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PERCEPTIONS OF EMPLOYEES REGARDING THE
UTILIZATION OF THE IN-HOUSE EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME
MODEL IN THE NORTH WEST
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

by

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DECLARATION OF CONFIRMATION OF OWN WORK

"I, CHABELI TEBOHO NICOLAAS, declare that: PERCEPTIONS OF EMPLOYEES REGARDING THE UTILIZATION OF THE IN-HOUSE EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME MODEL IN THE NORTH WEST DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION is my own work, that all sources used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references, and that this dissertation was not previously submitted by me or anybody for a degree purposes at another institution."

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SIGNED: CHABELI TEBOHO NICOLAAS

**ABSTRACT**

This research is aimed at investigating the perceptions of employees regarding the utilization of the in-house Employee Assistance Programme mode in the North West Department of Education.

The objectives of the study were:

- To define EAP and describe its different models through literature review;
- To determine the extent to which employees are aware of the in-house EAP service;
- To determine the perceptions of the employees regarding the in-house EAP model:
- To formulate the functioning of the in-house model; and
- To provide conclusions and recommendations.

**RESULTS/FINDINGS**

From the information gathered, the employees' perceptions regarding the use of in-house EAP model is negative.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The researcher proposes the following recommendations:

Management support.

Senior managers must support the programme and take it as one of those programmes that, when properly utilized, will assist the employer to attain its strategic goal.

Marketing the programme.

An extensive marketing strategy has to be put in place and implemented. This must, among other things, outline the rationale, advantages, and disadvantages of the programme in general as well as an in-house EAP model in particular. This could as well motivate the reason why an in-house EAP model is a viable option for the Department.

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**KEY WORDS**

Accessibility

Confidentiality

Employees

Employee assistance practitioner

Employee assistance programme

Employee assistance professional

Employee assistance programme model

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Senior Management

Work Performance

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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Introduction

The emergence of Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) was as a result of employees who experienced alcohol and drug problems in the workplace (Sithole, [Sa]: 2). These problems impacted negatively on employees' well-being as well as job performance. As time went by, the focus of the programme widened and included physical and emotional health; and marital, family, financial, legal, and other personal concerns that affect employees (Blum, 1995: 1). Organisations decided to extend a helping hand to their employees through the creation of the programme in order to serve the interest of both management and employees.

One of the programme's aims, according to Sonnenstuhl & Trice (1990:13), is to minimize the number of alcoholics or of alcohol-related behaviour in the workplace. EAP has the following positive implications to both employees and employers:
- improves productivity and workplace efficiency;
- decreases work-related accidents;
- reduces absenteeism and staff turnover;
- improves staff morale and motivation;
- demonstrates a caring attitude to employees;
- assists line managers in identifying and resolving staff problems; and
- provides a management tool for performance analysis and improvement.

In South Africa, there is no single specific legislation used to ensure the implementation of and adherence to the programme. The Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) introduced the programme through a number of legislative frameworks. Section 27 of the Constitution Act, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996) stipulates that an employee has a right to access to health care services and appropriate services. Section 17 of the Public Service Act, 1994 (Act 103 of 1994) determines that the powers to discharge an officer or employee rests in the relevant executing authority or his delegate. The powers should, however, be exercised taking the applicable provisions of the Labour Relations Act into account. Paragraph 8 of Schedule 8 of the Labour Relations Act, 1995 (Act 66 of 1995) on the other hand, stipulates that an employee

should not be dismissed for unsatisfactory performance, unless an employer has given such employee appropriate evaluation, instruction, training, guidance or counselling.

Paragraph 3(10) of Schedule 1 of the Employment of Educators Act, 1998 (Act 76 of 1998) outlines actions that may be taken in a case of an educator who fails to follow rehabilitation as a result of alcohol or drug abuse. One of the steps to be taken in this regard includes providing counselling, encouraging an educator to attend rehabilitation, recommending rehabilitation programme at an employee's own costs or terminating an employee's service in case of repetitive behaviour (Paragraph 4(6)© (i) of Schedule 1). This process may, however, be taken if an educator whose performance is below expected standards has undergone a particular route before disciplinary action is taken. This includes explaining requirements or setting standards, evaluating an educator's performance, and giving him feedback on the outcome. The employer should listen to the employee's  reasons for non-compliance, and should initiate development programmes and counselling. If all the above fails, disciplinary action may be taken which may lead to dismissal.

