

# Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

This section is devoted to Ph.D. and Masters level practitioners who are contracted by PBH to provide services to members covered by mental health and/or EAP benefits. We recommend that providers distribute this to all administrative staff within their offices.

## About the PBH EAP

PacificCare Behavioral Health believes that the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is an effective tool for the employee to resolve personal issues before they become workplace issues. The EAP is fundamentally a program designed to assist employees and managers in the early identification and resolution of productivity problems associated with behavioral health disorders and other personal concerns.

**The general PBH EAP philosophy centers on assessment and referral, and problem-focused brief counseling. Therefore, PBH encourages the provider to focus on working with the client to identify and resolve specific issues.**

PBH also encourages employees to use the EAP for early intervention and as a source for community resources. In cases where the client manifests a behavioral health disorder, the role of the EAP is to constructively confront, motivate and refer the employee for treatment. The goal of the PBH EAP is to promote wellness and prevention through easy access and early intervention, employee seminars and communications, and accountable partnerships with our customers.

The PBH EAP offers a wide variety of services to employer groups and their employees. The array of services includes 24-hour access to the following:

- ◆ Assessment and referral
- ◆ Brief counseling
- ◆ Community resource referrals
- ◆ Employee education, training and seminars
- ◆ Supervisor and union representative consultation, training and seminars
- ◆ Communication materials
- ◆ Critical incident debriefing

- ◆ Crisis Intervention
- ◆ Supervisory referrals and back to work reintegration
- ◆ Conflict Resolution
- ◆ Broad brush EAP services, i.e. child/dependent care referrals, wellness referrals, legal and financial referrals.

PBH offers a 3-visit EAP model that provides assessment and brief counseling to the point of referral. In addition, 5-visit, 8-visit and 10-visit models have been designed to offer short-term assistance, and if indicated, a referral to the employee's behavioral health plan. In all of these models PBH advocates a problem-focused, goal-oriented approach which parallels the philosophy for outpatient treatment. The unique aspect of EAP is that employees and family members gain access to no-cost assessment and counseling sessions with licensed professionals who can either help them resolve their concerns, direct them to appropriate community resources, or motivate them for an episode of outpatient treatment.

## Types of EAP Service Plans and Care Management Requirements

As you are reviewing this section of the manual, please keep the following definitions and guidelines in mind.

**All EAP services must be pre-authorized.** Axis I diagnosis is not required for EAP only clients. V codes or 799.90 for diagnosis deferred can be used for EAP claims.

There are three different types of PBH EAP service plans.

- ◆ Stand-alone EAP Services  
Members have only EAP services available through PBH. Behavioral health benefits may be part of another medical health plan or a carve-out behavioral health managed care plan.
- ◆ EAP as Gatekeeper to a PBH Managed Care Plan  
Members must contact PBH EAP prior to accessing mental health or chemical dependency treatment through their PBH plan. Depending on the outcome of the assessment, PBH EAP counselors refer to EAP services or behavioral health treatment. A referral can be given separate from, or in conjunction with, community resources, financial, legal and other EAP services. If the clinical need exceeds the scope of the EAP

service plan, the member will be given a referral for treatment under their managed behavioral health care benefit.

◆ **EAP Integrated with PBH Managed Care Plan**

Members has "dual" access, and may call PBH EAP or PBH behavioral health plan for assessment and referral. Depending on the outcome of the assessment, PBH staff refers to EAP services or behavioral health treatment. A referral can be given separate from or in conjunction with community resources, financial, legal and other EAP services. If the clinical need exceeds the scope of the EAP service plan, the member will be given a referral for treatment under their managed care behavioral health benefit.

**Each of the plans above is available with a 3-visit, 5-visit, 8-visit or 10 visit model. It is the provider's responsibility to know which service plan applies to an individual client. This information will be provided to you at the time of the referral. This knowledge can assist the provider during assessment and subsequent development of a counseling and/or referral plan. The number of EAP visits must be pre-authorized. For plans with more than 5 visits, EAP providers should always call the care manager after the fifth visit when needing to request additional visits or to transition the client to the behavioral health plan benefit.**

Regardless of the type of EAP service plan a client may have, PBH advocates an approach that focuses on assessment and referral, and problem-focused brief counseling.

