



UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
Washington, DC 20415

The Director

Friday, January 6, 2012

MEMORANDUM FOR: Other Stakeholders

FROM: Angela Bailey, Associate Director, Employee Services

Subject: The Role of the Employee Assistance Program during Workforce Restructuring

Due to the on-going budgetary situation many agencies may be faced with restructuring their workforces over the next couple of years. As a result, some Federal employees may have to transition to a new job. The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is committed to providing Federal agencies with tools to help employees prepare themselves. Likewise, there is an important role for Employee Assistance Program (EAP) Administrators to continue to make EAP services convenient and available to your employees.

As the EAP Administrator for your agency, you are committed to providing counseling and support services to employees of your agency when they need them. In light of potential workforce restructuring efforts, OPM recommends you place special emphasis on publicizing the EAP even more and the valuable role it can play during these times. OPM encourages you to continue to use traditional mechanisms, such as internal memorandums, newsletters, posters, your agency's intranet, or other creative means to encourage more employee utilization of these valuable services. Employees who may be affected by restructuring can experience stress and worry and may need assistance in dealing with these issues. Administrators should make sure that employees know that EAP can provide many services that they may not be aware of, including legal and financial consultations.

Since employees whose positions are unaffected by restructuring may also experience stress and other emotional issues due to the change, OPM encourages agencies to offer seminars where possible (both web-based and conventional), and lunch and learn sessions on topics such as stress management. Making this information available in public settings where employees can see the EAP staff and get to know them, will make it easier for some employees to approach EAP counselors when needed. This may be more appealing to some employees who may not be ready to discuss personal matters with a stranger.

Administrators should work with EAP providers if the services are contracted to a private contractor, Federal contractor, or with in-house coordinators to make sure they market community resources as well as services that may be offered on-site. They should encourage employees who are not comfortable talking to someone at the workplace, to take advantage of off-site services in their local community, or via their health plans.

OPM's Work Life Wellness Staff is available to offer guidance and assistance to Federal agencies regarding EAP matters. We encourage agencies to utilize our comprehensive resources available at opm.gov/worklife or email worklife@opm.gov with specific questions.