

# Common questions and answers about the Employee Assistance Program

**Article 35 of the National Agreement, titled “Employee Assistance Program” (EAP), provides that:**

The Employer and the Union express strong support for programs of self-help. The Employer shall provide and maintain a program which shall encompass the education, identification, referral, guidance and follow-up of those employees afflicted by the disease of alcoholism and/or drug abuse. When an employee is referred to the EAP by the Employer, the EAP staff will have a reasonable period of time to evaluate the employee’s progress in the program. This program of labor-management cooperation shall support the continuation of the EAP for alcohol, drug abuse, and other family and/or personal problems at the current level.

Some common questions and answers regarding this program are as follows:

## Are my family members entitled to EAP assistance?

Section 941 of the *Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM)* explains EAP’s general purpose as:

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a formal, voluntary, non-disciplinary program designed to assist employees **and their immediate families** in their efforts to resolve personal issues that may impact adversely on work performance, personal well-being, or both. Issues may include, but are not limited to:

- a. Substance abuse;
- b. Mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, and stress; and
- c. Issues that involve family, marital, financial, and legal concerns.

Assistance is provided through:

- a. Consultation;
- b. Evaluation, counseling; and
- c. Referral to community resources and treatment facilities.

(Emphasis added.)

## Who can refer an employee to EAP for evaluation?

In addition to certain situations when supervisors or managers refer employees to EAP, Section 942.222 of the *ELM* provides:

Fellow employees, union representatives, management association representatives, medical personnel, family members, or judicial and social service agencies may refer employees to the EAP. However, if any of these suggest or recommend that the employee seek EAP assistance, participation is always voluntary.

Additionally, an employee who feels the need can also refer themselves, as per Section 942.223 of the *ELM*, which states:

Employees who want help with any personal problem or concern are encouraged to seek assistance directly by personally contacting the EAP.

## Should I be concerned about my privacy if I participate in EAP?

Section 944 of the *ELM*, titled “EAP Counseling Records,” identifies the Public Health Service Act of 1944, the Privacy

Act of 1974 and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996 as laws that protect the confidentiality of your restricted information, *with extremely limited exceptions*, as identified in *ELM*, Section 944.

## Does an employee have the right to visit EAP on the clock?

Section 941.35 of the *ELM* provides that:

a. An employee’s first visit to EAP is on the clock, whether the visit is initiated by management, the union representative, or the employee (unless the employee prefers to visit the EAP unit on his or her own time).

b. Subsequent consultations are on the employee’s own time.

c. If a reasonable period of time has elapsed since a management referral or a previously disclosed self-referral, the manager or supervisor may, on a case-by-case basis, approve an additional on-the-clock session.

d. To receive pay for an on-the-clock session, the employee must authorize the EAP provider to disclose his or her attendance to management.

## How can EAP help me with my problem?

Section 942.23 of the *ELM* identifies the evaluation process as:

EAP counseling staff provides assessment services and arranges counseling for employees or family members or refers them to appropriate treatment resources.

**For additional information on EAP services, please see** the April 2015 *Postal Record* article (pages 10-12) highlighting the benefits of EAP as we deal with life’s struggles. If you do not have a printed copy of that month’s *Postal Record*, it can be found at [nalc.org](http://nalc.org).

EAP is a bargained benefit that NALC strongly encourages you and your family to use. Accessing EAP services can be done by phone or the internet. If you have any questions about the services, make the call to EAP or go to the EAP website at right to review the volumes of helpful information.

**Make the Call!**

USPS Employee Assistance Program

**1-800-327-4968**

(1-800-EAP-4-YOU) TTY: 1-877-492-7341

[www.EAP4YOU.com](http://www.EAP4YOU.com)



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