## **Formal Supervisor Referrals**

A formal supervisory referral occurs when a manager or a supervisor has documented a job performance problem and has already activated the organization's standard disciplinary procedure. As a complimentary, but separate process, the organization may request that the employee contact PBH EAP for assistance with any personal problem that may be interfering with the employee's job performance.

### **EAP Network Provider Responsibilities for Formal Supervisory Referrals**

- 1) Appointment must be scheduled with the client within twenty-four (24) hours of referral.
- 2) Provider must contact PBH EAP counselor after the initial evaluation (and subsequent sessions), with assessment and recommendations.

- 3) Provider must communicate non-compliance or treatment outcome regarding job performance issues to PBH EAP counselor.

#### PBH EAP Counselor Responsibilities

- 1) The initial call requesting EAP services should be made to PBH by the referring supervisor or manager.
- 2) The PBH EAP counselor must verify from the supervisor that the referral is a formal supervisor referral, based on job performance. The information required may include:
  - ◆ Current status of the employee and their job, especially if the current disciplinary action is a final warning
  - ◆ Past disciplinary action
  - ◆ Previous discussions/actions taken by supervisor regarding this employees job performance
  - ◆ Verification of written documentation regarding job performance
  - ◆ Information regarding the company's Drug Free Workplace policy
- 3) The PBH EAP counselor will discuss with the supervisor, the need for a signed consent form from the employee. It must be determined who will be included on the release form, and how best to obtain the employees' signature. *An employee will never be coerced or forced to sign the release form.*
- 4) The nature of the information that will be released is discussed with the caller. The information is limited to:
  - ◆ Whether or not the employee has had contact with the PBH EAP counselor;
  - ◆ Whether or not the employee has attended counseling sessions or treatment program;
  - ◆ Whether or not the employee has followed through on treatment recommendations, and;
  - ◆ Any recommendations, including restrictions, regarding back to work issues (only if the employee is returning to work after a suspension or other mandatory time off the job).
- 5) The EAP will recommend the supervisor ask the employee to sign the consent to release form during the same meeting in which they refer the

employee to PBH EAP. The form should be faxed to PBH EAP so that the supervisor may be informed if the employee does not call.

- 6) No information, including the employee's failure to contact EAP may be given to the supervisor without the employee's written consent.
- 7) The PBH EAP counselor will instruct the referring supervisor to inform the employee to identify him/herself as a supervisor referral.
- 8) It is the PBH EAP counselor's responsibility to educate the network provider regarding specifics of the supervisor referral (i.e., DOT, job performance, POS, drug screen, etc.).

## Critical Incident Debriefing

PBH EAP provides on-site critical incident debriefing for its customers. Critical incident debriefing provides intervention, stabilization and counseling services for employees and customers following a traumatic workplace event. A critical incident may be any situation which causes an unusually strong emotional reaction in an individual, with the potential to adversely affect their ability to function at work and home. Examples of traumatic events may include:

- ◆ Natural disasters
- ◆ Violent acts in the community/world
- ◆ Death of a coworker
- ◆ Violence in the workplace
- ◆ Robbery/Assault at the work site

PBH Employee Assistance will offer either through EAP staff or network consultants, on-site Critical Incident Debriefing intervention within 24-72 hours after the occurrence of the traumatic event.

- 1) A designated company representative calls PBH EAP to request services after a traumatic event.
- 2) The type of problem is discussed and the number of employees involved. A date is set for debriefing by either the PBH EAP staff counselor or network consultant.
- 3) Depending on the number of employees involved, PBH EAP dispatches an individual or a critical incident team. These individuals consist of EAP counseling staff, network consultant(s), or both. This individual or team

will work closely with the customer's existing crisis team to coordinate services.

