



**HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT: EMPLOYEE WELLBEING PROGRAMME  
(EWP) GUIDELINE**

Type of document	Employee Wellbeing Programme Guideline
Purpose	1. To create a caring and supportive work environment which will benefit all employees. 2. To guide in the referral, accessibility and ensure consistency in the implementation of Employee Wellbeing Programme for staff.
Accessibility	General (external and internal)
Implementation date	
Review date/frequency	As the need for amendments arises
Previous revisions	None (New protocol)
Owner of this protocol	Vice-Rector: Social Impact, Transformation and Personnel
Institutional functionary (curator) responsible for this protocol	Chief Director: Human Resources
Date of approval	
Approved by	The Institutional Committee for Business Continuity (ICBC)
Validity	In case of differences in interpretation, the English version of this policy will be regarded as valid version.

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## 1. PREAMBLE

The Stellenbosch University Staff Health and Wellbeing (SHW) is receiving increasing focus and prioritisation. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought this into even sharper focus. As an institution we wish to embody the values of compassion, empathy and care with respect to the health and wellbeing of our employees at all levels of the organisation. Our desire is for all our employees to feel empowered and supported.

Stellenbosch University is committed to ensuring that their workforce is productive, healthy and happy. They understand that both personal and work related problems can have a negative impact on their staff, and that this can result in reduced productivity, reduced performance and inappropriate behaviour in the workplace.

**Stellenbosch University** commits to support and promote a healthier work environment for its people by setting up an Employee Wellbeing Programme (EWP). The aim of this will be to create a caring and supportive work environment which will benefit all employees. The EWP has been designed to support employees, (and their immediate family as outlined in the scope of this policy) who experience difficulties in either their work or personal life, which may have an effect on their performance or productivity at work.

In partnership with Life Employee Health Solution, an independent Employee Assistance Program (EAP) service provider focussed on providing workplace support solution, SU will be responsible for the provision of the EWP services.

## 2. PURPOSE

The EWP will be utilized to grow and maintain a healthy workforce and supportive work environment. The programme is designed to:

- Promote early identification and resolution of personal and work related problems;
- Provide confidential, professional, accessible and comprehensive Employee wellbeing Program services, which will
- Increase individual functioning levels, promote work satisfaction and morale, improve the quality and productivity of work, and build a workplace climate and culture that is supportive.

## 3. DEFINITION

EWP is a coordinated and comprehensive set of health promotion and protection strategies used to promote health and wellness within organisations. The EWP assists employees and their immediate family when they experience personal and work related problems which may have an effect on the occupational functioning of the employee. Employee wellbeing programmes help employees make smart and healthy choices that can reduce health care costs and reduce absenteeism.

## 4. SCOPE

The following individuals are entitled to use the EWP:

- Staff in the employ of Stellenbosch University, and their household family members located in the Republic of South Africa.

- Household members include spouse, dependent children and other family members. The following are included:
  - Common law husband and wife. This means a man and woman who live together on a regular basis as husband and wife without any legal formalities.
  - Polygamous couples (more than one wife is present in the family)
  - Same-sex couples
  - Dependent children: these include foster children and stepchildren who are financially dependent on the employee as well as children who are not living with the employee but are financially dependent on the employee. Dependants in active military service are excluded.
  - Family members: these include relatives such as a parents, external relatives who are living with the employee and are also financially dependent on the employee.

## **5. GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

The Employee wellness office will provide on-going education and training to ensure that managers, employees and all other relevant stakeholders understand and adhere to the following key principles:

### **5.1 Accessibility**

The EWP is available to all employees and their family members as defined in the guideline. The services can be accessed in the following ways:

- By calling the toll-free number: 0800 004 770;
- By sending an sms to: 31581;
- By sending an email to: EWP@carewaysgroup.com;
- By sending a WhatsApp: 066 488 2273;
- Onsite Wellness Events.

### **5.2 Cost**

The use of the EWP as provided by Stellenbosch University's service provider, Life EHS, and is free for all employees and their family members<sup>1</sup>.

### **5.3 Confidentiality**

All information shared with the EWP is confidential. No information shall be shared with any 3<sup>rd</sup> party except in the following exceptional circumstances.

- Employees provide written consent to disclose information
- The law requires disclosure; or,

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that the EWP is limited to a short-term, solution focussed interventions. For extended treatment, assessment or service, the employee will be referred to community resources which are not part of the EWP solution. Costs may be incurred from such use of additional service and will need to be covered by the employee, organisation or medical scheme.

