

40.10 Employee Assistance Program

- **40-10-1 Purpose**
- **40-10-2 Philosophical Approach**
- **40-10-3 Role of Supervisors**

1. Purpose. Eastern New Mexico University-Roswell (ENMU-Roswell) recognizes that a wide range of problems not directly associated with one's job performance may have an effect upon employee job performance. To address these problems, ENMU-Roswell has established the following program to assist employees.

2. Philosophical Approach. Many times employees will overcome personal problems without those problems affecting job performance. Other times, normal supervisory assistance will serve either as a motivation or guidance by which such problems can be resolved so that the individual's performance will be returned to an acceptable level. However, in some cases, normal efforts will not have the desired effect and unsatisfactory performance will persist over a period of time either intermittently or constantly.

ENMU-Roswell believes it is in the public interest and the interest of its employees to provide a service that will assist its employees to find solutions to their problems if they need assistance. Therefore, it is the position of ENMU-Roswell to handle such problems as marital, vocational, alcohol/drug, financial, etc., within the following framework:

A. The institution recognizes that a solution can be found for almost any human problem provided that it is identified in its early stages and referral is made for appropriate assistance or diagnosis and treatment.

B. It is recognized that some problems, such as alcoholism and emotional illness automatically carry with them a social stigma that have no factual basis. It is believed that an enlightened public attitude and a realistic acceptance of these behavioral problems will encourage employees who are suspected of having such an illness, even in its early stages, to take advantage of the diagnostic counseling and treatment services available in their communities.

C. The purpose of this program is to assure that employees having any of these behavioral/medical problems will receive the same careful consideration and offer treatment that is presently extended to employees having any other illness.

D. The institution is only concerned with employee problems that impair the employee's work performance, attendance, conduct, and reliability.

E. When an employee seeks assistance and is referred by their supervisor for assistance or treatment, it will not jeopardize an employee's job security or promotional opportunities.

F. It is recognized that management and supervisory personnel do not have the professional qualifications to make any diagnosis as to whether or not the employee has behavioral/medical problems. Therefore, referral for diagnosis and treatment should be made only at the employee's request and/or on a basis of unsatisfactory job performance. Diagnosis, treatment or assistance shall be accomplished through existing resources.

G. An individual's participation in the Employee Assistance Program will remain confidential and will not be a part of his/her personnel file.

H. Implementation of this program will not require or result in any privileges or exemptions from the standard administrative practices applicable to job performance. The fact that an employee accepts, rejects, or fails to respond to treatment for alcoholism, drug abuse, emotional or other problems in no way diminishes their responsibility to meet the required performance standards of their job.

I. Individuals who have an emotional, alcohol, or related problem are encouraged to voluntarily seek assistance on a confidential basis by contacting their supervisor or one of the designated resource coordinators.

J. It is the option of the individual to comply with referral for diagnosis or assistance and to cooperate with properly prescribed treatment or suggested solutions.

K. Consideration will be given to those individuals who may require sick leave or excused absence due to treatment or rehabilitation need. These will be provided on the same basis that is granted for all other health problems. An employee's annual leave or leave without pay may be considered for use when necessary.

L. When an employee refuses to accept assistance, diagnosis or treatment, or if the employee fails to respond to treatment or assistance, the administrator, director, or supervisor will handle the situation as they would other problems of deteriorating job performance.

3. Role of Supervisors. The supervisor has a responsibility to monitor and document declining job performance such as absenteeism, tardiness, long lunches, early departures, poor judgments, erratic performance, decreased productivity or reliability, poor attitude, disruptive behavior, complaints from outside contacts, failure to meet schedules or deadlines and other instances of poor job performance.

The following guidelines are offered to facilitate the implementation of this program:

A. Performance of employees should be thoroughly documented.

B. Whenever the performance of an employee has deteriorated, the supervisor should schedule a performance review with the employee. The supervisor should inform his/her supervisor of the intended review.

C. The supervisor should outline the problems observed and provide the employee an opportunity to respond to the observations of the supervisor.

D. The supervisor should define expectations of performance and a timeframe to bring performance up to the level expected by the supervisor.

E. The supervisor should probe to obtain a reason for the poor job performance. This is the opportunity for the employee to indicate he/she has personal problems and to seek the assistance of the institution in resolving his/her problems.

F. If the employee has not improved in a reasonable length of time and has not availed themselves of confidential resource help outside the employing unit, it is probable that the underlying cause of performance decline is something beyond the employee's control. At this point, the supervisor should contact their supervisor to develop further strategy for dealing with the problem.

G. During this process, the supervisor's focus is on job performance and bringing an employee up to established expectations of performance. The supervisor should keep the personnel issues confidential and only discuss them with others on a need to know basis.

H. If the employee fails to respond to treatment, has reoccurring problems, relapse or refuses to accept treatment, the supervisor will handle the situation as they would with any other problem involving unacceptable job performance.