

STATE OF MAINE

DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL

March 9, 1978

PERSONNEL MEMORANDUM 10-78

TO: All Department/Agency Heads

SUBJECT: Employee Assistance Program

REFERENCE: Personnel Bulletin 10.4, August 30, 1977

PURPOSE OF PROGRAM: The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) has been introduced to provide counseling services and to locate and identify related assistance for Maine State employees whose job performance, as a result of personal difficulties, has declined. It is designed to retain those trained, valued employees who would face disciplinary actions in the absence of such a program. The EAP is intended to aid those employees whose personal problems -- whether alcoholism, drug abuse, family difficulties, emotional distress, financial or legal worries -- have had such a detrimental effect on job performance that the employee's job status is threatened. Since family concerns are as likely to have an effect on performance as are the employee's own personal problems, the program is also open to members of an employee's immediate family.

PARTICIPATION IN PROGRAM: It appears that a good many, if not most, of the program's participants will be self-referrals. In other cases, however, an employee's performance may deteriorate to a point at which the supervisor may recommend that he or she meet with the EAP counselor to determine if the program may be of assistance. It is expected that the performance appraisal system -- specifically, how an employee meets mutually established performance standards -- will be used to indicate the unsatisfactory performance that would prompt a supervisor to take this step. At this point, the EAP counselor would meet with the employee and would attempt to identify the difficulty and to suggest a means to resolve it. In many cases, the EAP counselor will serve as a conduit to existing community resources able to provide the specialized assistance he or she may need.

With regard to a supervisor's recommendation to see the EAP counselor, two points must be stressed:

1. Under no circumstance is the supervisor to attempt to diagnose the alleged problem. The supervisor is concerned with one problem only, and that is unsatisfactory job performance. Anything beyond this is completely outside the purview of the supervisor.

2. If an employee is referred to the EAP counselor by his supervisor, or to a community resource by the EAP counselor, participation is in no way mandatory. This program has been introduced to offer a service to those State employees who choose to take advantage of it. It is not a tool to embarrass, discipline or harass.

TRAINING: Supervisors (raters) have been trained in the principles and procedures of the EAP during their performance appraisal training. Non-supervisory employees will be familiarized with the program through performance appraisal orientation sessions, now being conducted, and through contact with their supervisors.

COUNSELING SERVICES: There will be no cost to the employee for the counseling services provided by the EAP counselor, who is employed by the Bureau of Rehabilitation specifically for the EAP. Depending on the resource and its methods of operations, outside counseling related services will be available to the participating employee at various costs. In many cases, it is possible that an employee's health insurance will cover all or part of the expenses of treatment received after referral. Many such community resources base their fee schedule on a sliding scale, corresponding with ability to pay.

CONTACT: The EAP counselor is Mr. Ed Renaud and his office is in Room B-5 of the State Office Building, Augusta. Phone - 289-2949.

EMPLOYEE LEAVE: Time that an employee may spend in consultation with the EAP counselor is administrative leave, paid by the State. Time away from work that an employee may need for treatment recommended by the EAP counselor or by an outside resource will be the employee's own. That is, the employee may use accumulated sick leave, vacation leave or leave without pay, in accord with normal procedures.

RECORDS: Strict confidentiality shall be maintained by supervisors and counselors. No records of counseling, diagnosis, referrals or results shall be maintained in the personnel files of individuals who avail themselves of assistance services. Only those entries and documents pertinent to performance may be maintained in personnel records.

ROBERT J. STOLT
COMMISSIONER

MAY BE REPRODUCED LOCALLY TO MEET DISTRIBUTION NEEDS