- It is believed that there is a threat to a person's life or safety, and that failure to disclose this information will lead to harm.

Examples of situations where confidentiality will be breached could include but are not limited to:

- Where child neglect and/or abuse is suspected
- Where an individual indicates that they are going to commit suicide, and have a plan
- Where an individual indicates that they intend to harm another person
- If an employee requires psychiatric or medical assistance
- If a court order or government agency compels disclosure
- If an employee is in a safety sensitive position and could pose a significant safety risk,
- Where there is a potential risk to the organisation (such as fraud).

#### **5.4 Voluntary Basis**

Use of the Programme is voluntary, even if the employee is referred by management. No manager, supervisor, or other person may coerce or pressure an individual to make use of the service.

#### **5.5 Job Security and Promotion**

The decision to seek or accept assistance through the EWP will not negatively affect an employee's job security or advancement opportunities.

#### **5.6 Performance/Behavioural conduct**

Participation in the EWP does not relieve the employee of the responsibility of meeting acceptable work performance and attendance requirements. An employee's performance and or behaviour will be evaluated and dealt with in line with the University's performance management procedures regardless of whether the employee is making use of the support of the EWP.

#### **5.7 Leave**

Time off will be provided to eligible employees and dependents consistent with Stellenbosch University's leave policy and applicable medical aid coverage, as well as the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (Act no. 75 of 1997) and the Labour Relations Act (Act no. 66 of 1995).

### **6. EWP SERVICES**

#### **6.1 Services available to all Employees and their Family Members:**

- 6.1.1 **Telephonic Support Line:** Unlimited access to a 24 hour, toll-free line with all calls answered by qualified and registered Life EHS professionals including, psychologists, social workers and registered counsellors.
- 6.1.2 **Face-to-Face Counselling:** Depending on the treatment plan, referral for face-to-face counselling with up to **6 (six)** sessions per person, per identified problem/concern, per year provided by a qualified and registered wellbeing

practitioner at his/her practice located within an accessible travelling distance of the employee<sup>2</sup>.

- 6.1.3 **Legal Advice:** To ensure that employees are not distracted or discouraged during work hours by concerns relating to the law, this service provides employees and their immediate families with 24/7 access to confidential, professional legal advice. Legal information on Labour law issues is excluded, and the service does not include the representation of individuals in a court of law.
- 6.1.4 **Financial Advice:** Personal financial problems may impact on an employee's wellness, and this can have an effect on their productivity at work. These cause distractions which may lead to conflict, absenteeism and distractions in the workplace. Life EHS EWP service includes financial advisory services, which are provided by qualified, independent financial advisors. These services include debt advice/planning, budgeting and retirement planning. No personal loans are provided.
- 6.1.5 **Trauma Management Service:** Trauma has become pervasive in our society. The EWP provides a comprehensive, multi-component and specialised crisis intervention service. This Trauma Management System includes prompt and professional group- and individual trauma responses.
- 6.1.6 **HIV/AIDS management services:** including HIV/AIDS counselling and support to those infected and affected.
- 6.2 **Additional Services available to specifically managers, supervisors and team leaders:**
  - 6.2.1 **Managerial Consultations:** Unlimited access to management of Stellenbosch University with regards to people management. This advisor support is provided by specialist managerial consultants. Managers may contact the Call Contact Centre – 0800 004 770 and the Employee wellbeing office to consult on work related concerns and situations
  - 6.2.2 **Managerial Referral Services:** Managers may refer employees presenting with personal or work related challenges to the EWP for supportive counselling and assistance.

## 7. REFERRAL PROCEDURES

Staff may obtain professional assistance through the EWP in one of the following ways:

### 7.1 Self-Referral:

An employee who would like confidential assistance for a personal or work related problem should call 0800 004 770 and ask to speak to a EWP Representative. The EWP Representative will either provide the necessary assistance on the telephone or will arrange for further confidential consultation at a counsellor's offices in the employee's work area or community. Any communication between the employee and the Life EHS Representative will be held in confidence.

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<sup>2</sup> Important note: EWP counselling is a short term, solution focussed intervention. Should an employee require long-term assistance he/she will be referred to community resources and costs might be incurred for this treatment option.

A Life EHS Representative may be a Corporate Wellbeing Consultant, Counsellor, Case Manager or Sales Representative.

