

Baltimore Research and Education Foundation, Inc.	Employee Assistance Program Policy	No.		14
		Effective Date		03/12/2009
		Revision Letter		A
		Final Approval Signature	Approved at the BREF Board meeting held 1/26/2011	

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish the terms whereby the Baltimore Research and Education Foundation, Inc. (BREF) will provide employee assistance.

2.0 Scope

This policy applies to BREF employees.

3.0 Policy

3.1 BREF employees are eligible to participate in the VA Employee Assistance Program. This service makes counselors available to those employees seeking assistance with personal problems that could have an adverse affect upon work performance.

3.2 BREF employees who wish help should contact the Mental Health office in room 6C-164 or call ext.7350 to arrange for an appointment.

3.3 In addition, supervisors who become aware of an employee whose work performance, behavior or attendance has become unacceptable may discuss this problem with an employee assistance counselor in an effort to explore means of addressing the issue. If indicated, the employee may be encouraged to seek assistance through the program.

4.0 Revision History

Revision Date	Revision Letter	Name of Document Author	Description of Change
12/1/2008	A	Heather Riley	Put policy into approved format.
1/26/2011		Shirley Rutledge	No revisions. Policy approved at the BREF Board meeting held 1/26/2011.

October 2002

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

1. **PURPOSE:** To set forth policy and procedure for implementing an Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

2. **POLICY:** The VA Maryland Health Care System (VAMHCS) recognizes that a certain percentage of employees will experience a variety of personal problems that can have an adverse affect upon work performance. If left unattended, these could lead to performance problems of such magnitude that it would be necessary to terminate the service of such an employee.

a. Personal problems such as illness, either physical, mental or emotional; family difficulties such as financial crises, delinquent children and marital discord; legal problems or addictions such as alcoholism or drug abuse, are not uncommon in today's society.

b. The VAMHCS is concerned with the employee's personal problems only as they may affect job performance, the efficiency of the service, or are related to activity contrary to law.

c. Employees will not have their job security or promotion opportunities jeopardized by a request for referral assistance, except as limited by Public Law 92-225, relating to sensitive positions.

d. Employees who suspect they may have a drug or alcohol abuse problem, even in the early stages, are encouraged to seek information on a confidential contact source.

e. Every employee will be entitled to a maximum of four visits without charge to leave.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES:

a. **Facility Service Line Manager, Mental Health.** The Facility Service Line Manager for Mental Health is the designated EAP Coordinator for the VA Maryland Health Care System. The Facility Service Line Manager will be assisted in this program by an interdisciplinary team of site coordinators and counselors (see attachment A).

b. **Site Coordinators and Counselors.** The responsibilities of the site coordinators and counselors will include:

(1) Development, implementation and monitoring of the program.

(2) Establishing liaison with community resources.

(3) Organizing training programs for supervisors in conjunction with mental health services.

(4) Organizing educational programs for all employees that focus on response to personal problems and the nature of the EAP.

(5) Ongoing program evaluation and recommendation of changes in policy and procedures, when appropriate.

(6) Maintaining records which will provide data for program evaluation and annual statistical reports required by Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Headquarters and the Office of Personnel Management.

c. **Other EAP Contacts.** Also available for initial EAP contact and referral are:

(1) All supervisors.

(2) Employee health sections at each VAMHCS site.

(3) Union officials.

d. **Work Supervisors.** Supervisors at all levels are responsible for dealing with poor work performance. When an employee's performance is not satisfactory, this will be brought to the attention of the employee; and the employee will be confronted with the opportunities to coat-L. the problem through the assistance of the Employee Assistance Program if such performance is caused by a personal or health problem.

4. **ACTION:**

a. Employee's initial contact should be through the EAP triage coordinator at the employee's specific site whenever possible (attachment A).

b. Employees may refer themselves to the program by telephone calls or personal contacts with the EAP triage coordinator.

c. A supervisor who becomes aware of an employee whose work performance, behavior, or attendance is falling below an acceptable level is free to discuss the situation with an employee assistance counselor in an effort to clarify problems and explore means of resolving them. The work supervisor should document specific instances and/or circumstances of an employee's unacceptable performance or conduct and, at the proper point, confront the employee, inform the employee of the availability of the Employee Assistance Program, and encourage the employee to seek appropriate help. Once an employee has elected to seek assistance through the program, it is inappropriate for a supervisor to inquire further of a counselor about the employee's progress in the program unless the employee gives written permission for release of information. A supervisor may, however, ask a counselor whether an employee, who asked for time to see a counselor, actually did so and at what times.

d. All EAP records are confidential, and access to them is limited to the EAP triage coordinators and counselors.

e. In the event of a supervisor referral and if leave (annual, sick, excused or other) is granted, the EAP counselor will advise the supervisor, on request, whether or not an employee met with the EAP counselor and the length of time spent. In the case of a referral from a supervisor or union

representative, a supervisor is entitled to know whether a counselor recommendation was made to the employee and whether such recommendation was accepted.

f. The EAP counselor will conduct an assessment and provide information to employees and supervisors requesting assistance and will recommend appropriate community resources for necessary services and treatment. The employee will determine which resources to elect. When appropriate, with the permission of the employee, the EAP counselor will make direct contact with the service agency. In the event mental health counseling services are recommended and are not covered by the employee's health insurance or other insurance, appropriate community referrals will also be made.

g. Supervisors may also request time-limited EAP services for groups of consenting employees in need of time management and stress management skills, team building and/or conflict-resolution interventions. Supervisors should contact the EAP triage coordinator about the nature of services required, and an appropriate EAP provider will be assigned.

h. During the initial meeting with the EAP counselor, employees will be informed of the role of the EAP and the nature and extent of counselor-employee confidentiality (attachment B). Specifically, the EAP functions as an assessment and referral agency within the VAMHCS. Counseling sessions are limited to three or four sessions. Employees whose work-related problems remain unresolved beyond such time frame will be referred to appropriate providers in the community.

5. **REFERENCES:** VA Handbook 5019, Part VI, Chapter 10

6. **RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** The Facility Service Line Manager for Mental Health (116/MH) is responsible for the contents of this memorandum.

7. **RESCISSIONS:** VAMHCS Policy Memorandum 512-00-008, subject: Employee Assistance Program, dated October 1999
VAMHCS Policy Memorandum 512-00-008, subject: Employee Assistance Program, Supplement 1, dated March 2000

8. **RECERTIFICATION:** This document is scheduled for recertification on/before the last working day of October 2005.

For and in the
absence of

DENNIS H. SMITH
Director, VA Maryland Health Care System

Attachments: A - Counselor and Triage Coordinators
B – Confidentiality Statement

CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

The Employee Assistance Program has been developed because the VA.MHCS believes it is in the best interest of the employees, their families and the VAMHCS to establish a program which will help the employee deal with personal problems before they result in serious deterioration of an employee's health, family life, or job performance. This program offers the employee confidential consultation as well as referral to appropriate community resources when indicated.

_____ 1. IF YOU HAVE MADE THIS APPOINTMENT ON YOUR OWN, no one in the VAMHCS will know of your visit unless you inform someone. No one will get any information from the Employee Assistance Program unless you instruct us in writing.

_____ 2. IF YOUR UNION REPRESENTATIVE OR SUPERVISOR HAS ARRANGED THIS APPOINTMENT FOR YOU, due to your job performance, the union representative or your supervisor will receive the following information from us:

- a. That you kept the appointment.
- b. Whether or not we have made a recommendation to you (not the nature of the recommendation).
- c. Whether or not you accept/follow the recommendation.

I have read and understand the information on this form and the Employee Assistance Program memorandum.

Signature Employee Date