

**WESTMINSTER COLLEGE  
EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM  
POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

**PURPOSE**

Westminster College maintains a strong commitment to its employees as a valued asset. This commitment is displayed in part through the **Employee Assistance Program**. The program is based on the premise that personal problems can negatively affect our lives and work situations. The objective of the program is to assist in reducing these problems and retain valued employees. If personal problems do affect work performance, the College has a responsibility to be concerned about the individual in relationship to College operations.

The majority of problems addressed by this policy can be successfully treated provided they are identified in early stages and referral is made for appropriate care. The program deals with a wide range of alcoholism, drug abuse, marital or family distress, financial or other concerns. The Employee Assistance Program provides employees with professional, confidential direction for personal problems.

**POLICY**

1. This Policy applies to all fulltime Westminster College employees, their spouses, and their dependents.
2. The program is a vehicle to assist employees and their immediate families with personal problems that are, or could be, adversely affecting job performance.
3. The policy and subsequent procedures do not alter personnel and administrative policies or the disciplinary process.
4. Participation in EAP is treated in a confidential manner. Records are maintained under a system separate from the College personnel records. The records will not be released to anyone without a signed release unless laws mandate release or a court order compels release. Aggregate statistics will be compiled and maintained. No names will appear among these statistics.
5. EAP provides assessment, short-term counseling, referral and follow-up in an effort to:
  - a. prevent problems that may interfere with a person's ability to perform his or her job;
  - b. rehabilitate employees whose problems may be affecting job performance;
  - c. retain valued employees;
  - d. motivate employees to assume more responsibility for his/her own health and well-being.
6. Employees referred to and participating in the EAP will be expected to meet

existing job performance standards and work rules. EAP is not a substitute for, nor does it preclude or alter disciplinary action.

## **PROCEDURES**

### I. Referrals

#### A. Self Referrals

Employees having personal problems which can adversely affect job performance are encouraged to seek assistance through the Employee Assistance Program via a self referral.

Self referrals occur at the employee's own initiative. The employee, in recognizing the need for assistance, consults with an EAP representative before job performance problems become an issue. No feedback will be given to supervisors.

#### B. Supervisor Referrals

If an employee has had satisfactory job performance in the past, but has begun to demonstrate deteriorated job performance, the supervisor may consider referring to the Employee Assistance Program. A referral to the EAP is appropriate when normal supervisory intervention has not been effective and when one or more of the following problem performance items exist:

#### **Declining Job Performance**

Erratic performance	Decision-making ability impaired
Missed Deadlines	Decreased effectiveness

#### **Attendance Problems**

Repeated tardiness	Excessive sick leave
Absent from work area	Repeated Monday/Friday absences

#### **Behavior Changes**

Emotional outbursts	Accidents at work
Conflict with fellow workers	Moody
Overreaction to criticism	Uncharacteristic anger/belligerence

The supervisor referrals are initiated by the supervisors. There are three (3)

types of supervisory referrals - suggested, recommended and mandated. The type of referral depends on the disciplinary step that is occurring.

The following guide illustrates the type of referral in relationship to the disciplinary step:

<b><u>Disciplinary Step</u></b>	<b><u>Supervisory EAP Referral</u></b>
No discipline step in process, concern about employee	Suggested EAP
Verbal Warning	Recommend EAP
Written Warning	Recommend EAP
Third Level Warning	Recommend EAP or Mandatory EAP involvement
Termination	As part of termination process, we may choose to inform the terminated employee that they can still use the EAP service as a transition tool

## II. Process for Supervisory Referrals - Suggested, Recommended, Mandated

- A. Suggested referrals occur when no disciplinary action is in process. The supervisor simply informs an employee or employees of the existence and availability of the Employee Assistance Program as a resource. This is considered an informal referral. In this situation, no feedback is given to supervisors.
- B. Recommended referral is initiated by the supervisor when an employee demonstrates deteriorating job performance. A recommended referral occurs when an employee's job performance has been verbally discussed and documented. Steps to a recommended referral are as follows:
  - a. With continuing observation, note changes in employee's job performance, behavior and attendance patterns, making sure each employee knows what is expected.
  - b. Keep a record of job performance problems, the date and time they occur and the expected level.
  - c. After consulting with immediate superior or Cabinet member and the Director of Human Resources, contact EAP representative to discuss possibility of referring employee.
  - d. Meet with EAP representative to review documentation surrounding employee's job performance problems.
  - e. Supervisor completes the EAP referral form. Make copies available

