

Gulf Coast Mariners Association



P. O. Box 3589
Houma, LA 70361-3589
Phone: (985) 879- 3866
Fax: (985) 879-3911
www.gulfcoastmariners.org

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**SUBSTANCE ABUSE:
EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS**

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EAPs IN THE WORKPLACE

[Source: This section of GCMA Report #R-404 is edited from the Internet at <http://www.health.org>. Search for "Employee Assistance Programs."]

Background. Programs that assist employees and family members with substance abuse, mental health, family, and other problems that negatively affect their job performance exist in many workplaces in several forms:

Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) are generally provided by employers or jointly by employers and unions. These programs vary considerably in design and scope. Some focus only on substance abuse problems; others undertake a 'broad brush' approach to a range of employee and family problems. Some include proactive prevention and health and wellness activities, as well as problem identification and referral, and some are actively linked to the employee health benefit structure.

Member Assistance Programs (MAPs) are provided by unions and, like EAPs, these vary considerably in design and scope. Unions have a long and distinguished history of addressing member, family health and welfare concerns in addition to working conditions. MAPs undertake a range of prevention, problem identification, referral, and counseling activities for workers and their dependents.

Peer Assistance Programs (PAPs) are generally sponsored by employers and/or unions and use trained peers to work with troubled employees to address substance abuse as well as other problems within certain rules and limits. This type of assistance program is often used in employment settings in which supervision is less direct or frequent.

Assistance Programs may be implemented in several

ways:

- **Referral-only Programs** provide supervisors and managers with a telephone number to give to troubled employees that accesses in-person and/or telephone referral to community resources, self-help programs, and substance abuse treatment providers. Some programs provide for a modest amount of crisis intervention counseling or referral to community resources for such interventions. Generally, no case management or financial support is provided in these programs. The existing Coast Guard regulations allow this very minimal approach.
- **In-house Programs** with outside treatment resources have employees who specialize in crisis intervention, assessment, and referral to outside sources for assistance. These programs often provide assistance to supervisors and managers as they handle employee performance reviews and identification of problems.
- **Outside Programs** provide crisis intervention, short-term counseling, assessment, and referral to specialized sources of assistance with the use of a consultant or firm providing these services. This is a very common model of employee assistance, providing highly specialized staff and services on an outside basis and removed from the direct eye of the employer, which is often found to be more acceptable to employees.
- **Consortium Programs** combine employers, unions, and worksites, usually within a defined geographical area or a specific industry, to offer assistance services often on a more comprehensive and less costly basis.
- **Mixed Model Programs** have been developed for employers and unions with multiple worksites with different needs and resources.⁽¹⁾ *[⁽¹⁾Adapted from Backer T. 'Strategic Planning for Workplace Drug Abuse Programs, Second Edition.' National Institute on Drug Abuse, 1994.]*

The intent of the assistance programs is to ensure that employees and family members have access to confidential assistance when they need it and, hopefully, before problems appear on the job. When problems do appear on the job, assistance programs help supervisors, managers, and employees engage constructively to support employees as they address problems, seek and receive counseling or treatment, and return to work.

The History of Assistance Programs. Assistance programs have evolved and grown into an industry of their own since the 1970's. At that time, performance-based interventions to address the individual and organizational costs of alcohol and other drug abuse began to be widely adopted. By the mid-1980's, the impact of health benefits cost containment approaches such as managed care brought considerable change and consolidation to providers of assistance programs.⁽¹⁾ Today, the market is divided among several large, national behavioral health and assistance providers, a number of major, regional and numerous local and 'boutique' or specialized providers who focus on particular employee populations. *[⁽¹⁾Masi D. Evaluating Your Employee Assistance and Managed Behavioral Care Program. Performance Resource Press: Troy, Michigan, 1994.]*

Costs of Assistance Programs. The costs of assistance programs vary considerably. In 1995, the average annual cost of such services per eligible employee nationwide was estimated to be about \$28.00 for in-house programs and

about \$22.00 for outside programs.⁽¹⁾ These costs compare favorably to the costs associated with recruitment and training replacements, estimated at about \$50,000 for employers such as IBM.⁽²⁾ [⁽¹⁾French, M.T., Zarkin, G.A., Bray, J.W., & Hartwell, T.D. *Costs of Employee Assistance Programs: Comparison of National Estimates from 1993-1995*. *Journal of Behavioral Health Services Research: February, 1999*. ⁽²⁾Falco, M. *The Making of a Drug-Free America: Programs That Work*. *Times Books: New York, 1994*.]

Selecting an Employee Assistance Program Provider.

