

Employee Assistance Programs

What is an Employee Assistance Program?

- Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) are company- or union-sponsored programs that serve the needs of employees and their families.
- EAPs serve needs by identifying and addressing work-related or personal health, economic and social issues.
- Employee assistance can be offered on site by a company staff member, or an employer may bring in an outside company whom offers EAP's.

What is included in an EAP?

- Employee Assistance can consist of many variables. Some programs are as simple as a small file where employees can find contact numbers for help.
- Most EAP services include some or all of the following: assessment, referral, aftercare/follow-up, management consultation, supervisory training, employee education, individual or motivational counseling and drug-free workplace policy development and implementation.
- Services are provided through internal, external, internal/external, consortiums (between various companies) and union-based structures.

Why does your company need Employee Assistance Program?

- EAPs are an excellent benefit to employees and their families. They clearly demonstrate employer's responsiveness and respect for their staff.
- EAPs also offer an alternative to dismissal and minimize and employer's legal vulnerability because they clearly show a company's effort to accommodate troubled employees.

How does an Employee Assistance Program work?

- Employees or family members can be referred to the EAP by self referral with no management involvement, employees or family members directly contact the EAP, or supervisory referral where supervisors recommend an employee to the

EAP based upon the employee's perceived need and the drug-free workplace policy.

What are the types of Employee Assistance Programs?

- **Member Assistance Program:** MAPs are provided by unions and, like EAPs, these vary considerably in design and scope. MAPs undertake a range of prevention, problem identification, referral, and counseling activities for workers and their dependents.
- **Peer Assistance:** PAs are generally sponsored by employers and/or unions and use trained peers to work with troubled employees to address substance abuse as well as other problems within certain rules and limits. This type of assistance program is often used in employment settings in which supervision is less direct or frequent.
- **Management Sponsored:** EAPs are generally provided by employers or jointly by employers and unions. These programs vary considerably in design and scope. Some focus only on substance abuse problems; others undertake a 'broad brush' approach to a range of employee and family problems.

How do you select an Employee Assistance Program?

- There are no universal standards for employee assistance program services or for the qualifications of program staff. In some states, however, there are established guidelines and there are national organizations that address the question of standards.
- The Employee Assistance Society of North America maintains an accreditation program that sets standards for internal and external employee assistance programs.
- The Employee Assistance Professional Association is a professional membership organization that certifies the qualifications of individual employee assistance practitioners.

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