

Policy 8.16

POLICY TITLE:	Employee Assistance Program	POLICY # 8.16	
Topic Area:	HUMAN RESOURCES	Page 1 of 6	REVIEW DATES
Applies to:	Lakeshore Regional Entity (LRE) Staff	ISSUED BY: Chief Executive Officer	4/2/2018
Developed and Maintained by:	LRE CEO & Human Resources Coordinator	APPROVED BY: Board of Directors	
Supersedes:	N/A	Effective Date: 12/20/2016	Revised Date: 4/1/2017

I. POLICY

Employees are responsible for their performance and for taking constructive action to resolve any problems that affects or threatens to affect their on-the-job behavior. The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provides a confidential, professional resource for assistance in resolving problems through professional assessment, short term problem resolution and referral for services. Employees are encouraged to seek assistance through the EAP on their own, before performance is negatively affected.

II. PURPOSE

It is Lakeshore Regional Entity's belief that employees with a problem affecting job performance and/or attendance should receive the same careful consideration and offer of professional and confidential assistance that is presently extended to employees having health problems. Lakeshore Regional Entity (LRE) has an established Employee Assistance Program to provide professional, confidential assistance for problems, such as emotional stress, workplace conflict, parenting concerns, marital and family distress, and alcohol- and drug-related problems. The program is designed to encourage early awareness of such problems and to offer assistance at the earliest opportunity.

III. APPLICABILITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

LRE employees.

IV. MONITORING AND REVIEW

This confidential program is administered by LifeWorks, an independent consulting and service firm under contract with Unum.

V. ELIGIBILITY

1. All full-time and regular part-time employees
2. Household members of eligible employees
3. Benefit-eligible dependents of eligible employees

VI. PROCEDURES

1. The LRE's Employee Assistance Program covers up to 8 sessions per problem per year, legal and financial consultation, and work-life services.
2. All records pertaining to the EAP kept by LifeWorks will remain the property of LifeWorks at all times. The EAP will not reveal information about any individual's use of the EAP (including information that the individual discloses) to persons outside the EAP except in the following circumstances: (1) the individual consents in writing; (2) the law requires disclosure; or (3) EAP staff or counselors believe that disclosure is necessary to avoid a threat to life or safety.
3. The decision to seek or accept assistance through the EAP will not adversely affect an employee's job security or advancement opportunities. Because of the EAP's confidentiality rules, the LRE will not know of an employee's use of the EAP unless an exception to confidentiality applies or the employee signs consent for disclosure.
4. The LRE encourages employees with problems to take early advantage of the professional services provided through the EAP. LifeWorks staff members are available 24 hours/ day, 7 days/week to answer any questions about the EAP and the scope of available services.
5. Supervisors are responsible for implementation of this policy by remaining alert to all instances of substandard work performance and bringing these to the attention of the employee along with an offer of assistance at the earliest indication of a recurrent problem.
6. Employees are responsible for deciding to seek assistance through the EAP or to accept referral to the EAP.
7. Time off will be provided to eligible employees consistent with current policy and applicable benefits coverage.
8. The EAP is also available to household members and benefit-eligible dependents of the LRE employees because employee work performance and attendance can be affected by the problems of an employee's spouse, children, and/or household members.
9. There is no out-of-pocket cost for a covered member to use the EAP, however any costs incurred as a result of a referral made by the EAP for ongoing assistance to mitigate a presenting concern is the responsibility of the employee.

VII. REFERRAL GUIDELINES:

Employees may obtain professional assistance through the EAP in one of the following

ways:

- Self-referral;
- Supervisor recommendation;
- Management/supervisor referral;
- Mandatory referral;
- Family member assistance.

(Self-referrals and supervisor recommendations to use the EAP are fully funded by the LRE through premiums paid on eligible employees. Management/supervisor referral and mandatory referrals to the EAP are available to the LRE under the current program model. Check with human resource department prior to making a formal management/supervisor or mandatory referral.)

A. Self-Referral

1. An employee who desires confidential assistance for a problem should call 1-877-259-3785 where the call will be answered by a master's level EAP consultant.
2. The EAP representative will do an initial screening and either provide the necessary assistance on the telephone or will arrange for a referral to a counselor in the employee's community or other appropriate services.
3. There is no out-of-pocket cost for an employee who self-refers to the EAP for the assessment and short-term problem resolution services. It is fully funded by the LRE.

B. Supervisor Recommendation

1. When an employee brings a problem to the attention of the supervisor, but work performance and attendance are within acceptable standards, the supervisor should encourage the employee to use the EAP. The supervisor should explain to the employee how the program works and, when appropriate, offer assistance in contacting the EAP.
2. The EAP does not provide confirmation to the supervisor that the employee is using the EAP or otherwise communicate with the supervisor.
3. There is no out-of-pocket cost for an employee to use the EAP. It is fully funded by the LRE.

