The State of California's Employee Assistance Program

Supervisor Handbook

MHN
A Health Net Company℠

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Overview

The State of California Employee Assistance Program from MHN

As a manager or supervisor, you know that personal problems can have a negative impact on attendance, health and productivity. The State of California's Employee Assistance Program (EAP), provided by MHN, includes:

- **Member services** that can help employees address their problems and improve their health and wellbeing; and
- **Manager and supervisor services** that can help you support employees, address performance and conduct problems, and build successful, engaged teams.

This handbook is your guide to those services.

EAP Member Services

EAP member services are offered at no charge to employees, their spouses, registered domestic partners and dependents. As a manager or supervisor, you're encouraged to:

- Make sure your team members know that the EAP is confidential, convenient, and available 24/7.
- Remind employees regularly of the range of valuable services available to resolve life challenges before they interfere with work.
- Suggest employees call the EAP or visit the member website if they seem to be struggling.

MHN provides posters, member brochures, flyers and articles that can help raise awareness of the available services and how to access them. Contact your EAP coordinator for more information.

EAP Member Services

(866) EAP-4SOC /
(866) 327-4762
TDD: (800) 327-0801

Or visit
eap4soc.mhn.com
Access code: **soc**

MHN's EAP member services include:

- Clinical support
- Online member services
- Work & life services
- Health and wellness services

Clinical support

Members have 24/7 access to clinicians who can help with emotional health issues, including:

- Marital, relationship and family concerns
- Stress, anxiety and sadness
- Alcohol and substance use
- Work problems

When a member calls MHN, the intake representative assesses the member's needs and evaluates the degree of risk to the caller. Callers with urgent or emergent needs, or those who ask to speak with a clinician, are immediately transferred to one.

For routine (non-urgent) issues, members can set up in-person counseling sessions (with a network provider) or telephonic or web-video consultations (with an MHN clinician). The provider or clinician works with the member to pinpoint the issue and develop an action plan to address it. This type of short-term counseling is appropriate for most member issues. (If the issue is more serious, the member will be referred to his or her behavioral health benefits.)

All MHN and network providers who deliver EAP services are fully licensed and specialize in providing short-term EAP counseling. These providers include psychologists, licensed clinical social workers, certified alcohol and drug counselors and licensed marriage and family therapists.

Member Choice!

With MHN, members have three choices for getting clinical support:

1. **Telephonic consultations** for maximum convenience and anonymity
2. **Face-to-face counseling** in-person sessions with an MHN network provider
3. **Web-video consultations** convenient and easy, but with a more personal touch than traditional telephonic

Online member services

MHN's EAP member website features a wide range of resources that empower members to take charge of their wellbeing and simplify their life. From the comfort and convenience of their own computer, members can:

- View their EAP benefits
- Search for an MHN counselor and get a referral
- Ask an MHN expert an emotional health question
- Take MHN's comprehensive wellbeing assessment
- Access self-help programs for stress, weight management, nutrition, fitness and smoking cessation
- Find articles on emotional health, health and fitness, financial and legal issues and more
- Access current and previous issues of *Member Matters*, MHN's monthly online newsletter about health, wellness and work-life balance

Work & life services

The State's EAP can also help members balance work and life and take care of all kinds of chores and challenges. Telephonic consultations are available for:

- **Childcare and eldercare** – Needs assessment plus referrals to childcare and eldercare providers
- **Financial services** – Budgeting, credit and financial guidance (investment advice, loans and bill payments not included), retirement planning and help with tax issues
- **Legal services** – Telephonic or face-to-face consultations for issues relating to civil, consumer, personal and family law, financial matters, business law, real estate, estate planning and more (excluding disputes or actions between the employee and the State or MHN)
- **Identity theft recovery services** – Information on ID theft prevention, plus an ID theft emergency response kit and help from a fraud resolution specialist if the member is victimized
- **Daily living services** – Referrals to consultants and businesses that can help with everyday errands, travel, event planning and more (does not cover the cost nor guarantee delivery of vendors' services)
- **Online work & life services** – helpful tips, tools and calculators for help with finances, legal issues and retirement planning plus access to online childcare and eldercare directories

Health and wellness services

A healthier, happier workforce is a more productive workforce. Through MHN, members have access to a wealth of resources for optimal emotional and physical health, such as:

- A research-based wellbeing assessment that offers personal wellbeing reports for participating State employees and an aggregate workforce wellbeing report to the State (with the participation of at least 50 employees). This aggregate report, benchmarked against national, regional or industry norms, gives the State valuable guidance as it promotes workplace wellbeing.
- Interactive e-learning programs to help members with personal finance, health and wellness, personal development and stress management.
- Self-help programs for smoking cessation, nutrition, fitness, weight management and stress.
- Articles and videos on health and wellness topics, including trusted content from Mayo Clinic Health Solutions.
- Practical health and wellness tools, including calculators for BMI, target heart rate and calorie intake.

