## Employee Assistance Program

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## Employee Assistance Program

### Background and Overview

EveryMan Australia places a very high priority on the overall quality of working life for staff, with a particular emphasis on the availability of work and life balance arrangements intended to assist staff members work in ways which fit both their personal needs, and those of EveryMan. To assist staff in this regard EveryMan offers an Employee Assistance Program (EAP), a short term intervention strategy designed to give staff the opportunity to promptly address issues of immediate concern to them. Staff who require longer-term assistance will need to consider making private arrangements, which can be either with the assistance of the EAP counsellor, or with some other provider.

### Policy Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for the effective operation of an EAP at EveryMan Australia, and to give guidance to staff and supervisors when employees need to access the Program for assistance with work-related and/or personal issues are affecting your work (e.g. being absent, work performance affected, difficulties in relationships with other EveryMan staff or clients). The EveryMan Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provides staff, including nominated supervisors and managers, with access to the following confidential services:

* confidential external counselling assistance to staff and members of their immediate family members
* mediation for staff and/or their managers
* assistance for managers in dealing with issues relating to their roles
* critical incident debriefing or trauma counselling

***Benefits of EAP***

The benefits of using EAP may include:

* early identification and resolution of issues with an objective and professional practitioner;
* reducing the impact of trauma or stress, thus reducing the likelihood of ongoing distress;
* increased contentment and productivity at work;
* EAP services are available to assist staff who are seeking to address personal or work related issues which may benefit from therapeutic support including:
  + grief and/or loss, or other personal trauma (including experience of family violence)
  + family and relationship difficulties
  + alcohol or substance abuse, gambling or other addictions
  + dealing with work or life change
  + financial or health concerns

***EveryMan Counsellors***

Counsellors employed by EveryMan are employed to provide support services to clients only. From time to time they may be asked to provide limited debriefing (e.g. immediately after a distressing incident), but this support may not be given without prior authorisation by the Executive Director, and will be strictly limited to a single session. Should further support be required, staff will be referred to the EAP.

### Policy Provisions

***3.1 Definitions***

For the purposes of this Policy, the following definitions shall apply:

**“Calendar Year”** means the period from 1 January to 31 December.

**“Counsellor”** refers to the individual counsellor/psychologist who has been assigned by the Service Provider to provide a staff member with confidential services related to the EAP.

**“EAP”** means Employee Assistance Program.

**“Immediate Family”** means a staff member’s relationship partner, parent, and/or child or adult child (e.g. birth child, adopted child, step-child, or ward).

**“Service Providers”** refers to the organisation that has been engaged by EveryMan for the purpose of providing confidential counselling services to individual staff members, through the EAP.

**“Staff Member”** refers to a person employed by EveryMan as a continuing or fixed-term staff member on a full-time or part-time basis.

***3.2 Access to Services***

3.2.1 When the need arises, the staff member is to request an EAP appointment by approaching the EAP service provider directly.

* + 1. When accessing EAP services for any session to which the staff member is entitled under 3.2.3 below, permission is NOT required for the staff member to use the EAP service.

3.2.3 A staff member, including members of the staff member’s immediate family, may normally access a total of 3 one-hour sessions per calendar year, paid for by EveryMan. Should additional sessions be required, the provider may refer the staff member to an appropriate external agency, or arrange for the staff member to continue with the provider in a private capacity at the staff member’s expense.

3.2.4 In exceptional cases, and on the recommendation of the counsellor and/or at the request of the staff member, a Director may approve up to three additional visits, which will be funded from the relevant program budget. Authorisation to access additional EAP services may not be unreasonably withheld.

3.2.5 In the case of requests under 3.2.4, the Director may require that scheduling additional sessions take into account work commitments known at the time the appointments are made.

* 1. ***Confidentiality and Privacy***

All consultations will be conducted in complete confidence between the staff member and the EAP counsellor. EveryMan may obtain statistical data on the broad categories and frequency of access and use of the EAP provider to ensure that the funding support to the service is adequately maintained. Such data will not include names of persons using the EAP services.

* 1. ***Attendance at EAP sessions***
     1. A staff member who attends an EAP session during working hours shall be regarded as being on duty, provided that the session is funded by EveryMan.
     2. Where appropriate, appointment times during working hours are to be made with the need to avoid disruption to service delivery to clients.
     3. As all staff are required to advise a supervisor of a need to be absent from the workplace, notice of attendance at an EAP session is required when scheduled during working hours.
     4. **Employees wishing to keep their attendance at an EAP session private and confidential will need to make an appointment outside of working hours.**

### Grievances

4.1 Any incident in which an employee takes adverse action against an employee because of the other employee’s accessing the EAP service will be managed under the provisions of the EveryMan Operational Policy and Procedures Manual, subsection 3.2.2 Adverse Action.

4.2 Any grievance arising from the application of this policy at EveryMan shall be managed using EveryMan’s Operational Policy and Procedure guidelines under 3.4.6 Internal Complaints Procedure and 3.5 Dispute Resolution Procedure

### Policy Review

EveryMan may make changes to this policy and procedures from time to time to improve the effectiveness of its operation. In this regard, any staff member who wishes to make any comments about this Policy may forward their suggestions to the Executive Director.

### Further Assistance

Any staff member who requires assistance in understanding the provisions of this policy should first consult their nominated supervisor. Staff needing further advice and/or information concerning the range of services available from the EAP provider should contact the Executive Director.