C. Supervisor/Manager Referral ("Formal Referral")

1. A supervisor, in consultation with his/her own supervisor and the Human Resources department, should make a formal referral to the EAP when an employee's work performance has shown a pattern of decline or problems otherwise appear to be interfering with an employee's work, for example:

- when an employee's work performance declines over a period of time (e.g., displaced poor judgment or decreases in productivity or work quality);
 - when an employee has absenteeism issues;
 - when an employee has difficulty working with others;
 - when a supervisor observes behavior that indicates the possible presence of a problem, excluding incidents of flagrant misconduct that require immediate disciplinary action.
2. The supervisor prepares a written account of the observed performance problem, including as much detail as possible, such as the dates, times, and descriptions of the pattern of behavior(s) or particular incident(s) that warrant supervisory action.
 3. The supervisor meets with the employee to discuss the performance problem and clearly communicate the consequences of failing to resolve the performance difficulty. The supervisor should not speculate as to the cause of the performance decline or engage in discussion with the employee about any problem that may be hampering the employee's performance and/or attendance. The meeting should focus solely on work performance and/or attendance. The supervisor is encouraged to consult with an EAP representative and with his/her own supervisor prior to meeting with the employee.
 4. After the employee has been confronted about the performance problem, the supervisor reviews this policy with the employee, advises the employee of the availability of confidential professional assistance for work-hampering problems, and strongly encourages the employee to accept the referral to the EAP. Use of the EAP is voluntary; the final decision whether to use the program is left up to the employee. The supervisor emphasizes the importance of correcting the performance problem and the availability of the EAP as a resource to help correct the performance problem.
 5. If the employee accepts the referral, the supervisor calls 1-877-259-3785 to make the referral. The supervisor furnishes the LifeWorks Management Line Consultant all information relevant to the employee's performance problem. The Management Line consultant furnishes the supervisor instructions for the employee to access the EAP based on the supervisor's referral.
 6. When the employee contacts the EAP, the Management Line Consultant obtains additional information and refers the employee to a counselor for in person assistance. The in person counselor informs the Management Line Consultant of his/her assessment of the employee's problem and progress in working on it. With the employee's written consent, the Management Line Consultant will tell the supervisor whether or not the employee kept the appointment and whether the employee has accepted the EAP's recommendations for addressing the problem.
 7. Supervisor referrals are not disciplinary measures and do not replace standard personnel policies and procedures for dealing with poor work performance or

other performance issues. Participation in the EAP in no way relieves an employee of the responsibility to meet acceptable work performance and attendance standards. Whether or not the employee chooses to accept assistance from the EAP, the supervisor reinforces the LRE's expectation for improved performance and the consequences for failing to improve. If the employee declines the offer of EAP assistance, the supervisor also points out that the EAP will be available should the employee wish to use it in the future.

8. Even with an authorization to confirm an employee's participation in the EAP, the Management Line Consultant will not disclose the employee's problem or plan of action to the supervisor.
9. There is no out-of-pocket cost for a covered member to use the EAP, however any costs incurred as a result of an external referral made by the EAP for ongoing assistance beyond the LRE's EAP limits noted above to mitigate a presenting concern is the responsibility of the employee.

D. Formal Referral

1. A formal referral is similar to a Supervisor/Manager Referral. It is a formal referral made by authorized internal medical/health services personnel on behalf of the organization following the process outlined under "Supervisor/Manager" referral (c.f. section C above) and remains voluntary on part of the employee.
2. The basis of the referral should be:
 - a) The identification of a mental health concern or substance abuse issue that may impacting a workplace problem and that may benefit from a professional assessment and short-term problem resolution; or
 - b) A request from the employee for advice or assistance regarding a problem.
3. Health Services staff should call the EAP via the 800 number and ask to speak to a Management Line Consultant to arrange an appointment between an EAP counselor and the employee.
4. The employee should be advised that the appointment with the EAP counselor constitutes part of the recommended treatment plan and that the referral will be documented in the employee's medical record. The decision to accept assistance through the EAP should be left up to the employee.

E. Mandatory Referral

1. Mandatory referrals may occur as a result of:
 - the result of a positive drug test under the company's drug and alcohol policy; and/or
 - workplace violence; and/or
 - severe behavioral health issues in the workplace that involve some level of job jeopardy

2. Under circumstances that warrant a mandatory referral, the employee's supervisor and Human Resources Coordinator together contact the EAP to discuss the situation.
3. The supervisor and Human Resources Coordinator meet with the employee per the description of formal supervisor referrals above. An employee's refusal to accept referral to the EAP and failure to authorize communication of the employee's compliance with EAP recommendations to the supervisor and to follow EAP recommendations is grounds for termination.
4. The employee is responsible for accepting referral to the EAP and complying with the recommended action plan.
5. With an authorization to disclose signed by the employee, the LifeWorks Management Line Consultant informs the Human Resources Coordinator whether the employee keeps EAP appointments and follows recommendations for addressing the problem. The EAP will not reveal any information the employee discloses to persons outside the EAP except in the following circumstances: (1) the individual consents in writing; with written consent of the employee the Management Line Consultant will confirm that the employee has engaged in the process and is participating in the recommendations. The Management Line Consultant will not disclose any of the content of what is discussed. (2) the law requires disclosure; or (3) EAP staff or counselors believe that disclosure is necessary to avoid a threat to life or safety.

F. Dependent or Household Member Assistance

1. An eligible dependent or household member who desires confidential assistance for a problem may call 1-877-259-3785 which is answered by a master's level EAP consultant.
2. The EAP representative will either provide the necessary assistance on the telephone or will arrange for a referral to a counselor office in the caller's community.

VIII. RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

8.11 Drug and Alcohol Free Workplace