

	<b>Employee Assistance Program</b>		
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Adopted March 2006  
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## **1.0 Employee Assistance Program Policy and Objective**

Columbia Basin College (CBC) cares about the health and well-being of its employees and recognizes that a variety of personal problems, including depression and anxiety, alcohol and drug dependency, marital or relationship issues, grief and loss, eldercare, and financial problems can negatively affect personal lives and work performance. CBC has an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) designed to encourage employee awareness of such problems and to offer assistance at the earliest opportunity. The EAP also provides a range of critical incident response services for workplace critical incidents or a traumatic event that is sudden, unexpected, and of a magnitude that is usually beyond the norm of what usually happens to people at work, potentially overwhelming normal coping abilities. Examples of such events are serious workplace accidents, sudden deaths, or natural or man-made disasters. The overall objective of the EAP is to provide a comprehensive resource for employee wellness and a management tool to increase employee productivity, reduce absenteeism and turnover, and positively impact the learning and working environment.

## **2.0 Scope**

The EAP is available to all faculty, administrative/exempt and classified staff, as well as temporary hourly employees and student workers and their immediate family members over the age of 18. The EAP providers will provide problem assessment and consultation and assist with short-term problem solving and/or provide referrals to resources that best meet employee needs. For treatment or extended service, the employee will be referred to local community agencies, hospitals, clinics or private practitioners. If a referral is made, the employee is responsible for associated costs, either by utilization of the employee's health insurance or by making other arrangements. Participation or non-participation in the EAP is voluntary and cannot be used in any decision affecting an employee's job security, promotional opportunities, corrective or disciplinary action or other employment rights.

## **3.0 Procedure**

CBC's EAP is contracted through the Washington State Employee Assistance Program under the Department of Enterprise Systems. The EAP can be accessed 24-hours a day seven days a week by telephone at 1(877) 313-4455 (toll free), or in writing at:

Washington State Employee Assistance Program  
1222 State Ave NE, Suite 201  
Olympia, WA 98504-7540  
FAX: (360) 664-0498

The Washington State Employee Assistance Program maintains a website that contains EAP forms, publications, resources, and other services. It can be accessed at <http://www.dop.wa.gov/EAP/Pages/default.aspx>.

- 3.1 EAP Administration. CBC's EAP Administrator is the Vice President for Human Resources & Legal Affairs located in the Human Resources Office. The EAP Administrator and Human Resources Office Staff shall treat all information about employee requests for information and knowledge of any use of the EAP discretely and confidentially. The EAP Administrator shall be responsible for ensuring the communication of the program to employees and maintaining an effective level of program awareness among supervisors and employees. Additionally, the EAP Administrator is responsible for receiving supervisory referrals (after consultation and approval of the appropriate vice president) for employees with patterns of declining job performance or discussing program benefits, procedures and alternatives available to employees.
- 3.2 Referral Guidelines. Employees may obtain professional assistance through the EAP in one of the following ways:
  - 3.2.1 Self-referral. An employee or family member may independently contact the EAP for a confidential appointment. Job performance problems are not a requirement for use of the services. The supervisor will not be notified of EAP contact without the employee's written consent.
  - 3.2.2 Informal referral. A supervisor or Human Resources Office representative suggests or refers an employee to the EAP, but the referral is not for work-performance problems. The supervisor or Human Resources Office representative will not be notified of EAP contact without the employee's written consent.
  - 3.2.3 Formal referral. A supervisor may consider a formal referral of an employee to EAP for declining work performance when normal supervisory intervention has not been effective and only after consultation and approval of the appropriate vice president and the EAP Administrator. A formal referral to EAP is not a part of discipline, but is intended to work adjunct or effectively compliment supervisor coaching and counseling and/or progressive discipline to achieve desired changes in employee behavior. The EAP is not a substitute for discipline. When a formal referral is made, the supervisor should review the EAP policy and services with the employee. Supervisors shall not attempt to diagnose or counsel the employee regarding personal problems, but should explain the formal referral to EAP is to provide an opportunity to improve job performance by working out any personal issues that may be affecting their work. The final decision to use EAP is up to the employee. If the EAP provider is notified of the formal referral prior to employee contact, the EAP will restrict information to whether or not the referred employee made an appointment, date and time of the appointment, and whether further appointment(s) were scheduled.
- 3.3 Use of leave. CBC wants to encourage employees with personal problems to seek assistance. Therefore, with supervisory approval and where services to students or others are not disrupted leave of absence with pay will be granted to an employee (not applicable to temporary hourly, work study or adjunct instructors) to attend an initial intake and assessment session with the EAP, if it occurs during the employee's scheduled shift. Supervisors will consider an employee-requested schedule change, use of paid

leave or leave without pay to attend any other appointment(s) with the EAP. In instances when an employee accesses EAP services during non-work time, the employee may of course do so without informing the supervisor.

- 3.4 EAP and Disciplinary Process. The EAP may compliment the disciplinary process, but is not a part of discipline. The supervisor shall not offer EAP services as an alternative to disciplinary action. When disciplinary action is imposed, EAP services are noted in applicable disciplinary documents as a resource and/or may be suggested as adjunct to disciplinary action.
- 3.5 Confidentiality. Use of EAP services is confidential and information about individual employee assistance use will not be released by the EAP provider without the employee's written consent. However, there are certain state and federal laws that provide for exceptions, including abuse or neglect of a minor child, elderly or disabled person and threats to self, others or state property. If this information is disclosed, the EAP providers have the responsibility to report the information to the appropriate authority. The other exceptions are for subpoena, court order or otherwise by law and under RCW 41.04.730 if the employee's supervisor or EAP Administrator makes a formal referral for the employee prior to the employee's initial contact with EAP for work performance issues. EAP will limit information to the supervisor or the EAP Administrator as stated above. Otherwise, EAP will maintain confidential records of employee contact with EAP and the services provided in order to provide continuity and coordination of care.
- 3.6 Records. All EAP records will be kept by the Washington State Employee Assistance Program. CBC will have no record of these services and therefore no information regarding an employee's participation in EAP shall be kept in the employee's personnel file.