
- An employee visited a local treatment provider and wanted to let the coordinator know how treatment is progressing.
- A coordinator has a signed *Consent for Release of Information* from a client to speak with the client's supervisor and calls the supervisor.
- A client was assessed on the phone (first contact) and then calls for an appointment to further discuss the problem/issue.
- A coordinator has an informal, brief discussion in the cafeteria with a client, who informs the coordinator that a resource was very helpful.
- A coordinator researches resources for a client and follows up with the client to provide the resources.

#### 4. Assessed Problems/Issues:

##### Primary Issue

The primary assessed problem/issue is the client's most significant problem/issue as identified by the coordinator based on the coordinator's assessment of the client's situation. The client may present with more than one problem/issue. However, only the most significant problem/issue should be reported as the Primary Issue. There should be only *one* Primary Issue. Other problems/issues should be reported as Additional Issues.

**NOTE: The totals in Section 1, 2, and 4 (Primary Issue) must be the same.**

##### Additional Issues

The Additional Issues are the client's other problems/issues as identified by the coordinator based on the coordinator's assessment of the client's situation. This section is where a coordinator can record multiple problems/issues, excluding the Primary Issue.

#### 5. Critical incidents:

A "critical incident" is an *extraordinary* event that significantly and negatively affects one or more employees. A critical incident may happen in the workplace or outside of the workplace. If an EAP coordinator provides any services in response to a critical incident, such as a needs assessment, "walk-arounds", or "stand-ups", a critical incident report should be completed.

Examples of critical incidents:

- An employee is shot while on duty
- An employee commits suicide over the weekend and employees learn of it when they return to work Monday morning.
- An employee has a heart attack at work and later dies at the hospital.
- An employee is assaulted by a patient at work and is seriously injured.
- A long-time, well liked supervisor dies at home after a lengthy illness leaving co-workers grief stricken.
- There is a riot at a prison and hostages are taken.
- Several employees witness a fatal accident
- An employee is injured in a traffic accident while on duty.
- Only the EAP coordinator who was primarily responsible for responding to the critical incident should report the "critical incident" on the statistical report. This

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same coordinator should complete the Critical Incident Report and submit it to the regional representative within one week. Only one CIR should be submitted per incident. Other EAP coordinators who assisted with the response should note their time in the Distribution of EAP Coordinators Time section of the statistical report.

## **6. Client Consultation:**

Consultations may include discussions with an EAP regional representative, another EAP coordinator, employees, health insurance providers, healthcare or other providers, supervisor/management, or union representative regarding the employee

### **Examples of a client consultation:**

- EAP regional representative/EAP coordinator: a coordinator called regarding a complex case.
- Employee: a coordinator received a call from an employee worried about a co-worker. The coordinator advised the employee to refer the co-worker to EAP.
- Health Insurance Provider: a coordinator contacted a health-care provider to clarify a coverage question.
- Healthcare or Other Provider: a coordinator contacted the local food bank for services for a client.
- Supervisor: a supervisor called to alert the coordinator that he or she is making a referral to EAP.
- Union: a coordinator called a union representative for clarification on union policy information.

## **7. Orientation/Training:**

EAP Training: an interactive session between a trainer and participants with the goal of increasing their knowledge of EAP and additional skills; training provided to EAP coordinators and committee members by FC EAP to further an understanding of the EAP and enhance the ability of the coordinators and committee members to fulfill their EAP roles and responsibilities.

EAP Employee Orientation: an informational overview of the EAP program for staff new to an agency.

EAP Management Orientation: an informational overview of the program benefits of EAP program for department heads and supervisors of an agency.

EAP Union Orientations: an informational overview of the benefits of the EAP program for union members.

*EAP Training for Supervisors*: an informational overview of the program for new or seasoned supervisors. This will explain the benefits of early referral to EAP.

NOTE: The EAP coordinator primarily responsible for delivering a supervisory training program should complete this section and list the number of sessions and attendees. Other EAP coordinators who assisted with this training should note their time in the Distribution of EAP Coordinators' Time section of the Statistical Report.

