

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to describe the Employee Assistance Program and the procedures to be followed in utilizing the service of the program.

2. GENERAL

- a. Wake Forest University provides professional assessment and referral services for employees with personal problems affecting their lives and thus their job performance. This assistance is made available to employees through the Employee Assistance Program, known as "Personal Assistance Network".
- b. The University recognizes that problems of a personal nature can have an adverse effect on job performance and that most personal problems can be dealt with successfully when identified early and referred to appropriate professional resources. The Employee Assistance Program has been established to help identify these problems and to provide referral to the most appropriate resource. The confidential program is designed to deal with a broad range of human problems such as mental or emotional disturbance, family or marital difficulties, alcoholism or other drug abuse, financial stress, or other concerns. The program provides on-site education, identification, diagnosis and referral. The overall goal of the Employee Assistance Program is to promote emotional wellness and to maximize job performance.

3. ADMINISTRATION OF THE PROGRAM

- a. The program is available to all employees of the University and their immediate family members. Targeted promotional material is made available through the distribution of promotional materials and information/education sessions.
- b. The program is available on a self-referral basis for employees and their immediate family members. When an employee has concerns about personal or family problems, he or she is encouraged to use the Employee Assistance Program.
- c. All records and discussions of personal problems are regarded as highly confidential. Records are maintained at the Employee Assistance Program office and do not become a part of the employee's personnel file. Records are not open to anyone without the written consent of the employee, except of statutory responsibility.
- d. Participation in the Employee Assistance Program will not adversely affect an employee's job security, reputation, opportunity for promotion, or career development.
- e. When performance problems are not corrected through normal supervisory attention, employees may be referred to the Employee Assistance Program by their supervisor. In

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

such instances, it is the employee's responsibility to comply with the referral and to pursue the counselor's recommended course of action. If performance problems persist, corrective action procedures may follow.

- f. Supervisory referrals will be based strictly on unsatisfactory job performance. Supervisors are not expected to diagnose personal problems. Supervisors should use the Employee Assistance Program as an adjunct to current human resource management policies and corrective action procedures.
- g. Leave from work will be in accordance with University leave policies.
- h. The Human Resources Department will conduct Employee Assistance Program training programs on a regular basis in order to familiarize managers and supervisors with their roles in the referral process.

4. REFERRAL PROCEDURES

a. SELF-REFERRAL

(1) An employee may recognize that a personal problem is causing progressive distress in his/her life long before it affects job performance and comes to the attention of the supervisor. Early recognition and treatment of such problems are major goals of a successful Employee Assistance Program. This awareness of one's own discomfort is an important factor in initiating personal growth. The cause of the problem may be unknown. However, this should not prevent an employee from seeking assistance from the Employee Assistance Program. It is the Counselor's role to assess the problem with the employee and to suggest options for treatment and/or rehabilitation.

(2) The following describes the procedures for self-referral:

- (a) The employee or family member calls the Employee Assistance Program to arrange a confidential appointment with a counselor. The Employee Assistance Program Counselors will have regularly scheduled appointment times, and a time will be scheduled for the employee as soon as possible. In emergency situations, the employee will be seen immediately. Whenever possible, appointments will be arranged outside the regular working hours.
- (b) The Employee Assistance Program Counselor and the employee/family member will discuss the concerns to determine the nature of the problem and to develop a treatment plan. The Counselor will review possible resource options and evaluate potential costs in accordance with benefit plan design. The Counselor will make a referral to the most appropriate resources and will follow-up to ensure quality of care.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

- (c) After hours emergency situations can be handled by either the Wake Forest University School of Medicine Psychiatry Resident on call or the North Carolina Baptist Hospital Pastoral Care Chaplain on call by contacting the Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center Emergency Department.

b. SUPERVISORY REFERRAL

- (1) The Employee Assistance Program is a valuable tool for the supervisor in dealing with employees experiencing job performance problems. When an employee has work performance problems, supervisory personnel will monitor and document the individual's behavior, recognizing that any one symptom does not necessarily indicate a problem. It is the responsibility of the supervisor to follow a procedure that insures that employees have the opportunity for evaluation and assistance.
- (2) The University does not discipline or terminate employees for failure to seek assistance from the Employee Assistance Program. Employees receive disciplinary actions and are subject to termination on the basis of poor job performance.
- (3) The following describes the procedure for supervisor referral:
- (a) The supervisor should document specific job performance problems. The documentation should include dates, incidents, and the specific performance deficits.
- (b) Upon **early** notice of performance decline, the supervisor should privately confront and support the employee. The supervisor should:
- 1 Be realistic and specific with the employee about his/her failing performance;
 - 2 Outline established expectations;
 - 3 Not attempt to identify underlying causes;
 - 4 Inform the employee of the availability of the Employee Assistance Program and how to utilize the confidential service;
 - 5 Advise the employee that this is a suggestion/recommendation to seek help on his/her own;
 - 6 Document this initial interview.
- (c) If performance continues at an unacceptable level, the supervisor should conduct a second interview and should:
- 1 Follow the steps outlined in 1 through 4 of 4.b.(3)(b) above;
 - 2 Make a referral to the Employee Assistance Program by calling the Employee Assistance Program office and making an appointment for the employee;
 - 3 It is the responsibility of the employee to comply with the referral for diagnosis of his or her problem and to cooperate with and follow the

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

recommendations of the Employee Assistance Program Counselor. If the employee refuses to comply with the referral to the Employee Assistance Program, this should be noted in the supervisor's file and the employee should be informed that he/she faces the consequences of appropriate job actions up to and including discharge, based on continuing poor performance. The Employee Relations Manager should be informed when a supervisor intends to make a formal referral.

- (d) The University does not discipline or terminate employees for failure to seek assistance from the Employee Assistance Program. Employees receive disciplinary action and are subject to termination on the basis of poor job performance.
- (e) After hours emergency situations requiring supervisory intervention will be handled by calling the University Police Department as warranted or by contacting the Wake Forest University School of Medicine Psychiatry Resident on call or the North Carolina Baptist Hospital Chaplain on call through the Emergency Department. The Director of the Employee Assistance Program should be informed of the acute event as soon as possible.

5. CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

- a. Confidentiality is a key element in a successful Employee Assistance Program. Employees are assured that when they seek assistance, personal information about them will be treated in a professional and confidential manner. Unidentifying demographic data will be compiled to provide the University with general statistics regarding utilization of the program and to provide for program evaluation.
- b. Employee Assistance Program counselors will, however, report information learned in the interviews to the appropriate authorities if required to do so by law. Examples of such statutory responsibility include: danger/threat to self or others. **No other information can be disclosed without the written consent of the Employee Assistance Program Client.**

Approved by the Vice President for Investments and Treasurer, July 1, 1999