To learn more about EAP member services, please contact your EAP coordinator or visit **eap4soc.mhn.com**. You can also find more information about EAP member services in MHN's EAP benefit training video or in the "**My Benefits**" section of the member website (**eap4soc.mhn.com, access code: soc**).

EAP Manager and Supervisor Services

Manager's Toolkit

MHN's online manager's toolkit includes sample memos, consent forms, articles and handouts. To access the toolkit, you must register as a manager on the member website.

The EAP can be an important resource for you as a manager or supervisor. The following services can help you resolve employee performance and conduct problems and build stronger, healthier teams.

Management consultations

Unlimited telephonic support from MHN's management consultants helps you address difficult employee work performance issues, attendance problems, workplace violence, mental illness and more. The management consultants provide professional, objective assessment and concrete recommendations for change. They can also assess the need for additional EAP services. To schedule a management consultation, call (866) EAP-4SOC / (866) 327-4762 and ask to speak with a management consultant.

Management consultations do not include fitness-for-duty consultations, drug testing, worker's compensation involvement, medical diagnoses or prescriptions for medications.

Critical incident stress debriefing

When a traumatic event occurs, such as a natural disaster or workplace violence, MHN can help you plan and implement a response to help your team recover and get back to business in a timely way.

After experiencing trauma, personal reactions vary. However, certain responses are very common. Typically, there's an initial sense of shock and disbelief that lasts for about 24 hours. This psychic numbing protects the victim from the full impact of the incident.

After this initial period, the victim is likely to experience a range of trauma symptoms, such as nightmares, flashbacks, difficulty sleeping, moodiness and an inability to focus.

Critical incident stress debriefing helps victims cope with feelings of guilt and responsibility and overcome the trauma. MHN partners with an extensive network of counselors with specific expertise in trauma recovery to provide pre-incident preparation, acute care support and post-incident follow up.

The main objectives of a CISD are to:

- Help employees cope.
- Normalize the experience.
- Remind people that talking about the incident is healthy.
- Encourage employees to use their support networks.
- Educate employees about possible post-traumatic feelings of vulnerability, loss of control and memories of previous traumas.

Call your EAP coordinator to inquire about CISD services.

Suggested self-referral

If you feel that an employee would benefit from the EAP or an employee requests help in dealing with a concern, suggest he or she contact the EAP.

Formal supervisor referral

One of your duties as a manager or supervisor is to monitor employee performance. If an employee's performance or conduct is poor, you can refer him or her to EAP counseling to help resolve the underlying issue. This is called a formal supervisor referral, or FSR. The following section of this guide is dedicated to helping you use FSRs to benefit the employee, your team and the State.

"Big picture" services

MHN also offers other organizational guidance, development and training programs to help teams, divisions and the organization at large function better. *Please check with your EAP coordinator to find out which specific services are included with the State's EAP.*

Formal Supervisor Referral Guidelines and Tools

As a manager or supervisor, addressing work performance problems can be one of the most stressful aspects of your job. While talking with an employee about performance issues is never easy, your EAP can guide you through the process. This section of the handbook can help you identify potential performance issues, as well as provide guidelines for completing a formal supervisor referral (FSR).

The FSR is a management tool used to improve work performance and resolve work-related problems. It is not intended as a disciplinary measure, nor does it replace the State of California's policies and procedures for dealing with poor performance or conduct.

If the employee accepts the referral, the MHN management consultant will set up an appointment with a clinician. The clinician will meet with the employee to analyze the work performance problem and any underlying personal issues. The clinician will also help develop a plan of action, referring the employee to available resources as appropriate. The employee may use his or her self-referral EAP sessions for more counseling. Visits beyond the assessment *do* count toward the limit on face-to-face sessions per issue per calendar year.

Formal supervisor referral process

Taking the following steps can help ensure a successful outcome with your employee.

1. Document issues with job performance, conduct, attendance, and other concerns. (See the upcoming section on "Documenting Performance and Conduct Problems.")
2. Contact the EAP and ask to speak with an MHN management consultant about the situation.
3. Prepare a formal letter explaining the FSR process. A sample letter is provided later in this handbook.
4. Meet with the employee in a private setting to discuss job performance, conduct and other issues of concern. Outline your specific expectations and make a formal referral to the EAP.
5. Note on the formal referral letter whether the employee accepted or declined the referral.
6. Continue documenting the employee's job performance and conduct. If no progress is made, follow appropriate disciplinary procedures.

Common indicators of personal problems

Personal problems may manifest in the following ways. If you notice a pattern of behavior, and the employee does not respond to your request to change the behavior, consider initiating an FSR.

