

HIGHLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE
GENERAL POLICY

SUBJECT: Employee Assistance Program

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BOARD OF TRUSTEE APPROVAL: 2/24/2021

EFFECTIVE DATE: 02/24/2021

Background

Highland Community College provides an Employee Assistance Program called the New Directions Employee Assistance Program (EAP). The goals of this program are:

1. To retain valued employees;
2. To restore productivity through early identification of personal problems; and
3. To motivate employees to seek help with life management problems.

An employee's choice of lifestyle is a personal decision. On the other hand, if an employee experiences problems and stress that outweigh the employee's ability to cope, or when life management problems begin to affect job performance or attendance, the matter becomes a concern of Highland Community College.

In most instances, if job performance becomes impaired, normal supervisory assistance serves to return job performance to an acceptable level. In some cases, neither the employee's efforts nor the efforts of the employee's supervisor resolve the problem(s). Consequently, unsatisfactory performance persists, causing reduced productivity.

Many problems can be resolved after identification and intervention. This applies whether the problem involves mental or emotional upset, financial hardship, marital or family distress, substance abuse or addiction, legal problems or other concerns.

A service that deals with life management problems, which may affect job performance, is provided to assist employees, their families, and Highland Community College. If an employee's work performance declines due to stress or difficulty coping, the employee is encouraged to voluntarily seek counseling and information on a confidential basis by contacting an Employee Assistance Program.

An employee's job performance may be affected by the problems of family members. For this reason, the same offer of assistance is extended to any members of the employee's immediate family.

All contact with the EAP are kept confidential as required by applicable laws. EAP related information will not be released without the employee's written authorization, unless the law requires or permits the disclosure of information without authorization. Generally, the company will request an employee only authorize the disclosure of the following information: Did the employee contact the EAP; and is the employee keeping appointments and /or complying the any recommendations.

Procedures:

The following procedures are designed to facilitate referrals to the Employee Assistance Program.

■ VOLUNTARY SELF-REFERRALS

1. An employee or immediate family member who desires confidential assistance for a personal problem may call New Directions EAP to arrange an appointment.
2. Supervisors may inform an employee of New Directions EAP. Unless the supervisor submits a formal management referral, no information about an employee's involvement in the program is furnished to the supervisor or other Highland Community College personnel, unless the law so allows, such as duty to warn of danger to a third party.

■ FORMAL MANAGEMENT REFERRALS

1. The basis for a formal management referral by Highland Community College management to New Directions EAP must be either:
 - (a) A decline in work performance on the part of the employee; or
 - (b) A particular on-the-job incident that indicates a possible life management problem.
2. The supervisor should interview the employee and restrict discussion to issues of work performance or the particular incident(s). During a meeting, the supervisor should not speculate about the cause of performance decline or particular incident. If a specific, unusual incident or pattern of performance decline occurs, a supervisor may consult with the Human Resources Director about the appropriateness of New Directions EAP prior to meeting with the employee.
3. After the work situation is reviewed, the supervisor may:
 - (a) Inform the employee of New Directions EAP;
 - (b) Recommend voluntary participation in the EAP; or,
 - (c) Take appropriate management steps to resolve the work performance problem.
4. If the decline in work performance continues, the supervisor may initiate a formal management referral to New Directions EAP. Before referring an employee to New Directions EAP, the supervisor must:
 - (a) Complete a New Directions EAP Referral Form;
 - (b) Review the appropriateness of a formal management referral with an immediate superior;
 - (c) Review the appropriateness of a formal management referral with the Human Resources Director (or appropriate personnel); and

- (d) If the appropriateness of a formal management referral is in question, a New Directions EAP clinician should be consulted; when an employee is directed to use the EAP as a condition of employment, he or she must cooperate and participate in prescribed services, counseling or rehabilitation.
5. When the supervisor and the Human Resources Director have reviewed and signed the Formal Referral form, the supervisor will meet with the employee to review the work performance decline and the decision to formally refer the employee to New Directions EAP for the purpose of discussing any life management problems which may be affecting work performance.
6. The employee may choose to accept or reject the offer of EAP services.
 - (a) If the employee chooses to accept, the supervisor or employee calls and arranges an appointment time. The supervisor then gives the employee, in writing, the appointment day, date and hour, together with the address and phone number of the provider's office. An initial appointment at the provider's office may be scheduled during work hours. Subsequent appointments may be scheduled on the employee's personal time.
 - (b) If the employee rejects the offer of referral to the EAP, and the employee's job has not been made contingent on participation in treatment, and the work problems do not recur after the interview, no further action is required. The supervisor may point out that the EAP is available on a self-referral basis should the employee change his or her mind in the future. An improvement or further decline in work performance should also be documented.
7. If Highland Community College believes that an employee has a problem that has seriously affected job performance, continued employment may be contingent on involvement and participation in New Directions EAP and/or the designated treatment plan. Referrals to New Directions EAP under this arrangement would require the employee to:
 - (a) Attend assessment interview and counseling sessions;
 - (b) Follow the recommended treatment plan; and
 - (c) Authorize New Directions EAP to provide Highland Community College with updates regarding involvement in New Directions EAP and participation in, conclusion of, or interruption of the recommended treatment program.
8. Termination for unsatisfactory job performance may be deferred by Highland Community College during the employee's participation in the recommended treatment program. Completion of the treatment program does not in itself guarantee job retention, which is dependent upon return to satisfactory performance.
9. After the New Directions EAP Referral Form is reviewed with the employee, it is sent to the New Directions EAP prior to the scheduled initial interview. The referring supervisor must document the work performance problem on the Referral Form.

10. The EAP clinician lets the referring supervisor know that the employee attended and participated in the assessment and treatment plan.
11. Nothing in this procedure limits the right of the supervisor or employer to administer appropriate disciplinary action in any manner consistent with Highland Community College policy and/or limit the employee's use of the grievance process.