



A Guide For NIH Leadership

*Employee Assistance Program
Utilization to Enhance Workplace
Productivity and Wellness*

Employee Assistance Program

Free • Confidential • Voluntary



Building 31, Room B2B57
(301) 496-3164

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As one of the nation's premier health research agencies, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) is committed to improving the health of our citizens. Consistent with this mission, NIH is dedicated to fostering the wellness of its employees. NIH provides its workforce with a full service Employee Assistance Program (EAP), staffed by professionals with licensure and certification in workplace wellness and behavioral health. EAP is free to all members of the NIH workforce and their immediate family members. EAP services are strictly confidential.

CHALLENGES TO SUPERVISORS

As a supervisor, you have the dual challenge of being responsible for the productivity and wellbeing of those you oversee as well as your own work. Often described by supervisors as *one of the hardest parts of the job*, employee work/life balance, mental health and substance abuse issues can result in significant supervisory stress. Issues of this nature can adversely impact the productivity and morale of the larger work unit. Furthermore, supervisors faced with an employee's serious behavioral health concerns may experience a range of intense personal reactions including fear, guilt or compassion fatigue.

Employee Assistance Program Consultants understand these challenges, offer behavioral health expertise, guidance and support to assist supervisors successfully navigate such complex situations.




PREVALENCE OF MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES IN THE US WORKPLACE

- Each year, employees with depression cost employers an estimated 44 billion dollars in lost productivity
- Nearly 500 million workdays are lost annually due to alcohol abuse
- Employees who abuse drugs are likely to have absences of 8 days or more annually
- Adults with depression miss an average of 19.2 workdays annually
- Suicide is a leading cause of death among working-age Americans, the 2nd leading cause of death for people aged 25-34, and the 4th leading cause for people aged 35-44



Source: US Office of Personnel Management; US Department of Health & Human Services
June 19, 2014 Memorandum for Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies: Federal Workplace
Supports Mental Health

“When one of my employees was threatening suicide, I called EAP right away. The EAP Consultant immediately provided guidance and resources on how to handle the situation as a supervisor. Most importantly, the EAP Consultant, as a licensed mental health professional was able to provide a clinical assessment for the employee and de-escalate the situation with an action plan.”

A photograph of a modern, multi-story building interior. The image shows several levels with balconies featuring large glass windows and colorful panels in blue, yellow, and orange. In the foreground, there is a lounge area with green curved sofas and small round tables. The lighting is bright, and the overall atmosphere is clean and professional.

“It really drained me physically, emotionally and mentally when I supervised two very bright and productive employees who had problems getting along with each other. The EAP served as a valuable resource for me by providing the additional supervisory skills I needed to better manage ongoing discord between these two employees, and the proper procedures for referring them to the EAP for individual assistance on communication skills.”

WHAT IS THE EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM?

EAP is an effective organizational support resource that provides professional consultation, short-term counseling, referral and follow-up services to enhance personal and professional wellbeing. EAP consulting and counseling services are confidential. We also offer training and support to workgroups to address issues that impact the work environment.

Who may use the program?

All members of the NIH workforce and their immediate family members age 18 and older who reside with them, may use the program whenever they are experiencing personal or work-related difficulties. All NIH employees, supervisors and trainees are eligible for the full range of EAP counseling benefits. Onsite NIH contractors may be seen only for an initial visit in order to stabilize a situation and offer referrals.

“When an employee has a mental health concern or significant stress, timely access to mental health services and support can facilitate prompt recovery and avert a crisis... We need to do everything we can to provide employees and their supervisors with tools to recognize impending problems and be able to respond appropriately.”

Federal Workplace Supports Mental Health: Memorandum-US Office of Personnel Management & US Department of Health and Human Services



NIH EAP COUNSELING: DEMONSTRATING EFFECTIVENESS

The NIH EAP strives to have a positive impact on the NIH community. A psychometric measurement tool called the Workplace Outcome Suite (WOS) has been developed to measure the effectiveness of EAP services. The WOS is an assessment scale that was designed by Chestnut Global Partners (CGP), to verify the impact that an EAP has within the workplace. The WOS, used by more than 400 organizations worldwide, is a validated measurement tool to demonstrate EAP effectiveness. The WOS has undergone two independent validation studies to substantiate its reliability, and the results of both studies reinforce WOS usage to accurately measure the EAP's effectiveness within an organization.

The NIH EAP's WOS assesses change in work distress, life satisfaction, and work presenteeism. CGP defines work distress as "...the degree of discomfort associated with the work environment." Changes in life satisfaction is defined as "...a reflection of the work experience in the manner in which it affects the whole life of the employee." Changes in work presenteeism is defined as "...the extent to which the issue at hand adversely affects the respondent's ability to do his or her job."

Between 2012 and 2017, 632 NIH EAP users were assessed, both before and after EAP use. The WOS demonstrated that EAP intervention can be highly effective at improving the above three variables. The results indicate that approximately 90 days after EAP services were completed:

- There was an 18% decrease in work distress.
- There was a 16% increase in life satisfaction.
- There was a 26% decrease in work presenteeism.

