

EAP Referral Tips for Supervisors

- 1. Call ahead to obtain** an EAP appointment prior to meeting with your employee and making a supervisor referral. If the employee agrees to a referral, offer the appointment, and have the employee call the EAP to confirm it. This is the best approach. Expect confirmation of EAP attendance that occurs “on duty.” Do not document “EAP appointment” in a log book or in other attendance control document/system. Use the term “personal health”, if necessary.
- 2. There are only two types** of referrals to EAPs: “self” or “supervisor”. All supervisor referrals are based upon documented performance problems that may include: absenteeism, availability, tardiness, conduct, quality of work, attitude, or other behavior considered by management as unacceptable.
- 3. The EAP learns about** the type of referral from the employee, or your report of a pending supervisor referral provided by telephone and a faxed *Supervisor Referral Form*. (www.apsva.us/eap). Without this form, the EAP relies upon what the employee self-reports during an intake.
- 4. An EAP is not** disciplinary. Use of the EAP is voluntary. Motivation to use the EAP results from self-awareness of a personal problem, which usually leads to self-referral, or concern about administrative consequences for continuing performance problems that may result from a personal problem.
- 5. There is no such thing** as a mandatory referral. EAP theory and practice only provide for a supervisor referral or self-referral. Calling a referral “mandatory” takes the choice to go to the EAP away from the employee, reduces motivation in the EAP interview, and links discipline to the EAP. This lowers EAP utilization by the rest of the workforce.
- 6. Employees are asked** to sign a “consent for the release of confidential information” at the EAP when referred by supervisors. Most sign this release, but a few refuse. This has no bearing on your administrative response to performance problems. A release allows the EAP to acknowledge your employee’s participation in the program; whether recommendations were made (not the nature of those recommendations); and, cooperation with recommendations. You are still in control of performance management. This information is useful if you have held an administrative action in abeyance as an accommodation for your employee who is requesting or accepting EAP assistance.
- 7. Expect an EAP follow-up** call to you. If no follow-up call is forthcoming after a referral, call the EAP. This may be the result of no signed release or participation. It is the EAP’s responsibility to call you, BUT, call the EAP rather than remain concerned about the employee. Follow-up is individualized. The EAP and the supervisor should discuss the frequency of follow-up needed.
- 8. Do not badger or otherwise** try to “influence” your employee to go to the EAP. Let the employee be attracted to the EAP by self-awareness of a personal problem, or other external factors that provide a sense of urgency. This could obviously include possible disciplinary action for continuing problems. Employees who are badgered to visit the EAP come with little intent to discuss their problems. (e.g., “Well, here I am. My supervisor said I had to come.”)
- 9. If the employee refuses** to accept an EAP referral, this will have no bearing on your ability to act administratively. Do not require the employee to sign the *Supervisor Referral Form* to acknowledge refusal to go to the EAP. (An employee could refuse to go to the EAP, but later change his/her mind. Or, just the opposite -- agree to go, then later refuse.) Acknowledgement of EAP attendance is never placed in the personnel file or performance evaluation document.