

Clinical Strong Practice (CSP) Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Practice Purpose

This practice expands on the existing Employee Assistance Program (EAP), a program which gives employees the opportunity to cope with problems which may adversely affect attendance, work performance, and/or conduct.

The EAP continues to offer 1:1 care for employees but also incorporates the expertise of facility departments, staff, mental health treatment, and physicians to develop content and facilitate virtual group sessions designed to help employees cope with areas identified through an employee needs assessment.

Documents Included

How to Establish Employee Assistance Program (EAP) (Page 1)

- Describes stakeholders, a checklist necessary to establish EAP in facility, and example EAP support areas

Documents to Help Establish Employee Assistance Program (EAP) (Page 2)

- Provides examples of group session topics, group session descriptions, course materials, and schedule for the EAP group sessions

Example Employee Assistance Program (EAP) Flyer (Page 3 – 5)

- Distribute to provide information to employees to describe what the expansion to the EAP program is and offers descriptions of sessions available

Practice Origin: Lexington VAMC

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This Clinical Strong Practice was developed in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic to enable VHA to adapt quickly for the benefit of Veteran and employee health. Do you have feedback on this practice, or would you like to submit a practice for consideration as a Clinical Strong Practice? Please email us here VHAClinicalStrongPractices@va.gov

How to Establish Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Stakeholders to Engage	<u>Mental Health</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mental Health Service (MHS) Leadership MHS Staff Suicide Prevention Coordinator 	<u>Human Resources (HR)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EAP Coordinator <u>Other Departments</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facility Leadership Public Affairs 	<u>Other Suggested Departments (Based Upon Needs Assessment)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nutrition Physical Medicine Rehabilitation
Checklist to Establish EAP in Facility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Obtain approval from leadership to expand EAP <input type="checkbox"/> Develop EAP intake form for 1:1 care with trauma referral questions (example on page 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Establish EAP team to schedule and coordinate group sessions <input type="checkbox"/> Establish generalist groups (open forum support groups that offers employee feedback on identified need) to obtain feedback from employees to conduct an employee needs assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Use employee needs assessment information collected to identify points of contact in identified support areas to develop materials and facilitate group meetings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Example EAP support areas listed below <input type="checkbox"/> Determine meeting cadence with EAP team to identify updates, assist with program development, and plan group sessions and content <input type="checkbox"/> Reevaluate employee needs assessment as necessary <input type="checkbox"/> Coordinate with Public Affairs to send group invites to employees, advertisements, and EAP link information <input type="checkbox"/> EAP Coordinator connects employees seeking individual assistance with appropriate specialty providers using the referral questions 		
Example EAP Support Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trauma Team – Develop a team whose specialty is dealing with trauma. The trauma team should have time to consult 1 hour a week in a group format as time allows, have a shared folder for resource materials, and be capable to provide 1:1 specialty trauma care if needed Generalist Team – Develop a Generalist therapist team to provide 1:1 support to employees that is not trauma specific. The team should be provided with resources and a consultation group developed for 1 hour per week as needed EAP Virtual Groups – These are EAP groups that can be offered by mental health clinicians to employees as well as connecting with other areas in hospital for a whole health approach. The groups included over 20 group sessions are mental health topics, parenting, pregnancy, nutrition, acupuncture as well as Tai Chi <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See attached Group Session Descriptions and Structure (page 2) See attached Example Group Session Schedule (page 2) EAP support materials – Materials were obtained via multiple locations and housed in an EAP link for employees to find EAP education sessions/trainings/didactics – Due to potential for COVID -19 surge, the team identified trainings important to manage reactions to trauma, vicarious traumatization, moral injury and psychological first aid. The trainings were recorded and placed on EAP link site EAP Link/Public Affairs/Advertisement – Coordinate with Public Affairs to update EAP link, send invites for EAP groups, and develop advertisement EAP for COVID-19 Positive Employees – EAP Coordinator connected with employee health who had access to COVID-19 positive employees and could offer EAP services while discussing their physical health EAP for COVID-19 Positive Veterans and Their Family – Identified providers to offer individual care for COVID-19 positive veterans and their family 		

Documents to Help Establish Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
Visit the EAP SharePoint Site (VA intranet only)

EAP Intake Form Referral Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Located on the EAP SharePoint Site 	Employee Assistance Record Checklist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Located on the EAP SharePoint Site
Example Group Session Topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motherboard • Tai Chi • Dietician Dish • Emotional Intelligence • Psychological First Aid • Whole Health: The 8 Components • Crisis Support for People of Color 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parenting in a Pandemic • Address the Stress • Under Pressure • Coping with COVID • Mindfulness/Meditation • Veteran Support Group • “Live with Larson” – open forum with a psychologist • Support for Partners 	
Group Session Descriptions and Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Located on the EAP SharePoint Site 		
Example Group Session Schedule	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Located on the EAP SharePoint Site 		
SharePoint Site with EAP Resources and Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link here (VA intranet only) 		
Example EAP Flyer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pages 3 – 5 • Describes what the expansion to the EAP program is and offers descriptions of sessions available • Editable for your facility 		



Employee Assistance Program

What is Employee Assistance Program (EAP)?

