

# **POLICY ON THE EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE GOVERNMENT OF ST. KITTS**

## **STATEMENT OF NEED**

The Government in general and the Human Resource Management Department in particular has a strong commitment to the health, safety, and welfare of Government's employees, their families, and its customers.

They both recognize that a variety of personal problems, such as emotional distress, family problems, financial difficulties, alcoholism, and drug abuse, can be devastating to lives, business, and the community at large. Personal problems often have a negative effect on performance, productivity, and behaviour in the workplace.

Most people solve their problems either on their own or with the advice of family and friends. However, we recognize that sometimes people need professional advice.

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

1. It is the policy of HRM Department to establish, implement, and support the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) that will assist employees and their **family members** to resolve problems, such as emotional distress, family problems, alcoholism, and drug abuse, recognizing these problems may adversely affect employee's personal health, family, and job performance.
2. It is the policy of the Government and HRM Department to commit the resources necessary to support the Employee Assistance Program.
3. This policy will not exempt employees from job performance requirements.

## **GOAL**

It is the goal of the HRM Department to establish an Employee Assistance Program to provide constructive assistance and services in the form of confidential counseling and referral to every employee who experiences personal as well as work related problems.

## **AUTHORIZATION**

The following authorities underpin the contents of this policy:

-Cabinet/ Government

-The HRM Department

## SCOPE OF APPLICABILITY

This program applies to ALL employees in the Government of St.Kitts. While the Department has no intention of intruding into the private lives of its employees, we recognize that their personal problems may eventually take their toll on job performance. Our concern is to assure that employees report to work in condition to perform their duties safely and efficiently in the interest of their fellow workers, themselves, and our customers.

## AREAS OF ASSISTANCE

The programme will offer assistance with respect to the following:

- Work performance difficulties
- Family and relationship concerns
- Balancing work/life issues
- Managing stress and change
- Care for elderly parents
- Depression, anxiety, or other mental health concerns
- Career concerns
- Retirement Issues/Planning
- Grief/loss of loved ones
- Parenting
- Quality of life problems
- Alcohol or other substance misuse, dependency
- Financial management problems

## PRINCIPLES

The Government's Employee Assistance Program will operate within the following framework:

1. The programme is accessible to ALL employees regardless of their positions. The programme will offer a system of resources relevant and accessible to employees and their families, for instance, counseling, seminars, and workshops.
2. The EAP will generally provide counseling and other forms of help during normal work hours and /or evenings.
3. A cadre of skilled and trained EAP Practitioners/Counselors will employ the **Solution Focused Therapy Model** to help employees solve their problems. A Counselor may also refer employees to other trained professionals or organizations in St.Kitts that can help employees with specific needs.

4. The use of EAP is voluntary and confidential.
5. The EAP's records and information revealed during consultation shall be maintained in a **STRICT CONFIDENTIAL** manner.
6. The EAP shall **NOT** be used as a disciplinary tool for management
7. Supervisors and Heads of Department are responsible for confronting employees about unsatisfactory as well as acceptable but deteriorating performance, and referring such employees to the EAP when appropriate.
8. Employees will be responsible for correcting their unsatisfactory performance and maintaining their acceptable performance.
9. Employees' current jobs and future advancement will not be jeopardized by using the EAP's services.
10. The HRM Department shall ensure the survival and sustainability of the EAP by providing visible support. The Department will guarantee permanency of the programme by ensuring thorough advocacy through consultation with all stakeholders.

## **GUARANTEES**

This policy guarantees the following:

- that an employee identified as having personal problems shall not be discriminated against in respect of benefits such as promotions, or training.
- that an employee will be granted time away from work to receive assistance from the EAP.

## **REFERRAL SYSTEM**

An employee may be referred to the EAP through any of the following types of referrals:

### **A. Self-Referral**

An employee through a process of self-realization recognizes that a problem exists and seeks assistance by consulting the EAP Practitioner directly. Self-referrals are treated with strict confidentiality and employees who voluntarily seek assistance but do not want their supervisors to know of their participation can arrange appointments outside duty hours.

## **B. Informal Referral**

This is when an employee experiences personal or social problems and on advice of other people, for example, the supervisor, a colleague, friend, family; seek assistance from the EAP Practitioner.

## **C. Formal Referral**

A supervisor who is concerned about the decline in an employee's performance, attitude and behaviour may refer that employee, with the employee's consent, to an EAP Practitioner for assistance. The supervisor is required to complete the referral form and submit it to the EAP Practitioner at least three days prior to the interview.

# **RESPONSIBILITIES**

In order for this programme to function efficiently, the following responsibilities have been assigned.

## **Stakeholders**

The Stakeholders must:

Promote the programme, that is, their support must be visible.

Ensure that the location of the EAP Consulting Rooms is away from the workplace to help ensure privacy and confidentiality.

Attend training sessions and become well-versed with EAP.

## **Heads of Department/Supervisors**

Heads of Department/Supervisors must:

Be alert and observe the performance of their supervisees so as to identify the change of behaviour and decline in performance.

Document evidence in relation to deteriorating job performance, that is, must keep records of absenteeism, late coming, failure to meet deadlines, physical appearance or any other visible behavioral change.

Inform their supervisees about the observed and documented behavioural change. Inform their supervisees about the value of EAP.

After everything else has been done, and there is still no improvement on job performance, mandate that the troubled employee consult the EAP.

Attend training sessions and be well-versed with EAP.

### **Supervisees**

It is the supervisee's responsibility to:

Note his/her behavioural change and take initiative of utilizing EAP services.

Ensure 100% co-operation in respect to appointments for consultation, treatment and avoiding relapse.

Attend information sessions and be well versed with EAP.

### **EAP Practitioners**

EAP practitioners are responsible for:

- Advocating EAP throughout the department.
- Ensuring links with authentic referral institutions.
- Conducting counseling sessions.
- Safe keeping of confidential records in respect of interviews and referrals.
- Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of EAP.
- Identifying and training new EAP practitioners on the **Solution Focused Model** of Counseling.

## **MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

The EAP shall be continuously monitored.

The Programme shall be evaluated every six months by the Clients, EAP Practitioners, and the Human Resource Management Department. The evaluation will consider: The number of Supervisors and employees referrals, and the impact EAP services have had on work, on reduction of health issues and on improved job performance.

## **DISPUTE RESOLUTION MECHANISM**

Any dispute arising out of the interpretation and application of this policy shall be dealt with in accordance with the dispute resolution mechanism applicable in the Human Resource Management Department.

## **Programme**

- the EAP.

## **Refer**

- directing a troubled employee to the EAP or other service provider.

## **Institution**

- authorized service providers which intervene in a case of a troubled employee, for example, National Drug Council, Department of Gender Affairs, and others.

## **Client**

- an affected person seeking assistance from EAP.

## **Treatment**

- an intervention by EAP practitioner/ psychologist/ psychiatrist.

## **Relapse**

- deterioration in client's condition after partial recovery.

## **Confidentiality**

- not disclosing any information received during interviews and referrals without client's permission.

## **Neutrality**

- maintaining an impartial state.

## **Voluntarism**

- self initiated referral.

## **Accessible Constructive Coercion**

- persuading a troubled employee to consult EAP.

## **Consultation**

- seeking information or advice from an EAP Practitioner.

## **Brief Therapy**

- Short-term counseling

## **Solution Focused Therapy**

- a process that helps people change by constructing solutions rather than dwelling on problems. This type of therapy tends to be short term.