



## Office of Human Resources and Administration Worklife and Benefits Service (058)

### **Fact Sheet – Employee Assistance Program (EAP)**

**Purpose:** During an employee's career, many will experience a problem that will affect a major aspect of their lives. The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) gives employees the opportunity to cope with problems which may adversely affect attendance, work performance and/or conduct.

**Eligible Employees:** EAP is a voluntary, work-based program available to all employees.

#### **Benefits of the Program:**

- EAP counselors work with employees to help resolve a wide variety of problems including alcohol and drug abuse, family pressures, legal and financial problems, job stress, and other concerns which can affect work performance and personal health.
- If needed, the counselor will refer employees to other professional services and resources within the community.
- EAP plays a key role in educating employees on a variety of health and assistance topics such as money management, parenting, caring for aging parents, stress management and legal issues.
- VA's goal is to restore valuable employee(s) to full productivity.

**Contact:** If you are in need of EAP services, review [OHRM Health and Wellness Web site](#) for a listing of EAP counselor's in your area.

#### **Confidentiality:**

- The Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C. 552a) covers all EAP records. In addition, EAP records of clients with alcohol and drug problems are protected by Confidentiality of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Patient Records (42 CFR, part 2).
- These laws and regulations prohibit EAP staff from sharing any information about clients to anyone outside of EAP without written consent of the employee.

**Cost:** EAP provides free short-term counseling sessions.

#### **Leave:**

- A supervisor or manager may grant up to 1 hour of excused absence for each counseling session, up to a maximum of 8 total hours, during the assessment/referral phase of rehabilitation.
- Absences during duty hours for rehabilitation or treatment must be charged to the appropriate leave category in accordance with law and leave regulations, 5 CFR part 630, and VA Directive and VA Handbook 5011, Hours of Duty and Leave.

#### **References:**

- 5 U.S.C. 7361 and 7362
- Chapter 73, subchapter VI and Chapter 79
- 5 CFR part 792
- OPM Operating Manuals 792-1 and 792-2
- MP-1 part II, Chapter 21
- 21 U.S.C. part 1101
- 42 CFR part 2
- 42 U.S.C. 290dd-1 and 290ee-1
- 29 CFR 1614.203
- VA Handbook 5025, Legal, Part II