



Employee Assistance Program Policy

1. Purpose

The WA Country Health Service (WACHS) is committed to promoting the wellbeing of its employees and volunteers. As part of this commitment, WACHS offers a confidential Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for all employees and their immediate families.

WACHS acknowledges that employees may experience personal or work-related difficulties that could negatively affect their performance at work and overall wellbeing. Unresolved issues may also pose risks to the wellbeing, safety and performance of other employees.

2. Policy

WACHS provides a free and confidential EAP service that includes counselling, mediation services, critical incident response and debriefing, financial assistance, legal advice and nutrition and exercise consultancy, available to all WACHS employees and their immediate families without the need for departmental approval.

The EAP will be provided under a contractual arrangement by an independent and accredited external service provider. Details of the providers of the Employee Assistance Program are available on the WACHS [Employee Assistance Program](#) page.

All EAP consultations and client records are treated with strict confidentiality. Services provided through the EAP are to be delivered by suitably qualified and registered professionals, bound by ethical standards governing counselling practice.

EAP support and counselling may be accessed for a wide range of concerns, including (but not limited to):

- managing conflict and stress
- anxiety and depression
- work and career related concerns
- alcohol and drug related concerns
- financial difficulties
- bereavement and grief
- life-stage changes
- marital / relationship related concerns
- workplace conflict
- impact of organisational change
- violence or traumatic incidents in the workplace; and
- medical / health related concerns.

In addition to counselling services, employees and managers may also have access to a range of additional supports, depending on the services offered by the EAP Provider:

- [Manager Helpline](#) – confidential coaching and guidance for managers to assist with people management responsibilities and workplace challenges.
- [Employee Online Resources](#) – access to a variety of materials such as wellness information sheets, research articles and links to other helpful resources.

- Mediation / Conflict Coaching – guidance for managers, assessment and strategy development.

2.1 Access to EAP services

2.1.1 Employee-initiated referral

Employees may contact an EAP provider directly without involving WACHS management or other persons.

The EAP provider is required to support people with diverse needs, including the following identified diversity groups:

- Aboriginal people
- Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) people
- People of diverse sexualities and genders
- People with disability
- Youth

Employee-initiated referral may occur where an employee recognises that they are experiencing difficulties with personal or work-related concerns, or where a supervisor, co-worker, family member, Doctor, friend etc, has observed the need and suggested to the employee that the EAP service may be beneficial.

Most appointment availability is during standard office hours i.e. 8am – 6pm Monday to Friday. Where the service provider is available for out of hours sessions, the employee may request to attend counselling at those times. Depending on the provider's facilities, sessions may be delivered face-to-face (preferable and most prevalent option), by phone, or online.

Where appointments conflict with an employee's normal hours of work, the employee is required to utilise accrued leave for the period of absence. The employee is only required to advise their manager that they will be unavailable due to an external appointment and is under no obligation to disclose the purpose of the leave, including attendance at an EAP session. Leave may be taken as personal leave, annual leave, accrued flexible hours, or another form of approved leave and approved in advance, as agreed between the employee and manager, subject to operational requirements.

The employee is not required to provide details surrounding the EAP referral.

After the initial session, further sessions may be recommended by the counsellor or requested by the employee or family member. WACHS will meet for the cost of up to six (6) sessions per issue. Where more than six sessions are required for a person, the EAP Provider will seek approval from Manager Work Health and Safety to endorse additional sessions. If at any time, an employee or family member is referred to alternative counselling, any costs will be borne by the employee.

2.1.2 Employer-initiated referral

In consultation with Work Health and Safety and Human Resources, and the employee, a manager / supervisor may formally refer an employee to the EAP:

- to address concerns relating to behaviour that if not remedied may result in disciplinary action

- as part of a performance improvement plan if their work performance has declined and remains below an acceptable level
- to accommodate outcomes from a formal HR process.

Where a formal referral is made, feedback will be provided to the manager/supervisor on attendance at and/or the outcome of the counselling, if required

2.1.3 Critical incident response

In the event of a critical incident, District Leadership will contact the EAP provider -to deliver timely psychological first aid and support – either individually or in groups – to all affected personnel. Qualified staff will be deployed with the skills to support a wide range of occupational groups, including employees working in mental health roles.

The EAP provider will ensure on-site attendance:

- within 2 hours of a request (Perth Metropolitan Area)
- as soon as is reasonably practicable and agreed by both parties (Regional Areas).

Additional support may include staff debriefing sessions following traumatic events and assistance with reviewing critical incidents.

Critical incident calls will be responded to and referred for assessment immediately and are available 24/7. Managers can directly contact the EAP provider for support, guidance and assistance.

The EAP provider will supply to requesting Department:

- a brief post incident summary report within 6 hours of completing attendance at the incident
- a close out summary report including recommendations within 5 days of completion of the response and support session.

2.2 Records Management

All WACHS corporate records must be stored in the approved Electronic Documents and Records Management System.

2.3 Compliance

Failure to comply with this policy may constitute a breach of the WA Health Code of Conduct (Code). The Code is part of the [Integrity Policy Framework](#) issued pursuant to section 26 of the [Health Services Act 2016](#) (WA) and is binding on all WACHS staff which for this purpose includes trainees, students, volunteers, researchers, contractors for service (including all visiting health professionals and agency staff) and persons delivering training or education within WACHS.

