

## **SIYANCUMA MUNICIPALITY**

### **EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME (EAP)**

#### **1. BACKGROUND**

The Siyancuma Municipality is committed to the health and well-being of all its employees. We agree that it is in everyone's interest to deal with personal problems that affect job performance within the following framework.

- 1.1 The Siyancuma Municipality recognises that almost any human problem can be successfully treated provided it is identified in the early stages and referral is made to an appropriate source of care. This applies whether the problem is one of physical illness, mental or emotional illness, finances, marital or family distress, alcohol or drug abuse, legal problems or other concerns. Alcoholism and drug abuse are recognised as medical conditions that are responsive to treatment and rehabilitation. Covered charges for medical and professional treatment will be handled in accordance with the provisions of employees' medical aid fund.
- 1.2 An employee's job performance may deteriorate from expected standards and she/he may be unable or unwilling to correct the situation, either alone or with normal Siyancuma Municipality assistance. This indicates that there may be some cause outside the realm of job responsibilities that is the basic cause of the problem. The employee, therefore, is to be referred to the designated program resource for evaluation.
- 1.3 Unsatisfactory job performance can be identified by such factors as documented absenteeism, tardiness, accidents, use of the health benefit plan, and generally lower job efficiency that persists over a period of time, either continually or intermittently. The program is not to intrude or interfere in the private life of anyone.
- 1.4 Strict confidentiality of records and information will be maintained at all times, and programme participants will not have job security, promotion opportunities, or reputation jeopardised by participation in the program.
- 1.5 Programme participation is not compulsory. An employee with an unsatisfactory job performance record will be subject to the normal standard disciplinary procedure, whether she/he accepts or refuses referral for a diagnosis of the problem(s) or follow prescribed treatment.
- 1.6 Employees who have problems that they feel may affect their job performance are encouraged to voluntarily seek information on a confidential basis by contacting the Employee Assistance Programme counsellor and co-ordinator.

1.7 The EAP policy will not alter or supplement the existing procedures for correcting unsatisfactory performance and will not be a basis, in itself, for discipline. Furthermore, the EAP policy shall not in any way alter or amend the existing Labour Agreement.

1.8 The benefits of the Employee Assistance Programme are the following:

- increased productivity
- reduced turnover of staff
- lower authorised and unauthorised absence
- higher morale and job satisfaction
- better corporate image
- less sick leave
- fewer accidents

## **2. POLICY**

2.1 An employee's use of the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is voluntary. The Skills Development Officer will serve as the co-ordinator of the programme.

2.2 Employees experiencing medical/behavioural problems are encouraged to consult with an EAP counsellor before such problems affects job performance.

2.3 Employees demonstrating job performance deterioration or unsafe practices are encouraged to consult with the EAP counsellor to resolve these problems.

2.4 Supervisors are encouraged to consult with the EAP counsellor regarding the management of an employee with an identified medical/behavioural problem.

## **3. DEFINITION**

3.1 The EAP provides problem clarification, treatment resource referrals, and crisis intervention for Siyancuma Municipality employees who are experiencing personal or medical/behavioural problems, alcoholism or drug dependencies, marital or family difficulties, some medical conditions (including those related to stress), and some financial problems.

3.2 The EAP counsellor consults with supervisors, managers and staff when there is a question as to whether or not a medical/behavioural problem exists, as well as how to understand and manage a troubled employee.

#### **4. APPLICATION**

This standard practice applies to all Siyancuma employees.

#### **5. RESPONSIBILITY**

##### **5.1 EAP Coordinator**

The EAP coordinator is responsible for

- 5.1.1 Seeking professional help for employees and supervisors regarding medical/behavioural problems that affect or could potentially affect Siyancuma Municipality operations
- 5.1.2 Informing employees who contact the EAP of their rights as defined in the policies and practices of the EAP.
- 5.1.3 Consulting with supervisors on how to appropriately motivate employees with possible medical/behavioural problems to initiate involvement with EAP.
- 5.1.4 Ensuring that once the employee has initiated contact with the counsellor, counselling information may not be disclosed, except with the employee's informed consent. Such information may be disclosed when the counsellor and employee mutually agree that counsellor-to-supervisor communication is in the employee's best interest.

##### **5.2 Supervisors are responsible for:**

- 5.2.1 Knowing of the EAP policies and procedures, working within the established guidelines for referrals and feedback, and referring employees to the EAP when appropriate.
- 5.2.2 Prohibiting any employee from working who in the judgement of the supervisor appears mentally or physically unfit to perform his/her duties safely and efficiently until satisfactory evidence of fitness is secured and using EAP to facilitate the medical clarification process when a medical/behavioural problem is the likely cause.
- 5.2.3 Identifying employees whose work performance, unavailability for work, or on-the-job behaviour indicates possible medical/behavioural problems, and advising such employees in performance counselling sessions that using the EAP by the employee is recommended by the supervisor.

5.2.4 Continuing to monitor job performance of employees with medical/behavioural problems in the manner appropriate to all employees.

5.3 Employees have the following responsibilities:

5.3.1 To take whatever steps are necessary to resolve any medical/behavioural problems that are affecting their job performance.

5.3.2 To accept personal responsibility for work performance and to seek assistance if outside help is necessary to overcome problems that interfere with job performance. However, regardless of any employee's involvement, non-involvement, or promise of involvement with the EAP, the employee remains accountable for the supervisor for resolving performance discrepancies.

5.3.3 To provide medical clarification from a physician when required by supervisors because of a concern that the employee is not fit for duty. Employees may request that the EAP administer this clarification process and screen from physician reports and confidential information not relevant to job performance or safety issues.