## **7.2 Informal Managerial Referral:**

If a manager is in doubt about the appropriateness of making a EWP referral, the manager should contact the Executive consultant/ Manager Care Centre; his/her own manager, or the Human Resources Practitioner, EWP office for confirmation. The following are among the circumstances in which a manager should make an informal referral to the EWP:

- A request by an employee for assistance with a personal problem;
- A particular on the job incident or observation by the manager which indicates the possible presence of a personal problem, excluding incidents of flagrant misconduct which require other immediate disciplinary action.

When an employee's performance is the basis for a management referral to the EWP, the manager should prepare a written account of the observed performance problem. This account should be as detailed as possible including the dates, times, and descriptions of behaviours which have become a concern, a pattern of decline or particular incidents which warrant management action.

The manager should then have a meeting with the employee to discuss the performance problem and communicate as clearly as possible the consequences of failure to resolve the performance difficulty. The manager should not speculate as to the cause of the performance decline or engage in discussion with the employee about any personal problem which may be interfering with the employee's performance. This meeting should focus solely on work performance and attendance. The manager is encouraged to consult with Human Resource Practitioner an Executive Care Centre consultant and with his/her own manager prior to a meeting with the employee.

After the performance problem has been confronted with the employee, the manager should review the EWP guideline with the employee, inform the employee of the availability of confidential professional assistance for any personal problem which may be interfering with their ability to work. Although the final decision to use the programme must be left up to the employee, the manager should emphasise the importance of EWP.

The manager should call 0800 004 770 or the Employee wellbeing manager to arrange for a counselling session between the employee and one of the Life EHS affiliated therapists.

Prior to the counselling session, the manager should make available to the Executive Care Centre consultant all information relevant to the employee's performance problems. If necessary, the Consultant will request a meeting with the manager to discuss the situation further.

Life EHS will not disclose to the manager any details of the employee's problem or further plans of action which the employee may choose to follow without the written approval of the employee. Feedback with regards to an informal Manager referral is limited to a once-off confirmation of whether the employee is using the service. Life EHS will hold any other information in confidence.

Whether or not the employee chooses to utilise the EWP at that time, the manager should reinforce Stellenbosch University's expectation for improved performance and the consequences of failure

to improve. The manager should also point out that the EWP will be available should the employee wish to use it in the future.

### **7.3 Formal Managerial Referral**

Formal referrals may occur as a result of:

- An employee request to a manager for help
- Voluntary employee disclosure of a substance abuse problem;
- The result of a positive drug / alcohol test;
- A decline in productivity and work performance
- Increased absenteeism
- The result of a problem serious enough to warrant disciplinary action up to and including termination

Under circumstances that require a formal referral, the employee's manager should contact the Life EHS Care Centre and or the Employee wellbeing manager to discuss the situation with a managerial consultant. The managerial consultant will be able to advise the manager on how to approach the employee and ensure an appropriate referral.

The manager should prepare a written report of the observed performance problems. This report should be as detailed as possible including the dates, times, and descriptions of behaviours which have become a part of a pattern of decline, or particular incidents which warrant management action.

The manager should then have a meeting with the employee to discuss the performance problem and communicate as clearly as possible the consequences of failure to resolve the performance difficulty. The manager should review the EWP guideline with the employee, and advise the employee of the availability of confidential professional assistance for personal problem which prevents them from working at capacity, and strongly encourage the employee to consent to the manager arranging an appointment with a Life EHS affiliated therapist.

The Managerial consultant will give feedback to the referring manager within one day after the first assessment interview. This initial feedback can be done telephonically or in writing and is limited to the information set out in the letter of consent signed by the employee.

Final feedback will be provided to the referral manager in writing within two weeks after closure of the file. This information will be limited to confirming whether the employee attended the sessions, if any progress was made as well as key recommendations going forward. Although the final decision to use the programme must be left up to the employee, the manager should emphasise the importance of the EWP. Refusal to accept referral to the EWP is not grounds for termination. However, this should form part of the internal disciplinary procedures and the employee needs to understand that failure to change inappropriate behaviour can have serious consequences.