Attendance and leave

- Overuse of sick leave
- Repeated absences from the work area
- Ongoing use of leave on Mondays, Fridays, and/or the day after payday
- Repeated early departures
- Increasingly unlikely excuses for absences
- Repeated tardiness in the mornings or failure to return from lunch on time

Conduct and behavior

- Frequent moodiness
- Chronic tiredness
- Avoidance of co-workers
- Appearance of being under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Lying and covering up errors
- Overreactions to criticism
- Poor grooming and hygiene
- Conflict with co-workers or supervisors
- Repeated borrowing of money from co-workers

Performance

- Improbable excuses for poor work performance
- Difficulty recalling instructions and details
- Alternate periods of high and low productivity
- Embezzlement or stealing at work
- Missed deadlines
- Impaired judgment and decision-making
- Decline in the quality and/or quantity of work
- Increased number of complaints about the employee
- Lack of focus
- Mistakes and accidents on the job

If an FSR is appropriate, the management consultant will help you prepare for the meeting with the employee. This may include suggestions on how to present the problem and your expectations for resolution to the employee.

Documenting performance and conduct problems

Once you are aware of performance or conduct issues, you need to document them clearly and accurately. Doing so can:

- Help you remember the specific issues.
- Help you identify a pattern of performance or behavior.
- Help you prepare for discussions with the employee, human resources, your management and MHN's management consultant.
- Provide a record of actions taken to assist the employee.

Useful documentation needs to be as objective and accurate as possible. These guidelines can help you stay focused on work performance and avoid common supervisory pitfalls:

- Record the specific date, times and place of the behavior.
- Record your actual observations, not hearsay or your opinions or conclusions.
- Focus on performance and conduct, not on personal issues.
- Keep records of poor and good performance.
- Challenge yourself to be fair, objective, and consistent. (Ask yourself if you would take the same action if another employee performed this way).
- Document the action as soon as possible.
- Update records on a regular basis.

Below is an example of documenting specific employee behavior:

Employee's name: Julie Schurman

Day	Date	Time	Observations
Monday	1/2	2:45 p.m.	Argument with co-worker
Tuesday	1/3	9:00 a.m.	Unexplained absence from work
Thursday	1/5	10:00 a.m.	One hour late to work
Monday	1/9	3:00 p.m.	Complaint from client
Wednesday	1/11	1:30 p.m.	Intoxicated at work
Friday	1/13	2:00 p.m.	Two hour lunch break

Meeting with the employee

When meeting with the employee about the FSR:

- Be direct, firm and specific about your concerns, yet respectful.
- Have a written report, including dates and times of the conduct or performance problems. Give a copy to the employee.
- Do not try to diagnose or solve the employee's problems.
- Clearly state that you expect job performance and/or conduct will improve. Provide time frames and schedule meetings to measure improvement.
- Offer the FSR. Explain that the referral is being made because factors that are not work-related can affect job performance and conduct. Be sure the employee understands that:
  - He or she can choose to accept or decline the referral.
  - Even if the referral is not accepted, you will continue to evaluate performance and conduct in the workplace.
- Tell the employee he or she will be asked to sign a limited release of information. Describe the information that will be given to you if the release is signed.
- Ask the employee to indicate whether he or she accepts or refuses the referral.
- Advise your MHN management consultant whether the employee has accepted or refused the referral and provide an update from the meeting.

Authorization to release information

At the beginning of an FSR, the employee will be asked to sign an "Authorization to Release Client Information" form. If the employee signs the limited release of information, the MHN management consultant is authorized to advise you of the following:

1. **Attendance** – Did the employee attend the sessions(s)?
2. **Plan of action** – Was a plan developed? (The nature of the problem will not be disclosed.)
3. **Employee agreement** – Did the employee accept and follow through with the plan?

The FSR is not intended to replace, or protect an employee from, disciplinary or administrative action. Even if the employee refuses the referral, you should continue to monitor work and document performance and conduct. If the situation does not improve, consider appropriate disciplinary action. Remember, management consultation and the referral process is designed to augment your own supervisory style and the State's disciplinary processes, not replace them.

Use of EAP sessions

When an employee uses the EAP as part of an FSR, the first/initial sessions (typically only one session but could be two) do not count against his or her personal EAP benefit. (Visits beyond the assessment do count toward the face-to-face visit per issue per calendar year limit.) The clinician will work with the employee to assess the problem, develop a plan of action and refer the employee to the appropriate resource.

Quality assurance

MHN's goal is to provide timely, effective service. With prior approval, MHN sends a confidential survey to each supervisor, manager, or human resources representative who makes a formal supervisor referral.

Formal supervisor referral checklist

The following FSR checklist can help you prepare for your discussion with the MHN management consultant.

