



Lehigh University Human Resources Policy

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| Policy Number: | 303 |
| Effective Date: | 10/1/1990 |
| Revisions: | 10/1/2006 |
| Applicability: | All Full Benefits Eligible Faculty and Staff Members |

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM POLICY

Purpose:

Policy on Lehigh's Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Policy:

Introduction

Lehigh has a strong commitment to the health, safety, and welfare of its employees, their families, and the members of the community. Lehigh recognizes that a variety of personal problems can disrupt employees' personal and work lives. Many employees solve their problems either on their own or with the help of family and friends. However, sometimes employees need professional assistance and advice. While there is no intent to intrude upon employees' private lives, the University believes it is in the best interests of the employees, the employees' families, the University, and the community at large to provide a service which helps employees deal with such problems. Lehigh provides an employee assistance program to help, and encourages employees and dependents in need of assistance to use it.

Integrated Behavioral Health (IBH), manages Lehigh's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and is available to assist employees in a confidential, constructive, and effective manner consistent with good therapeutic and business practices.

IBH may be accessed by calling 800-395-1616 or through the internet at <http://ibhcorp.com>.

Policy

Through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), Lehigh provides confidential access to professional counseling services for help in confronting such personal problems as alcohol and other substance abuse, marital and family difficulties, financial or legal troubles, and emotional distress. The EAP offers problem assessment, short-term counseling, and referral to appropriate community and private services.

Eligibility: The EAP is available to all full benefits eligible faculty and staff members working at least 75 percent effort and their dependents. Employees are eligible for three (3) assessment/brief service counseling sessions (of 50 minutes) per incident at no cost. Inpatient and/or long term outpatient treatment or other services are the financial responsibility of the employee and may be offset via health insurance available to employees.

Employees can make use of the EAP in two ways:

- The resolution of a problem within the basic service framework provided by an EAP counselor, or
- For more complex matters, the identification of other professional programs considered useful in assisting the employee.

Confidentiality: The EAP is strictly confidential and is designed to safeguard an employee's privacy and rights. Information given to the EAP counselor may be released only if requested by the employee in writing. All counselors are guided by a professional code of ethics. Personal information concerning employee participation in the EAP is maintained in a confidential manner. No information related to an employee's participation in the program is entered into the personnel file.

When it is necessary for a representative of the EAP to consult another person such, as the referral source, supervisor, or the ongoing service provider, release forms must be signed by the employee.

Information from program records must be disclosed upon receipt of a Subpoena or Order from a Court of competent jurisdiction or in accordance with applicable Federal and State laws and regulations. Also, situations involving jeopardy to life or the welfare of co-workers or others releases the EAP from its pledge of confidentiality and invokes the "duty to warn" concerned others. Parties affected by these caveats will be advised either personally or in writing to their last known address.

Time away from work: Use of the EAP via Self-Referral or Supervisory Referral is to be arranged so as not to conflict with an employee's normal working hours. If this is not possible, normally scheduled work hours spent conferring with an EAP counselor will be considered as sick leave/excused absence. Time off (via sick leave/excused absence) may be granted on a case-by-case basis for Formal Management Referrals. If a staff member prefers to use the program anonymously, vacation hours can be used to cover the absence.

Costs: There is no cost for an initial employee consultation with an EAP counselor. If further counseling is necessary after the initial three visits, the EAP counselor will outline community and private services available. The counselor will also let employees know whether any costs associated with private services may be covered by their health insurance plan. Costs that are not covered are the responsibility of the employee.

Procedures

Accessing the EAP: Services of the EAP may be initiated in one of three ways:

- **Employee Self-Referral:** Employees/dependents experiencing a personal problem can contact the EAP directly, without the knowledge of the University and are encouraged to do so. Employees/dependents who voluntarily seek services are assured of confidentiality.
- **Supervisory Referral:** Managers, supervisors, and concerned co-workers or colleagues may informally recommend that an employee contact the EAP. An employee may voluntarily approach a manager or supervisor for assistance with a personal problem and be encouraged to use the EAP. In either case, confidentiality is assured and the EAP will not disclose any information regarding participation in the program without the prior written consent of the employee.
- **Formal Management Referral:** Staff members who exhibit a pattern of deteriorating job performance which is suspected to be related to a personal problem will be referred by their manager or supervisor to an Employee Relations representative in Human Resources ("LU

liaison”).

Faculty who exhibit a pattern of deteriorating job performance which is suspected to be related to a personal problem will be referred by their Department Chair or Dean to the Provosts Office (“LU liaison”).

The LU liaison will then offer to arrange an appointment with the EAP and explain the options available to the employee regarding the employee's decision whether or not to use the EAP. If the employee agrees to use the EAP, the LU liaison will contact the EAP to arrange an appointment and to explain the nature of the referral. The LU liaison will also ask the employee to sign a release authorizing the EAP to inform the LU liaison that the employee kept the initial appointment and whether the employee indicates a willingness to follow a prescribed treatment plan. Further disclosure of information related to an employee's participation in the program or ongoing treatment will require additional signed releases. A Lehigh University referent will specify the information needed in the *Release Form* and communicate the request to the EAP.

Performance Expectations

This policy will not exempt employees from job performance requirements. The EAP and the University's performance improvement process each have its appropriate use. An employee's use of the EAP is not to be used as a substitute for discipline or as a basis to compromise applicable rules, regulations, or practices. Discipline is not to be used as retribution for refusal to use the program. Poor performance is not acceptable, regardless of whether an employee uses the resources available through the EAP. Managers will follow appropriate steps to address deteriorating job performance.

An employee's refusal to accept a referral and/or service recommendations is not in itself a cause for disciplinary action. Such refusals will be handled by dealing with job performance according to established disciplinary procedures.

Individuals are responsible for performing their job functions. The EAP complements, but does not alter University personnel policies and procedures. During or following service/treatment employees should not expect special privileges or exemptions from standard personnel practices. In cases of Formal Management Referral, if job performance remains unsatisfactory, disciplinary procedures will be implemented.

Miscellaneous Provisions

In cases where it is necessary, leave may be granted for treatment or rehabilitation as is ordinarily granted for health problems and consistent with the applicable benefits.

Nothing in this statement is to be interpreted as constituting a waiver of management's responsibility to maintain work standards and discipline or the right to take disciplinary measures.

Links

IBH website: <http://ibhcorp.com/>

Instructions:

- Select *Work-Life Resources* twice and use the following information to access the site:

Username – Lehigh

Password – univ03

- To go directly to the *Work-Life Resources*, go to:

<http://www.advantageworklife.com/site/1490/login.html>

Release Forms

1. *Authorization for Release of Information*
2. *Authorization to Release EAP, Mental Health, Drug or Alcohol Abuse Information for Mandatory Employee Evaluation or Treatment*

Keywords: EAP, IBH, Counseling