A voluntary and confidential program that helps employees work through various life challenges that may adversely affect job performance, health, and personal well-being. Services can include assessments, counseling, and referrals for additional services.

During COVID-19 Pandemic, we are here for you.

Please check your outlook calendar for invitations to participate in group support and didactic sessions. If you are missing these from your outlook calendar, please contact <POC Information>

Personal and / or work-related concerns may include:

Stress
Financial issues
Legal issues
Family problems
Office conflicts
Alcohol / substance use disorders

HOW? Currently, EAP groups are offered online to support employees during the current pandemic. Individual sessions are always available to employees!

WHO? EAP providers are in mental Health Service and provide confidential, discreet, and FREE services to employees.

WHERE? Virtually or in-person (when not restricted due to COVID-19)

WHEN? Groups are offered at various days / time throughout the week; individual sessions are agreed upon with provider.

The Employee Assistance Program:

- ◆ Is **FREE** to all employees
- ◆ Services available in Group and individual formats
- ◆ Confidentiality is emphasized
- ◆ Supported by your leadership

If interested, individual EAP services are available!

Please contact <POC INFORMATION>

EAP Group Offerings Currently Available:

- Mindfulness / Meditation
- Coping Skills for Anxiety
- Parenting in a Pandemic
- Crisis Support Group for People of Color
- Psychological First Aid
- Stress Management Skills
- Support for New / Expecting Mothers
- Exploring our Emotional Intelligence
- Pressure Point Self-Therapy
- Dietitian Tips
- General Support Group
- Tai Chi

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Employee Assistance Program

DIDACTIC SESSIONS:

Located on the Employee Assistance Program page on the intranet—view when it is convenient for you!

Common Reactions to Trauma, Dr. Ashley Casto

During difficult times, it is normal to experience some changes in functioning, including problems sleeping, feeling more irritable or working more often. Sometimes these symptoms can start to interfere with your job or your relationships with family and friends. This may be especially true during the COVID-19 pandemic. This didactic is designed to provide you with basic information about normal coping, acute stress reactions, and symptoms of PTSD. It will also provide information on treatment options available to you for free through our Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and will suggest tips to help other in your life who may be struggling.

Dietitian Dish, Dietary Services

VA Registered Dietitians cover everything from stress and boredom eating, staying active, variety in your diet, limiting snacking, meal planning, and maintaining motivation to meet your goals. VA employees share their struggles and tips for staying on track with healthy eating and exercise at a time when that could easily slip. These tactical sessions leave participants with a variety of ideas they can implement right away to meet their goals. This well-attended group has been a source of support and comradery at a time when many feel isolated. The intent is to inspire people to take charge of their health through new creative methods and along with reminders for common sense strategies.

Check out Veterans Health Library at www.veteranshealthlibrary.org

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Moral Injury in the Healthcare System, Dr. Bullock

Injury is a term first introduced for military servicemembers who described moral and ethical dilemmas during their time in service. Currently, in the wake of COVID-19 and work-related demands, we are discussing this term and reviewing its symptoms so as to better prepare individuals who feel they may be faced with morally difficult decisions. We also review some personal and professional resources that may be of assistance during this time. We will specifically be discussing treatment options for our Lexington VA staff through EAP treatment options.

Compassion Fatigue, Dr. Bullock

The term “vicarious traumatization” refers to the emotional impact of indirect trauma on helpers and caretakers who are often exposed to the traumatic experiences of others. We will discuss this term, alongside “compassion fatigue” and “burnout,” to assist in identifying signs and symptoms sometimes associated with work in the healthcare field. We will also introduce tools to reduce this emotional impact and work towards continued self-care and compassion.

Psychological First Aid, Dr. Betsy Campbell, Kelley Furlong, RN

Psychological First Aid is an evidence informed approach supported by mental health experts as the intervention of choice when responding to individuals impacted by natural or man-made disaster, pandemics, and other critical incidents. The goal of this training is to provide employees with basic skills to intervene with coworkers who appear to be experiencing symptoms of distress secondary to the COVID-19 crisis and it’s fallout. Basic techniques regarding how to spot symptoms, and how to approach fellow employees and provides a hand-on approach for immediate intervention.

Check out Veterans Health Library at www.veteranshealthlibrary.org