When seeking to purchase employee assistance program services, it is important to prepare certain information so that providers can analyze and respond to your interests and needs. Information generally sought by providers includes:

- The drug-free workplace or equivalent policy statement
- Information about the health benefits structure
- General information about the workforce including number of employees, supervisors, work sites, job categories and work type, available demographic data on employees and covered family members
- Services to be included
- Budget range or considerations for these services.
- Reports that will be needed

With this information, providers are able to suggest a package of services, cost structure, and contract for consideration. When reviewing providers' offers, there are several important points to review:

- Provider's experience? (current clients, years of service, references)
- Provider's locations (familiarity with the community in which covered employees live and work)
- Scope of services (substance abuse prevention, stress management, elder care, wellness programs)
- Hours of service
- How the provider handles publicity, referrals, quality review of referrals, and followup
- Training and credentials of provider's staff

There are no universal standards for employee assistance program services or for the qualifications of program staff. In some states, however, there are established guidelines and there are national organizations that address the question of standards. The [Employee Assistance Society of North America](#) maintains an accreditation program that sets standards for internal and external employee assistance programs. The [Employee Assistance Professional Association](#) is a professional membership organization that certifies the qualifications of individual employee assistance practitioners.

Overview of Online Information. The links on the this page will take you in several directions.

General information about assistance programs is provided in:

- [Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs Resource Guide: Employee Assistance Programs](#)
- [Benchmarking Employee Assistance Programs](#)
- [Employee Assistance Programs Are Evolving to Meet Changing Employer Needs](#)
- [Employee Assistance Programs Fact Sheet](#)
- [Employee Assistance Programs, Employer Fact Sheet](#)
- [Prevention Primer: Employee Assistance Programs](#)
- [Substance Abuse Prevention in the Workplace Fact Sheet](#)

A **model** is provided by the [Office of Personnel Management's Model Employee Assistance Program](#) for Federal agencies and describes the necessary functions and relationships of the employee assistance program. Information about the Federal government's policy and programs is provided in: [Your Federal Employee Assistance Program: A Question and Answer Guide for Federal Employees](#)

An **example** is provided by the [Department of Health and Human Services Employee Assistance Program](#) offered to its employees and family members.

Discussions of the **emergence and evolution of employee assistance and managed behavioral health programs** are provided in:

- [Employee Assistance Programs: Then, Now, and in the Future](#)
- [Evolution of Employee Assistance Program Models within the Managed Care Environment](#)
- [Workplace Managed Care Research: Successful EAP Models](#)

Cost and benefit information is provided in:

- [The Cost of Employee Assistance Programs: Findings from Seven Case Studies](#)
- [The Impact of Employee Assistance Program Use on Health Care Costs](#).

Information about the **professional associations and assistance services** is provided in

- [Employee Assistance Professionals Association](#)
- [Employee Assistance Society of North America](#)
- [Guide to Employee Assistance Programs and Services in Canada](#)

Other Sources. Information about employee assistance programs and providers is often available from State and county alcohol and drug agencies or from managed care organizations or health insurance providers. Information about other forms of assistance programs, i.e., member and peer assistance programs is usually available from union safety and health departments.

COAST GUARD EAP REQUIREMENTS

Current Coast Guard regulations provide the requirement for a very minimal Employee Assistance Program related to substance abuse. The regulations appear in Title 46, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 16 as follows:

46 CFR §16.401 Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

The employer shall provide an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for all crewmembers. The employer may establish the EAP as a part of its internal personnel services or the employer may contract with an entity that will provide EAP services to a crewmember. Each EAP must include education and training on drug use for crewmembers and the employer's supervisory personnel as provided below:

(a) EAP education program: Each EAP education program must include at least the following elements: display and distribution of informational material; display and

distribution of a community service hot-line telephone number for crewmember assistance, and display and distribution of the employer's policy regarding drug and alcohol use in the workplace.

(b) EAP training program: An EAP training program must be conducted for the employer's crewmembers and supervisory personnel. The training program must include at least the following elements: the effects and consequences of drug and alcohol use on personal health, safety, and work environment; the manifestations and behavioral cues that may indicate drug and alcohol use and abuse; and documentation of training given to crewmembers and the employer's supervisory personnel. Supervisory personnel must receive at least 60 minutes of training.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE FOR SEAMEN

[Source: By Captain Kelly Sweeney, *Pacific Maritime*, Oct. 2004, p. 4. Kelly can be reached at kelly@pacmar.com

[GCMA Comment: This article explains what an EAP is and what purpose it can serve.]

In 1982, I was a cadet on a container ship running from the West Coast to the Far East. One day, after the slop chest was open, I was heading back to my room with the candy and peanuts I had bought. As I walked by the Third Engineer's room, he called out "Step in and have a cold beer, cadet!"

