

Employee and Family Assistance Program Policy

Policy Level: Library Board

Author: Director, Human Resources and Information Services

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POLICY PURPOSE

The Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) is a free, confidential service available to all permanent full-time and part-time employees and their dependents 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. The EFAP provides short-term counselling along with health and wellness services for everyday life challenges and demands.

KEY POINTS SUMMARY

- HPL recognizes that challenges, personal or work-related, can be a natural part of employees' lives.
- The EFAP program covers all permanent employees (full-time and part-time) including Library Pages.
- Employees' confidentiality is protected by the program.
- The policy provides a summary of the services provided.
- Accessing the program will not affect an employee's job security nor adversely affect advancement opportunities.

DEFINITIONS

Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) A confidential service available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week to eligible employees and/or their dependents. The EFAP provides short-term in-person, phone, or virtual counselling regarding personal and work-related challenges including personal and/or job stress, relationship issues, balancing work and family, eldercare and childcare, separation and loss, smoking cessation, parenting issues, career counselling, and financial or legal matters along with a variety of health and wellness services such as e-learning courses, internet based cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), articles, health risk assessments, and more.

POLICY DETAILS

The Hamilton Public Library recognizes that challenges, personal or work-related, can be a natural part of employees' lives and that providing employees with an opportunity to resolve challenges will result in a healthier and more positive approach to everyday living.

Eligibility

All employees of the Hamilton Public Library and their dependents are eligible under the current plan with the exception of contract employees, students and volunteers have access to the EFAP and who may require specialized assistance are asked to contact Human Resources. Access to the EFAP will

be determined on a case-by-case basis

Pensioned employees and their spouses

Terminated or resigned employees will have access maintained for one (1) month following date of termination or resignation and the Employee & Family Assistance Program will provide limited short-term service to the individual.

Scope of Program

The core Employee & Family Assistance Program consists of:

Counselling Services

Counselling is short-term and focused on problem-solving and finding solutions that are practical and improve your physical and mental well-being. It's available face to face, over the telephone, or online. Counselling can help with any challenge such as: family or marital relationships, addictions, anxiety, depression, life transition or change, grief or bereavement, stress, and other personal issues.

Plan Smart - Lifestyle and Specialty Counselling

These work life services help you tackle small issues before they become big concerns. Each service helps you to take a proactive approach to managing everyday challenges and life transitions. With Plan Smart, you can receive information and coaching related to:

- Health - nutrition, lifestyle changes, weight management, smoking cessation, "12 weeks to wellness" programs for people with specific health and/or weight management goals.
- Life Balance - childcare and parenting, elder and family care, relationships, financial issues, legal issues.
- Career planning, workplace issues, pre-retirement, shift work.

Online Resources (homewoodhealth.ca)

You can access the Homewood Health website www.homeweb.ca anytime for e-learning, interactive tools, health and wellness assessments, and a library of health, life balance and workplace articles.

Visit Homewood Health's website at www.homeweb.ca and register for Member Services to access online services, including:

- E-Learning courses - self-directed, confidential and interactive courses on a variety of topics designed to help you take charge of your health and well-being.
- Health Risk Assessment - an online health risk assessment tool that assesses your physical and emotional health as well as your overall readiness to change.
- Busy Family - an online tool to help you find child and elder care services.
- Internet-based Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (iCBT) - a form of psychotherapy that focuses on the links between thoughts, feelings and behaviours. This program helps recognize how those thoughts, feelings and behaviours mutually impact each other and gives tools to help change thought patterns and improve mood.

If specialized or longer-term support is required, EFAP counselors can refer to an appropriate specialist or community services. Fees for additional services outside of the EFAP that are not or may not be covered by the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) or the employee's benefit plan are the responsibility of the employee and are not paid by the Library.

Accessibility

Employees and/or their dependents may access the Employee & Family Assistance Program voluntarily. The program may be suggested by an individual's co-worker, peer, or supervisor but it is up to the employee to initiate access to the program. To access the program, please visit: www.homeweb.ca or call, toll-free number 1-800-663-1142, TTY: 1-888-384-1152.

Confidentiality

The Employee & Family Assistance Program shall respect the confidentiality of information obtained about the client and shall release the information only with the approval and consent of the client as governed by standard professional and legal guidelines. The Employer and/or anyone acting for it or on its behalf shall not request or receive any information concerning the client without the written consent of the individual.

Anonymity

The Employee & Family Assistance Program service will be located in an off-site location and will provide an anonymous service. No one will know that an individual has used the service unless the individual themselves chooses to inform others about their use of the program. Employee & Family Assistance Program office procedures are designed such that anonymity is protected.

Coordination and Administration

Upon request utilization reports, regularly completed by the Employee & Family Assistance provider, will be made available and discussed with representatives of Local 932 Canadian Union of Public Employees at the regularly scheduled Joint Union-Management Committee. Utilization reports provided to this Committee by the Employee & Family Assistance Program service will be of a statistical nature only. Please note that statistical information will only be released to this Committee when use of the program has resulted in reporting figures large enough to protect anonymity of individuals.

Advancement/Opportunity

Use of the Employee & Family Assistance Program will not affect an employee's job security nor adversely affect advancement opportunities. Neither will use of the program affect normal disciplinary and grievance procedures.

APPROVAL HISTORY

August 2010; February 2017, November 2021