- 4) After learning the circumstances of the incident, the counselor/consultant determines the optimum group size and parameters under which the debriefing will be held.
- 5) For groups, the debriefing consists of each employee voluntarily relating his or her perspective of the incident, and his or her emotional response.
- 6) Those individuals showing a strong or unusual response to the incident are approached privately by the counselor/consultant to ascertain the individual's well being.
- 7) An in-person, one-on-one assessment is conducted with appropriate employees.
- 8) After an evaluation, the counselor/consultant determines how the employee's needs will be best served, and makes referrals based on available community resources or mental health services through the employee's health plan.

## Crisis Intervention

Crisis intervention is part of the core service of PBH EAP. PBH EAP counselors assess the acuity of the call, and the nature of the problem. They then take the necessary steps to ensure the physical safety of the caller. There are occasions when the risk of imminent harm is so high that 911 or the local police department must be contacted to assure the member's safety. There are also occasions when the EAP counselor must direct a member to the closest hospital to assure safety. When the member (and the member's family and/or social support system) is able to contract with the EAP counselor to not act on violent impulses, an *immediate* face-to-face evaluation is arranged. This can be done by a local psychiatric emergency team, a practitioner/facility, or an EAP network consultant who specializes in crisis intervention. The EAP counselor will place calls on behalf of the member to ensure access to one of these services.

**PBH asks the provider performing the crisis intervention services to call the PBH EAP counselor within four (4) hours of the initial call, to relay the outcome and future plan. This information is documented in the client's EAP file so that follow-up can occur.**

The Employee Assistance Program Association (EAPA), defines crisis intervention as a rapid, intensive helping process which includes the following components:

- ◆ Engagement of the client
- ◆ Assessment
- ◆ Building client support systems
- ◆ Contracting with client
- ◆ Follow-up
- ◆ Possible referral to treatment

## Follow-Up

EAP clients are re-contacted after they have requested EAP services. Contact may be by telephone, mail or both. Follow-up is intended to be a monitoring process, not a therapeutic process. The purpose of follow-up is to:

- ◆ Support and/or motivate the client to implement the recommended treatment plan
  - ◆ Insure that the client was able to make contact with the treatment provider or community resource
  - ◆ Confirm the recommended provider/resource was appropriate and determine the need for additional services
  - ◆ Monitor progress and/or impact of the EAP
  - ◆ Determine the client's satisfaction with EAP service
- 1) The PBH EAP counselor asks for the client's permission to check with them to determine if their needs were met by the referrals given.
  - 2) The PBH EAP counselor may contact the client by telephone, providing the client has given his permission to do so, usually ten (10) to fourteen (14) days after the initial contact.
  - 3) The EAP counselor inquires as to whether or not the client was able to get the assistance needed for the referral resources, and offers additional resources and referrals, if needed.
  - 4) EAP clients are also contacted by a mail survey in order to determine overall satisfaction with the service they received. The client need not sign their name to the survey.

- 5) In the instance of formal Supervisory Referrals, an EAP counselor will periodically call the client to follow-up with the client's status.

## Training

One way for an EAP to be an effective tool for promoting and encouraging health and wellness is through education and training. PBH EAP provides education and training to customers on a wide variety of topics. These presentations are given by PBH EAP staff or network consultants, and offer expert advice and guidance on the selected topic, as well as increasing awareness of the EAP and its services.

The goal of education and training is to help individuals increase their awareness and knowledge regarding a specific area of their lives. This process will help them identify alternative behaviors, solutions or choices so they can achieve optimal physical, spiritual, financial, and mental health.

A selection of PBH educational seminar topics include:

- ◆ Beyond Codependency
- ◆ Breaking Free of Addictive Behavior
- ◆ Basic Personal Budgeting
- ◆ Career and Life Balance
- ◆ Growing Healthy Families
- ◆ Holiday Season Budgeting
- ◆ Coping with Change
- ◆ Professional Conduct for Exceptional Teamwork
- ◆ Stopping Harassment and Discrimination
- ◆ Dealing with Difficult People
- ◆ Becoming a Smart Consumer of Professional Services
- ◆ Repairing your Credit Record