If I hadn't seen it myself, I may never have believed it. He was sitting at his desk with a beer in hand, and there were 10 cases of beer stacked on the deck next to him. I declined, telling him "Thanks, but I have to go on watch in an hour." Drinking like that was something I hadn't expected to see onboard. Even to me, a typically unaware cadet, it was obvious that this guy had a problem with alcohol. I paid off the ship 32 days later in Seattle and was carrying my bags down the passageway when I went by the Third Engineer's room. His door was open so I stopped in and shook hands with him before I left. All the beer was gone.

I don't see behavior like that at sea anymore, something I attribute to stricter alcohol restrictions and to a certain extent, to Employee Assistance Programs. Everyone needs help with his personal problems now and then, and it's no different for mariners. That's the purpose of an Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Whether it's domestic abuse, depression or addiction problems, EAPs provide information about resources and programs available.

I was working on a tanker recently and the ship was in drydock for maintenance and repair. One day after watch, an AB and I decided to split the cab fare to a local tourist attraction and then do some shopping. After a few hours I was getting tired and told him we should catch a cab back to the ship. "Okay," he said, "but I want to stop by this place first and find out when the meetings are." I replied "What meetings?" "Twelve-step program meetings," he answered. "I'm in recovery."

We made the stop on the way back, and afterward, when we returned to the ship, he told me his story over a bowl of ice cream. "Peaceful Pirate" is his nickname, but for years

his life was anything but peaceful. The son of a Captain, he went to sea following in his father's footsteps. Gradually, substance abuse began to affect his life, and things deteriorated so much that he admitted he was powerless over his addictions and decided to seek help. "Peaceful Pirate" readily admits a twelve-step program saved his life. He told me "A lot of sailors don't know there's help available, and they let their addictions ruin their reputation and maybe their career. I've told a number of shipmates my story - and that there are places they can go if they need help."

Maritime companies are required to provide an Employee Assistance Program in accordance with 46 CFR 16.401. One of the requirements mandated by law is that the company's shipboard drug and alcohol policy be displayed throughout the vessel. On most ships you'll see placards explaining the company policy posted on the bulkheads in passageways or common areas like the crew's lounge.

Another requirement is that both officers and sailors must attend at least one hour of company provided substance abuse education. The Captain usually gave the training I've taken, but on one ship the shoreside vessel manager conducted it. We went over behavioral indications of substance abuse (like having 10 cases of beer stacked in your stateroom), and all of us learned enough about the warning signs to make an honest determination if we had a problem.

The third requirement is that a telephone number be made available to crewmembers, that they can call to get help. Some companies meet this third legal requirement just by offering the local Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous telephone numbers. No rehab costs are covered and it is expected that crewmembers will seek treatment on their time. Other outfits go a step further and contract out their EAP services to a third-party corporation, which is staffed with health care professionals. A toll-free number where these trained counselors offer guidance on treatment is provided. Depending on company policy the crewmember may or may not have to pay for rehab. Most maritime companies I sail for recognize that even a good mariner can have problems that may affect job performance, and some of them pay for treatment when a crewmember or officer comes forward and admits he or she has a problem.

One outfit I've worked with many times had a cook who had a problem with alcohol. The cook sought help, was placed in a two-month rehabilitation program at company expense, and was offered his old job back after completing rehab. In my opinion, how companies approach their Employee Assistance Program responsibilities says a great deal about their commitment to their personnel, and to workplace safety onboard their vessels.

Maritime unions are also willing to help mariners with addiction problems, and a number of them provide assistance far beyond the minimum requirements. For example, the Seafarer's International Union has the Addictions Rehabilitation Center (ARC), located in Maryland. A sailor in rehab there gets the benefit of treatment in a residential facility, open to all union members free of charge. With room and board taken care of by the SIU, and with counselors available to help, a man or woman at the center can focus on recovery. While I was writing this article I called "Peaceful Pirate" and asked him if he wanted me to mention anything specifically. He said "I want every

sailor with an addiction problem reading this to know that they are not alone, and that help is only a phone call away." He continued "Most importantly, I want them to know that I've been clean and sober for years - and that they can do it, too." Till next time ... smooth sailin.'

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Coastal Human Resources, 3083 Brickhouse Court, Virginia Beach, VA 23452-9942 1-800-285-9107. Ask for catalog.

- Drug-Free Workplace: Back on Track
- Drug and Alcohol Testing: Your Rights and Responsibilities.

Krames Communications, 1100 Grundy Lane, San Bruno, CA 94066-3030 1-800-333-3032

- Early Signs of Addiction: Are the Illusions Taking Over?
- Alcoholism in the Family: Is Everyone Trapped by the Bottle?

National Council on Alcoholism, 733 Third Ave., New York, NY 10017.

National Clearinghouse for Alcohol Information, Box 2345, Rockville, MD 20852.

EAP Digest, 1270 Rankin Dr., Suite F, Troy, MI 48083-2843. 810-588-7733.