All categories measured at NIH EAP in this analysis demonstrated desirable changes after EAP intervention at the $p < 0.001$.

“I called EAP when I had a lot on my plate as a supervisor and a caregiver for both my elderly parents and my children. I felt tired and stressed out all the time. I had a difficult time juggling my work and home responsibilities, especially when issues kept coming up unexpectedly. The EAP Consultant listened, provided strategies, and resources to help me define my priorities, improve assertiveness skills, make tough decisions, and identify personal and professional goals that helped enhance the balance in my life.”



“The EAP Supervisory Workshop was very informative and useful. It helped me gain an understanding of EAP services for all NIH employees as well as services specifically for supervisors. The workshop explored the impact of employee issues on individual and organizational well being. It also explained the beneficial impact of EAP services on individual and organizational wellness. I learned various effective strategies to address concerns with employees from this workshop and also got the credit that I needed to fulfill part of my mandatory supervisor refresher training requirement.”

WHAT SPECIALIZED SERVICES DOES EAP OFFER TO SUPERVISORS?

In addition to the supportive counseling benefits that all NIH workers may use, EAP also offers specialized services to supervisors.

Supervisory Consultation

- Intervention strategies for employees:
 - Absenteeism
 - Conduct
 - Emotional and behavioral concerns
- Work/life balance
- Intervention strategies for work group issues:
 - Morale
 - Reorganization
 - Work performance
 - Workplace conflict



- Guidance on various EAP referral methods for employees
- Supervisory stress management
- Assertiveness and communication training
- Supervisory role delineation
- Boundary-setting
- Accountability strategies
- Workplace coaching

SERVICES CONTINUED

Crisis Intervention Services

- Timely onsite individual and group support services for workgroups impacted by traumatic events including:
 - Death of a coworker
 - Organizational change
 - Problematic termination
 - Threatening behavior
 - Workplace violence



Training and Education

- Presentations for workgroups including:
 - Supervisory workshop (meets OPM/HHS supervisory refresher training requirements)
 - Emotional intelligence
 - Organizational change
 - Stress management
 - Workplace communication
 - For a complete list, call (301) 496-3164

“I didn’t know what to do when one of my staff passed away unexpectedly. I was glad that EAP was available to assist staff in processing the grief reactions. The EAP Consultants educated me and the affected staff on normal reactions to grief, promoted resilience strategies, and offered referral and follow-up services to those individuals who needed additional support. The comprehensive support that the EAP offered helped me, my staff and the organization to move effectively through the crisis situation.”



“It is great that EAP is available to the NIH community to schedule an EAP Orientation as well as specific training and hands-on workshops on a variety of topics ranging from Stress Management, Emotional Intelligence, and Work/Life Balance, to Organizational Change and Workplace Communication. Very practical and helpful.”

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What are some of the key differences between EAP counseling and supervisory consultation?

Counseling tends to focus on an individual's personal concerns while supervisory consultation pertains to issues involving an employee or workgroup under a supervisor's purview. Supervisors seeking consultation need not complete the paperwork required of EAP clients, and typically receive services telephonically.

What distinguishes the EAP from other NIH support resources?

Staffed exclusively by licensed mental health professionals, the EAP is the only NIH office designated by HHS to provide professional supportive counseling services to members of the NIH workforce. EAP is a neutral and non-administrative consultation resource at NIH that provides guidance on personal and interpersonal workplace issues from a behavioral health perspective.

Are EAP services REALLY confidential?

Yes! Confidentiality is a cornerstone of our service. No information about a client's involvement with EAP can be released outside of the EAP without that client's written consent, except in cases involving imminent safety risks or as otherwise required by law.

How do I request an EAP workshop for my department or workgroup?

NIH supervisors or department representatives may contact our office by phone or complete the online request form on the "Workshops" page of the EAP website to request a workshop.

Is there a cost to use EAP services?

No. All EAP services are provided at no cost to the NIH workforce. EAP services are pre-paid by NIH to support workforce wellness and productivity. Comparable services outside NIH can cost hundreds of dollars per encounter, so using EAP services can generate significant cost savings for the NIH workforce.

How do I contact the EAP?

For appointments, assistance or additional information, call (301) 496-3164. Additional contact information for the NIH EAP office is listed on the back panel of this brochure.

Notes





Employee Assistance Program at the National Institutes of Health

The EAP is staffed by social workers and professional counselors who have graduate degrees and licenses, as well as certification in the field of employee assistance. All staff members have extensive experience, receive continuous professional supervision, and regularly participate in continuing education and training. We are guided by the Employee Assistance Professionals Association (EAPA).

We provide services to NIH employees at the following locations:

Bethesda, MD	Baltimore, MD	Durham, NC
Rockville, MD	Frederick, MD	
Gaithersburg, MD	Hamilton, MT	

Contact Us

For appointments, assistance or additional information:
Phone: (301) 496-3164

Address

Office of Research Services
Division of Occupational Health and Safety
NIH Employee Assistance Program
Building 31, Room B2B57
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Online:

<https://www.ors.od.nih.gov/sr/dohs/EAP>