WACHS staff are reminded that compliance with all policies is mandatory.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

WACHS Executive is accountable for:

- Ensuring that appropriate systems and resources are in place for the prevention of violence and promotion of safe working in all its operations and for systematic implementation and monitoring of procedures.

Central office (CO) - Manager Work Health Safety and Wellbeing and Human Resources Manager are responsible for:

- Overseeing the EAP contractual agreement.
- Providing resources for the promotion, education and training in relation to the EAP.
- Monitoring provider adherence to Key Performance Indicators.
- Monitoring EAP utilisation reports including satisfaction feedback.
- Logging and addressing concerns in relation to the provision of EAP services.
- Escalating performance issues, satisfaction issues and complaints to the HSS contract provider when unable to be satisfactorily resolved.
- Including reference to the EAP service in appropriate correspondence including, but not limited to fitness for work, organisational change, disciplinary and performance management matters.
- Assisting managers and supervisors with the process of informal and formal referral.

WHS Managers and HR Business Partners are responsible for:

- Communicating to their teams about the availability of the Employee Assistance Program.
- Ensuring EAP services are offered to employees who are experiencing difficulties with personal or work-related concerns.
- Recognising when people management issues are arising and know how to access EAP Manager Helpline to assist with the prevention of the matter.

Staff members are responsible for:

- Recognising when personal or work-related concerns may be affecting their health and/or work performance and know how to access the EAP to prevent the concerns from reaching crisis point.
- Advising immediate family members that they are eligible to attend the EAP.

All staff are required to comply with the directions in WACHS policies and procedures as per their roles and responsibilities. Guidelines are the recommended course of action for WACHS and staff are expected to use this information to guide practice. If staff are unsure which policies procedures and guidelines apply to their role or scope of practice, and/or are unsure of the application of directions they should consult their manager in the first instance.

4. Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring of compliance with this document is the responsibility of the Central Office Work Health Safety Manager, conducted every 12 months using the following means/ tools:

- EAP Provider reports

4.1 Complaints

If anyone experiences difficulties accessing or using the EAP, they may contact their manager or local Work Health and Safety teams. Concerns and any issues discussed will be maintained confidentially.

5. References

DoH [Work Health and Safety Framework](#)

Work Health and Safety Commission [Violence and aggression at work: Code of practice](#)

6. Definitions

Term	Definition
Counselling	The provision of personal, confidential assistance by a qualified and independent professional to promote mental health and wellbeing. Counselling aims to enhance self-understanding, and support resolution of identified issues and problems. Clients are active participants in the counselling.
Crisis	A sudden stressful state, which tends to make a person feel helpless, powerless and overwhelmed. For many people it is accompanied by extreme fear and inability to think clearly.
Critical Incident	A sudden and traumatic event or sequence of events (or threat of such) within the workplace.
Employee	Includes WACHS full-time and part-time employees employed on a permanent, fixed term, casual or sessional basis. For the purposes of this Policy also includes WACHS volunteers.
Employee Assistance Program	A confidential, employer-sponsored program that provides independent, professional counselling services to employees, volunteers, and their immediate family members. The program is designed to support emotional, psychological, and general wellbeing by assisting with personal and work-related challenges that may impact wellbeing or job performance.
Immediate Family	People that the employee calls ‘family’ and who live in the employee’s home. This includes de facto relationships and step-children.

7. Document Summary

Coverage	WACHS-wide
Audience	All staff
Records Management	Non Clinical: Corporate Recordkeeping Compliance Policy
Related Legislation	Work Health and Safety Act 2020 (WA) Work Health and Safety (General) Regulations 2022 (WA) Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (WA)
Related Mandatory Policies / Frameworks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MP 0117/19 Prevention of Workplace Bullying Policy • MP 0124/19 Code of Conduct Policy • MP 0159/21 Preventing and Managing Workplace Violence and Aggression Policy • Employment Framework • Work Health and Safety Framework
Related WACHS Policy Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fitness for Work Guideline • Fitness for Work Policy • New Staff Induction Policy • Prevention and Management of Workplace Violence and Aggression Policy • Serious Adverse Event Management Guideline • Staff Support Post Critical Incident Guideline • Work Health and Safety Policy • Workers' Compensation and Injury Management Procedure
Other Related Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Violence and aggression at work: Code of practice Work Health and Safety Commission 2022
Related Forms	Nil
Related Training	Available from MyLearning : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychological First Aid Declaration (PFA EL2)
Aboriginal Health Impact Statement Declaration (ISD)	ISD Record ID: 5491
National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards	1.1
Aged Care Quality Standards	Nil
Chief Psychiatrist's Standards for Clinical Care	Nil
Other Standards (please specify and include link)	Nil

8. Document Control

Version	Published date	Current from	Summary of changes
4.00	08 April 2026	08 April 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update to new legislation • Amended roles and responsibilities • Additional detail on referral processes

9. Approval

Policy Owner	Executive Director People Capability & Culture
Co-approver	Nil
Contact	Director Work Health Safety & Security
Business Unit	Work Health Safety & Security
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