Contact information

- ☐ Manager/supervisor name
- ☐ Name of alternate contact
- ☐ Work email address
- ☐ Name of employee to be referred
- ☐ Employee's address

Personal information

- ☐ Employee's length of service
- ☐ Date of birth
- ☐ Gender
- ☐ Marital status
- ☐ Position/title
- ☐ Employee's health insurance, if known

Type of problem

- ☐ Quality of work
- ☐ Relationships at work or with the public
- ☐ Behavior/conduct
- ☐ Absenteeism/tardiness – frequency and patterns
- ☐ Duration of problem

Attempts at resolution and action plan

- ☐ Progressive/disciplinary action taken or pending which is relevant to current problems
- ☐ Future plan (i.e. what will be the next step in progressive action if the employee does not improve?)

The management consultant will coordinate a session with a clinician as soon as the employee agrees to participate in the FSR.

Sample formal supervisor referral letter

Please re-type this letter on your department letterhead.

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Employee Assistance Program

Manager/Supervisor Referral Letter

Date: _____

To (employee name): _____

Work location: _____

Classification: _____

From (manager/supervisor name): _____

Signature: _____ Phone: _____

This letter serves as your formal referral to MHN's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for help in resolving the job performance and/or conduct problem(s) below:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Participation in this program is voluntary and you may decline to use the service at any time. However, I will continue to monitor your performance. If your performance or conduct problem(s) described above do not improve, I may need to proceed with disciplinary action.

This formal referral to the EAP is confidential and limited information (as specified in the Authorization to Release Client Information form) can be released only with your written consent. MHN will notify me if you have accessed the EAP or if you do not keep the initial appointment.

Please contact EAP management consultant (name)_____ at (phone)_____ within five business days. The management consultant will schedule your appointment with a provider.

If you plan to attend this appointment during work hours, please let me know. Should you decline to use this service or if you are unable to keep your appointment, please let me know immediately.

A copy of this referral letter will be forwarded to a confidential file. It will not become a part of your individual personnel file.

A copy will also be forwarded to MHN (fax: [650] 988-4855).

[ ] Accepted referral [ ] Declined referral

_____

(Employee Signature) (Date)

Sample authorization for release of information

This page is for informational purposes only. Please do not complete this form, since it is a sample. The actual form should be completed by the management consultant.

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Sample Authorization for Release of Information

I, _____ _____

(Print client's name) (Case number)

authorize MHN to disclose my information to a third party recipient as I designate below. This information will be obtained in the course of my assessment and/or treatment for **work related problems** (situation, problem or disorder). Completion of this form is voluntary. If the form is not completed in its entirety, the requested information will not be disclosed to the recipient identified. This authorization for use or disclosure of medical information complies with applicable federal regulations, including federal HIPAA privacy regulations, 45 C.F.R. Section 164.508, 42 U.S.C. Section 290 dd-2, and 42 C.F.R. Section 2.1 et seq. as applicable.

_____ _____

(Name of person) (Organization)

_____ _____

(Name of person) (Organization)

The disclosure of information or records authorized herein shall be limited to:

- Whether or not I attend the EAP sessions
- Whether or not the clinician and I identified a problem
- Whether or not the clinician and I came up with a plan to help resolve the problem
- Whether or not I have agreed to accept and follow any recommendations made by the clinician

The purpose of this disclosure is compliance with the formal supervisor referral.

Information used or disclosed pursuant to an authorization may be subject to disclosure by the recipient and no longer protected by the federal health privacy regulations.

The authorization is subject to revocation in writing by the undersigned at any time except to the extent that action has been taken in reliance thereon. If not earlier revoked, it shall terminate on completion of my program participation or no later than one year from the date signed below, whichever is earlier.

Neither payment, enrollment nor eligibility for benefits will be conditioned on my providing or refusing to provide this authorization. This restriction does not apply if MHN is seeking to obtain information in connection with my eligibility or enrollment with MHN when I am not already a member or to obtain information required for payment of a specific claim for benefits.

_____ _____

(Client signature) (Date)

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Limitations

There are limitations to the services available through the EAP:

- The initial assessment sessions for employees who access the EAP through the formal supervisor referral process do not count against a member's EAP benefit. However, additional visits beyond this assessment do count toward the limit on face-to-face sessions per issue, per calendar year.
- Management consultations do not include:
  - Fitness for duty consultations
  - Drug testing
  - Workers Compensation involvement
  - Medical diagnoses
  - Prescriptions for medications
- EAP benefits do not include:
  - Inpatient or outpatient treatment
  - Prescription drugs
  - Supervisor referral based on substance abuse if there is not a job performance issue attributed to it
  - Treatment for autism or mental retardation
  - Services beyond the authorized number of EAP sessions
  - Services provided by non-MHN contracted providers
  - Counseling services mandated by a court of law or paid for by Workers Compensation
  - Formal psychological evaluations
  - Counseling related to Workers Compensation
  - Formal excuses for leaves of absence or time off work
  - Clinical evaluations for recommendations for child custody or child abuse proceedings

Notes

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