



SECTION: HR
TOPIC: EMPL ASSIST 01
GENERAL
AUGUST, 2024

ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES MANUAL

SUBJECT: EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Today it is generally accepted that alcoholism, other chemical dependencies, and other personal problems can be defined as highly complex illnesses that can be treated successfully if they are identified as early as possible and an appropriate treatment program is promptly instituted. It is recognized, however, that problems stemming from these illnesses more often than not have an adverse effect on employee's job performance manifesting themselves in excessive tardiness, absenteeism and substandard performance. The Dane County Board, County Executive and employee unions believe that it is in the public interest to provide a program designed to assist employees suffering from alcoholism, other chemical dependencies, or personal problems by assisting in the early identification of such illnesses and proper referral to appropriate community and professional agencies for help. Such a program must protect the privacy of the individuals concerned and, if it is to achieve its objectives, employees seeking assistance through the program must be assured that their employment status will not be jeopardized by the fact of their seeking such assistance. Accordingly, it is the policy of the County to handle problems arising from alcoholism, other chemical dependencies, and personal problems within the following guidelines:

1. Definitions:

Alcoholism and Other Drug Abuse Problems: illnesses in which the employee's or their dependent's consumption of alcoholic beverages and/or use of other drugs, definitely and repeatedly interfere with the employee's job performance.

Personal Problems: behavioral/medical problems such as physical, psychological, marital, financial, legal, etc., involving either the employee or a dependent, that definitely and repeatedly interferes with the employee's job performance.

2. Alcoholism, other chemical dependencies, and personal problems are recognized as highly complex illnesses that can be successfully treated.
3. Dane County is not concerned with the private decision of an individual to use or not to use alcoholic beverages or other drugs off the job. When their use impairs job performance, attendance, conduct and reliability, it becomes a matter of concern to the County and it is the responsibility of the supervisor/administrator of employees evidencing substandard job performance to seek to remedy the situation and bring the employee's performance up to standard. If, after counseling about substandard job performance, an employee's performance does not improve, the employee's supervisor or administrator should refer the employee to the Employee Assistance Program available through Dane County. Such consultation shall be at the employee's option.
4. The supervisor's sole responsibility is referral to appropriate sources of assistance. The supervisor is not a counselor and shall not attempt to solve the employee's problems except through referral and follow-up.



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5. At all times it is the prerogative of the employee to accept or reject referral and treatment. If the employee elects to reject referral and treatment, it becomes the responsibility of the employee to bring their job performance up to standard or face such job action as might be appropriate. If the employee elects to accept referral and treatment, the fact that they have accepted referral and treatment shall be regarded in the same manner as treatment for any other illness; if treatment requires time off from the job, upon return to work it will be the responsibility of the employee to achieve and maintain standard performance on the job.
6. No medical records will be sent to an employee's official personnel file; these records will remain at the treatment centers, unless released by authority of the affected employee. Treatment progress is also kept confidential unless released by the affected employee. Medical release forms may be obtained through the Employee Relations Division.
7. Dane County recognizes that an employee's job performance may be adversely affected by stresses resulting from the fact that members of their immediate family may be afflicted with alcoholism, other drug dependencies, or personal problems. Accordingly, assistance under the County Employee Assistance Program is available to any member of an employee's immediate family, either at the request of the employee or of the family member. Individuals should contact the Employee Relations Division for current information regarding the Assistance Program.
8. It is of utmost importance for all employees to understand that this is neither a management nor an employee program but a helping program in which both management and employees can contribute towards increasing employee health, happiness and governmental productivity.
9. This policy does not diminish a supervisor's responsibility to require an acceptable level of job performance, nor excuse the obligation to use personnel management tools and procedures available to maintain an acceptable performance level.

END OF POLICY



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RESPONSIBILITY

ACTION

Employee Relations Division

1. Establish and maintain liaison role with Employee Assistance Program to include receiving data pertaining to numbers of participants (does not include actual names and/other individual data).

Supervisor

2. If it is apparent that an employee may be having an alcohol/drug dependency or other problem, refer that employee to the Employee Assistance Program (telephone number can be obtained from the Employee Relations Division) or request that the employee seek assistance from their own personal physician or clinic.

END OF PROCEDURE