

2014 OEAP Annual Resource Conference
Breakout Session: A Panel Discussion
“An Inside Look at the Role of the Agency EAP Coordinator”
June 3, 2014

Facilitator: Tim Beverly

**Panelist Members: Matt Dyer, State Library; Carla Hall, JFS;
and Marius Igwe, OEAP Consultant**

Purpose

This session is geared towards both new and experienced agency EAP Coordinators. The panel discussion is an excellent opportunity for participants to learn from veteran agency EAP Coordinators on how he/she interacts with OEAP Consultants and effectively collaborate with them in meeting the needs of employees at agencies / institutions.

You will receive an overview of the key roles and responsibilities of the agency / institution EAP coordinator as well as what is involved in a site visit. Handouts for this session include:

- ❖ The role of the EAP Coordinator
- ❖ Site visit overview / site visit model

Participants will have an opportunity to ask questions and discuss each of these documents. Emphasis will be placed on the importance of participant feedback, since this information helps the OEAP shape how the interactions with agency EAP coordinators and managers to strengthen the partnership.

In the remaining time, each panelist will be asked to share their experience in working with OEAP. Then there will be a brief discussion where the panel will be asked the following questions:

Discussion Questions

- 1) Why are site visits important to your agency and institution?
- 2) Do you feel that your role as EAP coordinator is effective? If not, what can be done to improve in this area?
- 3) Do you feel that employees in your agency can benefit from the Transformative Mediation process? If so, how can the agency EAP coordinator support the program?

Thank you for your participation!

OEAP Team



Agency / Institution EAP Coordinator Roles & Responsibilities

The agency / institution EAP coordinators volunteer their time to assist the Ohio Employee Assistance Program (OEAP) in carrying out its mission. The goal of OEAP is to ensure that every state employee is aware of available services. The role the agency EAP Coordinator plays is vital.

The role of agency EAP Coordinators may vary, depending on the needs of the agency. The primary functions of most agency / institution EAP coordinators fall under the following categories: ***Point of Contact or Resource, Program Knowledge, Confidentiality, Education and Training, and Promoting / Communicating OEAP services.***

Responsibilities of the agency / institution EAP coordinator include the following:

Point of Contact and Resource

- Serve as a point of contact to employees, supervisors, managers and union representatives by providing information on OEAP services. Note: the role of the agency EAP Coordinator is to ***only*** provide general information, support and to facilitate discussions; he/she ***should not*** function as a therapist or counselor.
- Act as a liaison to supervisors / managers on issues involving the OEAP and assist the agency management with referral procedures, assessing the need for OEAP intervention with employees' personal problems.
- Function as a resource to managers, supervisors and union representatives as well as employees on issues involving the use of OEAP referral services, access to services, consultation and coordination of training that helps to improve the workplace.
- Maintain a neutral status in dealing with employees and supervisors as it relates to disciplinary actions. Also, the agency / institution EAP coordinator should not act as a representative for an employee, against management.
- Assist in identifying situations that may warrant on-the-job intervention by OEAP once an employee has been identified as having performance problems that may result in discipline (e.g., policy violation, behavior, attendance).

Program Knowledge

- A key function of an agency EAP coordinator is his/her working knowledge of the various aspects of the OEAP. This person may be required to assist in: interpreting or explaining agency policies and procedures for employees and/or managers; and
- Interface with the OEAP staff on any new program initiatives and/or changes in policies/procedures.

Confidentiality

- No information, written or oral can be disclosed by the agency EAP coordinator without the written consent/authorization of the employee. All records are maintained by OEAP and kept secured, separate from all other employee records, and are accessible only by OEAP management and staff.
- The agency EAP maintains confidentiality by not sharing OEAP information about an employee unless the employee provides a written consent/authorization.

Education and Training

One of the most important areas in which to focus education efforts is that of helping supervisors / managers to understand the need for identifying problems. OEAP will provide training to supervisors on the proper techniques of intervening. Training can include the procedures for making a referral, the OEAP Participation Agreement and referencing the organization's policy as guidance.

- The agency EAP coordinators interface with OEAP in order to ensure that education and training are available to their agencies. For example, courses on substance abuse, violence in the workplace, bullying in the workplace and other personal problems should be presented as a means of providing awareness of potential problems and how they can impact others in the workplace.
- The agency EAP coordinators will work with OEAP to schedule site visits; make available the OEAP Awareness training for new employees and supervisors; attend the OEAP annual resource conference for agency EAP coordinators, human resources, labor relations and union representatives.
- Also, the coordinators will educate managers / supervisors on the tools and resources available to them (e.g., OEAP Annual Report, Quarterly Utilization Reports, Supervisor Resource Guide, Participation Agreement, Critical Incident Management Services and the new service: Employee Workplace Mediation).

Promoting and Communicating OEAP Services

- Assist in the promotion and distribution of information about OEAP services to help employees make more informed decisions about OEAP services. The program visibility is critical to supporting the OEAP as well as integrating OEAP services with other organizational activities.
- Promote both a positive image and a positive reputation. Agency EAP Coordinators should continually promote the program to ensure maximum usage by those who would benefit from its services.
- Advocate OEAP awareness via the OEAP website and the distribution of brochures, posters, newsletters or information articles; promoting health fairs and group discussions.
- Assist with programmatic issues, discussing OEAP services at monthly staff meetings to ensure management is informed of EAP related-issues, utilization and concerns.

Ohio Employee Assistance Program (OEAP) Site Visit Overview

When conducting a site visit to a state agency or institution the following areas should be discussed with the EAP Coordinator or other designated contact.

- ❖ Share OEAP strategic initiatives based on Strategic Plan.
- ❖ Share copies of the most recent, Frontline Focus newsletter and quarterly report, and annual report. Make sure that the newsletter is being distributed to the employees.
- ❖ Share information on agency/ institution utilization and discuss what steps can be taken to improve utilization.
- ❖ After June 3, 2014 provide the agency institution with a copy of the revised Participation Agreement
- ❖ Discussing the Statewide Mediation Program and determine needs for understanding more about this program.
- ❖ Take brochures, magnets and posters. Look around to make sure that current OEAP information is being displayed.
- ❖ Review our website with the agency / institution contact and remind them that they should visit the website frequently as information is constantly being updated. Also, review specifically the Supervisor's Resource Guide.
- ❖ Review and discuss the agencies training needs and trainings that have been completed.
- ❖ Review the OLPD training catalog.
- ❖ Discuss any upcoming health fairs.

Ohio Employee Assistance Program (OEAP)

Site Visit Model