## **8. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **8.1 The Manager/Supervisor**

- Managers/Supervisors are responsible for the effective implementation of this guideline and will provide an enabling environment and support to all employees;

- Managers/Supervisors should always be alert and observe the performance of their employees so as to identify any change in behaviour and/ or decline in performance and refer the employee concerned on time, where appropriate.
- Managers are expected to address work performance problems through normal human resource and university policies and procedures.
- Managers are required to be consistent and treat employees fairly.
- Managers are not expected to attempt to diagnose personal problems of the employee or offer a personal opinion. Instead managers are required to refer the employee to the appropriate resources such as the EWP.
- Managers are encouraged to provide follow-up and support to employees upon return to work after an absence.
- Managers may not request the employee to divulge the nature of the problem when requesting leave or time off for an appointment with the EWP. If necessary, the employee can provide verification of attendance through the EWP.
- Managers are required to maintain a strict level of confidentiality with all cases.

## **8.2 The Employee**

- It is the responsibility of the employee to maintain satisfactory job performance. In the event that personal problems cause deterioration of work performance, the employee has a responsibility to obtain the necessary help to bring job performance up to an acceptable level. The EWP is a means to obtain this help.
- Employees are assured that personal information concerning employee participation in the EWP is managed in a confidential manner. No information related to an employee's participation in the programme is entered into the individual's personnel file.

## **8.3 The EWP Unit/Coordinator/Manager**

- Assist the EAP Service Provider in the positioning of the programme within the Organisation in order to optimise its benefit.
- Develop action plans for the implementation and acceptance of the programme throughout the organisation.
- Ensure continued promotion and awareness of the EWP within the Organisation and all its divisions – in close collaboration with the EAP Service Provider.
- In collaboration with EAP Service Provider, interpret EWP utilisation statistics and design and implement appropriate and proactive intervention action plans.
- Coordinate training of supervisors and managers in the identification, management and referral of vulnerable employees.
- Feedback regarding any organisational changes to the EAP Service Provider to allow for optimal service provision.
- Monitor and coordinate the EWP budget to ensure value for money.

## **9. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REPORTING**

- The EWP Unit/Coordinator/Manager will conduct regular reviews of the EWP services provided to employees and dependants in order to monitor and evaluate the efficiency and professionalism of the EWP services. This process will ensure that the EWP remains

dynamic, continuing to meet diverse needs of the employees within all divisions, and changing to meet the altering needs of the Organisation.

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## APPENDIX A: Glossary of Terms

- **EAP/EWP:** Employee Assistance Programme is an effective method to promote health and wellness within organisations. The EAP/EWP assists employees and their families when they experience personal and work related problems which affect the occupational functioning of employees'.
- **Employee:** Any person employed by Stellenbosch University (whether part-time, full-time, permanent or temporarily).
- **Vulnerable Employee:** An employee whose job performance is affected by personal or work related problems.
- **Employer:** Anybody who has legal status and is providing employment to people and furthermore providing payment for services rendered.
- **Community Resource:** An acknowledged resource in the community providing required services.
- **Intervention:** A therapeutic process to assist individuals in coming to terms with their problems and providing strategies for dealing with these problems.
- **Manager:** Person/s responsible for managing and administrating a department/division.
- **Service Provider:** An independent organisation that provides professional services to the university based on a formal contract.
- **Wellbeing Practitioner:** A qualified and registered professional including psychologists, social workers and registered counsellors.
- **Supervisor:** A person empowered/authorised to oversee and manage the performance of subordinates in the workplace.
- **Training:** The action of teaching a person a particular skill or type of behaviour.
- **Trauma:** A deeply distressing or disturbing experience such as armed robberies, motor vehicle accidents, workplace accidents and violence causing psychological distress and/or physical injury.
- **Treatment/Counselling:** an intervention by a wellbeing practitioner to assist an individual with dealing with their personal or work related problems.

## **APPENDIX B: Statutory Authorisation**

The following legislation underpins the contents of this guideline:

- The South African Constitution, Act No. 108 of 1996
- National Health Act, No 61 of 2003
- Protection of Personal Information Act, No 4 of 2013
- Mental Health Care Act, No 17 of 2002
- Basic Conditions of Employment Act, Act No. 75 of 1997
- Labour Relations Act, Act 66 of 1995
- Public Service Regulations of 2001 as amended.
- Employment Equity Act, Act no. 55 of 1998
- Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act, Act No. 130 of 1993
- Occupation Health and Safety Act, Act no. 85 of 1993
- Domestic Violence Act, Act no. 116 of 1998
- Prevention of and Treatment for Substance Abuse Act, No. 70 of 2008.
- Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act, No 32 of 2007.
- Children's Act, No 38 of 2005 as Amended
- National Credit Act, Act no. 34 of 2005
- Medical Scheme Act, Act no. 131 of 1998a