- to the employee.
- f. Verbal warning. Supervisor will hold a performance discussion in private with the employee. Comments noted in personnel file. Discuss recommended referral to EAP as a positive resource for employee.
  - g. Give employee an EAP brochure and/or business card and instructions on how to make an appointment or offer to make an appointment for employee.
  - h. Limit discussion to job performance issues. Do not diagnose or counsel employee with personal problems. If personal problems arise, explain to employee that a confidential resource is available to assist employee.
  - i. Employee has the option of accepting or rejecting a recommended referral.
  - j. Schedule a follow-up meeting with employee to discuss job performance and improvement or deficiencies that may occur. Coordinate with EAP representative, making sure the follow-up meeting is scheduled no later than two (2) weeks after EAP referral meeting. Ensure that immediate superior or Cabinet member and the Director of Human Resources are informed of all steps in the process.

C. Mandatory referral. Follow same steps for recommended referral except for the following variation:

- a. Mandated referral occurs when the supervisor, the Cabinet member, the Director of Human Resources, and EAP Coordinator decide a mandatory referral is the most effective referral method for the employee's situation.
- b. And when job performance problems still exist after a:
  - 1. verbal warning
  - 2. written warning and the employee is facing a third level warning or termination.
- c. Consult with the Director of Human Resources before making a mandatory referral to EAP. A mandatory referral requires the employee to participate in the EAP and follow the recommended treatment plan. Should the employee elect not to participate in the EAP, suspension from work or termination of employment may result.
- d. Explain to employee in requiring usage of EAP, you are giving them an opportunity to improve job performance problems by working out any personal issues that may be affecting their work.
- e. If the employee utilizes EAP and their work performance problems continue, the supervisor continues with the normal disciplinary process.
- f. A mandatory referral requires the employee to:
  - 1. participate in EAP;
  - 2. complete the necessary Release of Information Authorization forms;
  - 3. follow-up with recommended treatment plan.

### III. Feedback to Supervisors

- A. Under a recommended or mandated referral, feedback to the supervisor is restricted to:
  - 1. Confirmation that employee did (or did not) meet with the EAP counselor.
  - 2. Acknowledgment that the employee is (or is not) cooperating with a recommended treatment plan.
  - 3. The return-to-work date, if treatment required extended time off.
- B. Disclosure exemptions to the above procedures would occur under the following circumstances.
  - 1. A written consent is obtained.
  - 2. A medical emergency occurs.
  - 3. A court order or subpoena requires disclosure.
  - 4. An employee represents a serious threat of life or safety to himself/herself or others.

### IV. Utilizing EAP Sessions

- A. The Employee Assistance Program offers 6 - 8 sessions of assessment, short-term counseling and referral services to employees and their immediate family members.
  - 1. Time off from work for utilization of the EAP should follow normal channels of approval, unless it is due to a supervisory "mandatory" referral, then the initial session can be scheduled during working hours without using vacation time.
  - 2. Additional sessions will be scheduled utilizing personal time or scheduling vacation. Again, normal arrangements should be made with the supervisor.

### V. Program Cost

- A. The EAP is a benefit to employees paid for by the College. There is no cost to the employee or their immediate family members for utilizing the service.
- B. If a referral to an outside individual or agency is in order, the employee would be held responsible for that cost, either by utilization of his/her health insurance or by making other arrangements. The EAP representative will assist the employee in obtaining costs of referral resources and health insurance reimbursement information. The EAP representative, however, cannot be held accountable for this information.

### VI. Summary

The EAP exists to benefit the organization, supervisors and individual employees. Supervisors are encouraged to refer employees early in the disciplinary process. Early referrals allow an employee the opportunity to address their personal problems before they escalate and correct job deterioration before it becomes a major disciplinary problem.

***Please direct any questions regarding these procedures or the referral of an employee to the Employee Assistance Program to your EAP Administrative Coordinator at 573-815-6034***