

Policy Name	Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP)		
Policy #	607	Category	600: HEALTH & SAFETY
Steward	Manager, Human Resources	Date Approved	Sept. 19, 2024
Next Review Date		Date Reviewed or Revised	July 22, 2026

POLICY

The Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) is a benefit program to provide eligible Suncrest College employees and their immediate family members with access to confidential, voluntary, non-disciplinary, professional counselling resources providing preventative and short-term intervention services.

PRINCIPLES

1. The program is confidential, completely voluntary, non-disciplinary and is designed to allow employees and family members to seek help on their own.
2. The wellbeing of employees is a priority for the College. The purpose of the EFAP is to provide prevention, assessment and personal counselling services for employees and their families upon request. Such assistance may be appropriate for employees whose job performance could deteriorate or has already done so because of personal, social, or health problems.
3. Such problems may include emotional difficulties, marriage, family, parenting concerns, bereavement, issues relating to self-esteem, problems caused by alcohol and drug abuse, financial problems, issues coping with change, stress management, traumatic events, and group conflict.
4. The Employee and Family Assistance Program exists to assist our employees and their eligible family members to prevent and resolve personal difficulties through early identification and appropriate intervention. We recognize that resolving the personal difficulties of our employees, and their immediate family members, at an early stage may prevent work problems from developing.

SCOPE

EFAP ELIGIBILITY:

- Any in-scope employee working an average of 15 hours per week or more, and all permanent employees not on layoff.

- Spouses of employees; a spouse being:
 - A partner to whom you are legally married;
 - A common law person with whom you have lived for at least 12 consecutive months.
- Dependents of eligible employees; a dependent being:
 - Your child or stepchild, under 18 years of age, for whom you are legally and financially responsible;
 - Your child or stepchild between the ages of 19 and 25 (inclusive) whom you support and who is attending an educational institution on a full-time basis; and
 - Your child or stepchild over 18 who is solely dependent upon you due to a mental or physical disability.

DEFINITIONS

- **Immediate family members** – Employee’s legal partner and employee’s dependent children, as outlined within the scope of this policy.
- **Dependent children** – Minor children or stepchildren; adult children to 25 years of age whose major occupation is that of a student; and adult children who are disabled.
- **Participants** – An employee or the immediate family member of an employee who is accessing or participating in the EFAP services.
- **Service Provider** – Suncrest College has retained the services of a professional counselling service that specializes in assessment, counselling, referral and follow-up for individuals utilizing the program.

PROCEDURES

CONFIDENTIALITY

- Confidentiality and respect for individual and family privacy is a cornerstone of the EFAP.
- The program is designed to ensure that no one will know who accesses the program, other than the client and the service provider. Employee’s will contact the service provider directly.
- Any third party who has knowledge of an employee’s involvement in the program must remember this is privileged information and must be held in the strictest confidence.
- Counselling records, medical reports, or other communication arising from an employee’s assessment and counselling through the EFAP will only be released with the written consent of the employee.
- In exceptional circumstances involving a legal or moral obligation, and in order to ensure individual or public safety, the service provider will initiate appropriate disclosure following discussion with the employee or family member.

ACCESS TO SERVICE

- Employees using services through the Employee and Family Assistance Program refer themselves.

- The decision to participate must always be voluntary. A supervisor may make suggestions when an employee chooses to share a personal concern and work difficulties appear to be related to personal problems, however, the decision to access the EFAP always remains with the employee.
- Eligible family members may contact the program directly as well. Children under the age of 16 require parental/guardian consent to access EFAP services.
- The employee or family member will contact the service provider, who will arrange an assessment.
- Participants may also make an anonymous inquiry or consult directly with the service provider.

EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

- Employees are entrusted to respect the eligibility, financial, and frequency guidelines as established.
- Employees may require services outside the scope of EFAP; in this instance the employee would then accept all responsibility for costs in excess of those covered by the EFAP and agree to pay the provider directly under a separate contract.
- Employees participating in EFAP will be expected to maintain existing job performance standards and established work rules.
- The EFAP encourages employees to voluntarily seek assistance for personal problems and to assist those employees whose personal problems are adversely affecting their work or have the potential to adversely affect their work performance.

EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITIES

- There is no documentation in the employee's file associated with EFAP counselling.
- The employer will support an employee's decision to access the Assistance Program by guaranteeing appropriate leaves of absence and/or sick leave.
- The employer agrees to cover all reasonable costs associated with the development, implementation, and administration of the program.

SERVICE PROVIDERS

- The service provider will be the first point of contact and may refer to other agencies as required or requested. The approved service providers are as follows:
 1. Blue Cross
1-800-663-1142

LEGISLATIVE AND COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT REFERENCES

Collective Bargaining Agreement, Appendix D: Letter of Understanding Regarding Employee Assistance Program

LINKS TO OTHER RELATED POLICIES, DOCUMENTS, AND WEBSITES

homeweb.ca