**8. Promotion/Wellness Programs:**

- Promotion includes events such as “meet and greets”, union meetings, health fairs, lunch-time seminars, and wellness programs.
- Enter the number of health and wellness events and the total number of attendees.
- Enter the number of “meet and greet” events and the total number of attendees.
- Enter the number of the other meetings in “Other” category. This may include presenting information about EAP at various other agency or facility meetings.

NOTE: The EAP coordinator primarily responsible for the promotion or wellness program should complete this section. Include the number of sessions and attendees. Other EAP coordinators who assisted with the event should note their time in the Distribution of EAP Coordinator's Time section of the statistical report.

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### Distribution of EAP Coordinator's Time

**Time is recorded in hours e.g., 2.00, 2.25, 2.50, 2.75**

Client contact includes all contact with clients, including initial contact and follow-up. Time spent in response to a critical incident is recorded below.

Critical Incident Response includes discussions with the EAP regional representative, other EAP coordinators, and management or union representatives regarding formulating a response to a critical incident in the workplace, assessing the needs of the employees, resource identification and dissemination, "walk-arounds", coordinating response services, and assisting with related training. Be sure to include and record **all** time spent on a critical incident.

Consultation includes discussions with the EAP regional representative, other EAP coordinators, employees, health insurance providers, healthcare or other providers, supervisors, management, and union representatives regarding EAP and other organizational issues.

Orientations/Trainings includes all orientations, trainings, and professional development presented by the EAP coordinator or that the EAP coordinator attends.

Promotion includes health and wellness programs, "meet and greets", union conventions/meetings, attendance at lunchtime or "brown bag" seminars, and other events designed to promote EAP to employees.

Administration includes report preparation, clerical duties, grant applications, attendance at meetings, resource development, and preparation of promotional activities. Include all time from section 9 – EAP Activity Preparation Contacts here.

Travel includes travel related to the EAP coordinator's official duties as an EAP Coordinator and must adhere to the EAP coordinator's agency travel policy.



### Essex County Employee Assistance Program Coordinator Statistical Report

<p><b>1. Client First Contacts</b></p> <p>Employees _____</p> <p>Family Members _____</p> <p><b>TOTAL</b> _____</p>	<p><b>2. Sources of Referrals</b></p> <p>Self _____</p> <p>Supervisor _____</p> <p>Union _____</p> <p>Co-worker _____</p> <p>Family _____</p> <p>Other _____</p> <p><b>TOTAL</b> _____</p>	<p><b>3. Follow-up Contacts</b></p> <p>Employees _____</p> <p>Family Members _____</p> <p><b>TOTAL</b> _____</p>																																																																																	
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**Essex County Employee Assistance Program  
Coordinator Statistical Report  
Distribution of EAP Coordinator’s Time**

**Hours\***

**Client Contact** (First Contacts and Follow-ups) \_\_\_\_\_

**Critical incident Response**

Discussions with EAP regional representative, other coordinators,  
Union/management, resource providers; needs assessment, and “walk-arounds” \_\_\_\_\_

**Consultation**

EAP regional representative/EAP coordinators \_\_\_\_\_  
 Employees \_\_\_\_\_  
 Health insurance providers \_\_\_\_\_  
 Healthcare or other providers \_\_\_\_\_  
 Supervisors/management \_\_\_\_\_  
 Union representatives \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Orientation/Training**

Preparations for orientations/trainings \_\_\_\_\_  
 Presentations of orientations/trainings \_\_\_\_\_  
 Attendance at NYS EAP trainings \_\_\_\_\_  
 Attendance at other professional development \_\_\_\_\_

**Promotion/Wellness**

Health and wellness programs \_\_\_\_\_  
 “Meet and Greets” \_\_\_\_\_  
 Union meetings \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Administration**

Report preparation/clerical duties \_\_\_\_\_  
 EAP committee meetings and other meetings \_\_\_\_\_  
 Resource Development \_\_\_\_\_  
 Preparation for promotional activities \_\_\_\_\_

**Travel** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Total Hours Spent on EAP Work** \_\_\_\_\_

\*Time should be recorded in hours, e.g., 2.00, 2.25, 2.50, 2.75