## 6. CONTENT OF PROGRAMME

### 6.1 PREVENTION

*Prevention is a deliberate effort of the employer to prevent any personal or behavioural problems that can be detrimental to both the employer and the employee.*

The following prevention programmes will take place on a regular basis:

#### 6.1.1 Handling of stress

Courses and seminars that will advise employees how to cope with stress.

#### 6.1.2 Career Counselling

A course about the most important aspects of career counselling.

#### 6.1.3 Marriage- and family support

This includes marriage enrichment as well as relationships between parents and children. The focus will be on interpersonal relationships.

#### **6.1.4 Retirement counselling**

Seminars will be conducted that will include aspects about health, financial planning and emotional support.

#### **6.1.5 Financial Planning**

This includes financial life skills that will teach employees how to handle their finances.

#### **6.1.6 Medical prevention programmes**

This includes all industrial hygienic and health aspects, medical examinations and information sessions regarding medical matters, as well as specific actions like aids prevention.

#### **6.1.7 Trauma handling skills**

A course that will teach people how to handle trauma. The target group will be people who works in trauma related sections like fire brigade and traffic as well as people that may be subject to trauma (like cashiers - armed robbery).

#### **6.1.8 Others**

Topics like prevention of breast cancer, HIV/AIDS and related sicknesses, family trauma, parent-child relationships and others form part of prevention seminars.

### **6.2 COUNSELLING (SUPPORT)**

*Counselling is one-on-one situations where a person receives therapy and/or advice how to handle and take appropriate action to solve a personal problem. These sessions will be handled by the counsellor.*

Examples of different counselling sessions are the following:

#### **6.2.1 Career Planning**

Guidance to employees regarding career choices, study guidance and training.

### **6.2.2 Internal Interventions**

Counselling regarding any internal complaints and problems experience by departments or sections.

### **6.2.3 Retirement Counselling**

People that are due for retirement and need emotional support.

### **6.2.4 Post - traumatic stress handling**

Counselling for employees regarding accidents, death of family, needle pricks, armed robbery and death guidance.

### **6.2.5 Family bereavement**

Support will be offered when employees lost their family.

### **6.2.6 Emotional problems**

People experiencing emotional problems will receive counselling before they are referred for further help.

### **6.2.7 Legal problems**

People experiencing legal problems will receive counselling before they are referred for further help.

### **6.2.8 Injuries (medical)**

A medical service (due to injuries) will be rendered to personnel before they will be referred for further medical treatment.

### **6.2.9 Sexual harassment**

Support for men and women who are sexually harassed at work.

## **6.3 REFERRALS**

*If counselling fails or the counsellor is of the opinion that the person experiencing a problem needs specific attention, such a person will be referred to a professional or institution that specialises in the field.*

In most instances the employee's medical fund will cover the cost of outside professionals. Thereafter the choice is for the individual to continue therapy and/or treatment. The cost of therapy is very high and it is **not the responsibility of the employer** to cover these costs. The employer already contributes by providing medical schemes for the employee (employer contributes 60% to monthly payment). Most medical schemes make provision for psychological treatment. It is also not the responsibility of the employer to solve all the problems of the employee, but rather to act in assistance and supporting role.

There are institutions that render services for problems like alcohol and drug addiction, as well as different religious pastoral services that support people with related problems. The idea is to make contact with these institutions and refer people with problems to them.

The cases will be referred for professional assistance with the permission of the patient:

### **6.3.1 Drug dependency**

Employees addicted to drugs of any kind who needs professional help.

### **6.3.2 Alcoholism**

Employees dependent on alcohol who needs professional help.

### **6.3.3 Marriage- and family support**

Employees who need professional help as a result of marriage deterioration or other family problems.

### **6.3.4 Financial counselling**

People experiencing financial problems who need advice to solve their problems may be referred to financial experts and institutions.

### **6.3.5 Personality disorders**

People with personality disorders that need professional treatment.

### **6.3.6 Post-traumatic stress handling**

People that need professional assistance after a traumatic experience.

### **6.3.7 Legal problems**

Employees experiencing legal problems may be referred for professional assistance.

### **6.3.8 Emotional problems**

People that experience emotional problems and needs professional assistance.

### **6.3.9 Medical references**

Employees that need specialised medical treatment will be referred to medical practitioners or specialists.

## **7. REGISTRATION PROCESS**

Every employee must complete a registration form giving permission to be treated on the programme or referred for further support.

## **8. RECORD KEEPING**

The EAP coordinator will keep confidential records.

## **9. OTHER PRINCIPLES**

9.1 The EAP coordinator may not disclose any information of a participant, except in cases where the necessary permission is granted by the relevant employee.

9.2 The counsellor will not compile any formal report after counselling. The diagnosed form will serve as reference.

9.3 No confidential or any other information may be used in any disciplinary case. Employees who want to use information received for treatment in a disciplinary case must obtain information from an external source at his/her own freewill.

9.4 No union representative will be allowed to accompany any worker during counselling sessions. The reason is that counselling is always a one-on-one situation and confidential in nature. People that do not agree to this arrangement will not be allowed on the programme.

- 9.5 The counsellor may refuse to treat an employee in cases where he/she feels that the case is inappropriate or the employee wants to misuse the programme.
- 9.6 No information may ever be bind into a personal file of an employee.

**MAYOR :**

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**DATE POLICY APPROVED : 04 NOVEMBER 2010**

**RESOLUTION :**

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