

Employee Assistance Program

Implementation Guide – Ministry of Health PD2011_040

Policy Number 3.045

Policy Function Human Resources

Issue Date 31 August 2016

Summary The Employee Assistance Program is an early intervention strategy which provides appropriate, timely, professional and confidential counselling and referral services for employees in order to assist them to identify and resolve professional, personal, health or work related issues.

This policy provides policy and procedures on the Employee Assistance Program for JH&FMHN staff, in accordance with Ministry of Health policy directive PD2011_040.

Responsible Officer Executive Director Governance & Commercial Services

Applicable Sites

- Administration Centres
- Community Sites (e.g. Court Liaison Service, Community Integration Team, etc.)
- Health Centres (Adult Correctional Centres or Police Cells)
- Health Centres (Juvenile Justice Centres)
- Long Bay Hospital
- Forensic Hospital

Previous Issue(s) Policy 3.045 (September 2012 & July 2007)

Change Summary

- No changes suggested as PD2011_040 has not changed

TRIM Reference POLJH/3045

Authorised by Chief Executive, Justice Health & Forensic Mental Health Network

1. Preface

Justice Health & Forensic Mental Health Network (JH&FMHN) is committed to providing all staff with a safe and healthy work place through a range of effective employment strategies. This commitment recognises the obligation as an employer to support staff and the important link between staff performance and the achievement of the strategic outcomes.

What is an Employee Assistance Program (EAP)? An EAP is an early intervention strategy which provides appropriate, timely, professional and confidential counselling and referral services for employees in order to assist them to identify and resolve professional, personal, health or work related issues. An effective EAP represents a flexible response to concerns in the private or work life of employees that may impact on their health, safety, wellbeing or performance.

This policy provides a framework to assist managers and staff to identify and address work related and personal issues and problems before they begin to affect work performance by ensuring an EAP is available to staff in accordance with Ministry of Health (MoH) [PD2011_040](#) *Employee Assistance Programs: NSW Health Policy and Standards*.

2. Policy Content

2.1 Mandatory Requirements

- Managers must pro-actively manage the provision of the EAP. This will include the provision of information to staff on the EAP and the use of the EAP as a strategy to address staff issues and problems.
- Management training and development programs conducted by JH&FMHN should include information on the EAP.
- Participation by staff is voluntary and at no cost to staff for up to three counselling sessions.
- Use of the EAP is confidential and staff should have confidence that use of the EAP will not jeopardise their career.

JH&FMHN currently utilises the services of an external [EAP provider](#) who is contracted to provide a range of services using highly skilled, experienced and mature counsellors who are either registered psychologists, social workers or other allied health professionals. This service is confidential and may involve up to a maximum of three (3) free counselling sessions.

Recording and Reporting of Information

To evaluate the effectiveness of the EAP, the external provider will be asked to provide regular reports and de-identified data analysis on the service provided. This de-identified data will focus on the type of service provided, the reasons why staff access the service and staff numbers by work location. The confidentiality of the actual staff involved will be maintained.

2.2 Implementation – Roles and Responsibilities

Staff

Staff are responsible for taking action to address their issues and problems before they impact on their work performance or their work colleagues.

Managers and Supervisors

Managers and supervisors are responsible for:

- ensuring EAP contact details are available in the workplace;
- ensuring they have the knowledge and skills to be able to brief staff on the EAP;
- including information on the EAP in the orientation of new staff as part of the department orientation;
- supporting staff who wish to access the EAP and
- recommending staff to EAP who they believe require it.

Executive Directors/Service Directors

Executive Directors and Service Directors are responsible for ensuring staff are aware of the EAP through orientation, the availability of promotional material and for encouraging managers to actively promote the use of the EAP.

Workforce Department

Workforce is responsible for:

- promoting and supporting the EAP to managers and staff;
- monitoring, reviewing and evaluating the EAP program and its providers to ensure operational effectiveness;
- ensuring regular data collection and
- providing program reports and program evaluation.

3. Procedure Content

Staff and their immediate family may contact the external EAP provider directly without the need for approval from their manager. This confidential service is available 24 hours a day and is designed to provide short term intervention support for staff in a broad range of issues including workplace incidents, conflict, dealing with difficult situations, substance dependency, loss and grief. This short list is not all inclusive and staff should not be constrained by the list.

Contact details for the external provider are available on the [JH&FMHN Intranet](#) as well as in a range of documents including staff orientation, staff notices, staff newsletters and pamphlets on the EAP.

3.1 Trauma Counselling

A separate trauma response service is provided by the external provider for critical incidents such as a death, adverse clinical incidents, physical abuse, serious or extended verbal abuse, incidents that are dangerous, life threatening and/or traumatic. Access to this service is not initiated by the employee.

The above list of incidents should be taken as a guide only and managers should not feel constrained by the list if they believe there is a need for assistance.

Nursing Unit Managers with prior approval from their Nurse Manager or the After Hours Nurse Manager may contact the external provider. Other managers (non-nursing) require prior approval from their Executive Director or Service Director before contacting the provider.

Trauma counselling does not include requests for intervention in staff conflict, mediation, team building or associated organisational issues.

3.2 Organisational Interventions

From time to time JH&FMHN may require assistance in dealing with a workplace conflict or situation that requires management intervention. This may include team building or other group activities. Where a manager is considering utilising an external provider, which does not need to be the EAP contracted provider, written approval in advance is required from the relevant Executive Director. Managers are required to submit a written proposal to their Executive Director that covers the following information:

- Background including staff involved and the need,
- Expected outcomes,
- Details on the activity including duration, provider and location, and
- Estimated costs.

3.3 Conflict Resolution and Mediation

JH&FMHN policy [3.090 Grievance Management](#) recognises the need for workplace conflict and staff grievances to be addressed. In most instances it is expected that these will be dealt with at the local level by the staff involved and if necessary their manager(s). When it is necessary to involve an external provider to assist with resolving the issue, the procedure detailed in [Section 3.2](#) must be followed.

4. Definitions

Must

Indicates a mandatory action required that must be complied with.

Should

Indicates a recommended action that should be followed unless there are sound reasons for taking a different course of action.

5. Legislation and Related Documents

Legislation [Anti Discrimination Act 1977](#)
 [Health Services Act 1997](#)
 [Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994](#)

[Work Health & Safety Act 2011](#)

Ministry of Health

[NSW Public Health System Awards](#)

[PD2011_040](#) *Employee Assistance Programs: NSW Health Policy and Standards*

JH&FMHN Policies

[3.090](#) *Grievance Management*