The above legislation clearly indicates that an employee has rights, which, if not adhered to, may lead to stressful situations that will in turn cause reduced productivity.  If an employee's situation warrants dismissal, he must be advised through counselling prior to such a dismissal, therefore an EAP service has to come in and assist.

There are various kinds of EAP models that may be used by an organization, which includes in-house, external, or combined models.  An in-house model is the one where an employer provides services, while a contractual model refers to the one where services are outsourced to an outside service provider.  In choosing an appropriate model to use, an organization has to take a number of issues into consideration, and they include written policy, organizational structure (number of employees, and geographical location), top management endorsement, union endorsement, staffing (EAP professionals), marketing, and budget (availability of funds).

As a result of the size of the Department of Education, (about 40 000 employees), geographic location of various institutions and offices within the province (stretches from Hammanskraal, Bloemhof, Kuruman to Mafikeng) and the written policy, the North West Department of Education (NWDOE) chose an in-house EAP model. The unit was

established as a result of the Department's newly approved organizational structure with effect from July 2003. The unit is located within the human resource management directorate in head office while each region has two counsellors each. Its purpose is to promote employee wellness and safety, in order to achieve effective service delivery. The unit, which has then employees, namely Deputy Director, three Assistant Directors, two Counsellors, EAP practitioner and three Safety Practitioners has the following strategic objectives:

- to sustain morale and productivity of employees of the Department;
- to provide a consistent and constructive set of guidelines to assist troubled employees through provision of confidential and professional counselling services;
- to address HIV/AIDS in a positive, supportive and non discriminatory manner; and
- to assist, by means of effective system, to facilitate early identification of performance-impaired employees for referral and treatment.

The following table indicates statistics regarding cases that were dealt with between May 2004 and February 2005:

**Table 1.1 Statistics regarding cases dealt with between May 2004 and February 2005**

| Number of cases | Referral system | Mode of intervention | Problem presented | Number of sessions |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | Self | Family therapy | Family relationship | 12 |
| 4 | Supervisor/self | Financial management skill | Financial management | 4 |
| 2 | Supervisory | Supportive therapy | Dismissal | 8 |
| 3 | Self | Motivate and referred | Transfer | 5 |
| 5 | Supervisor/self | Therapy & referral to rehab | Alcohol | 10 |
| 4 | Self | Therapy & referral to psychiatrist | Depression | 4 |

**1.2    Problem formulation**

Although the NWDOE has an EAP unit staffed by professionals, employees find it difficult to freely use the service because it is located where everybody notices when one consults, they are attended to by staff members appointed by the Department, and EAP staff may be influenced by management or may report clients' problems to management.  Myers (1984: 76) notes that services are private when the location of

the counselling office is such that it allows users not to be seen at a counsellor's office. Camazine (1988:371), on the other hand, indicates that confidentiality is governed by two legal concepts: firstly, the privilege to clients which is the guarantee that if they speak to a counsellor, physician, or attorney, their words will not be repeated. The second legal concept is imposed upon the professional and concerns the client's right to have his or her EAP records kept privately, securely and separately from other corporate and Departmental records.  Employees therefore may have a feeling that when they use an in-house model, information regarding them may not be properly kept, and thus may become known to other employees. According to EAP Handbook (1999:5) employees sometimes fear that such close proximity in an organization might jeopardise confidentiality of services and render EAP more susceptible to management discovery and manipulation.
http://www.consad.com/eap/chapter03.htm.
Accessed on 8 September 2004.

Lack of knowledge and understanding of the in-house EAP model may cause employees in an organization to have negative perceptions about the programme. It is important, therefore, that employees' perceptions regarding the use of the model be determined, so that whatever misconceptions they may have can be cleared. This will be to the benefit of both employer and employees. Once the employees use the service, they will be mentally and physically prepared to perform their duties properly. The costs of going out or absenting themselves to consult an outside service provider will also be drastically reduced. This will, in turn, enhance employee-employer relations, thus increasing the productivity and the image of the Department.

The problem can be summarized as:  The NWDOE's perceptions regarding the utilization of the in-house EAP model in the Department are unknown.

## 1.3   Purpose, goal and objectives of the research study.

Fouché (2002:108-109) regards goals of a research as being either basic or applied, while objectives are exploratory, descriptive, explanatory, correlating, or evaluative in nature.

### 1.3.1 Purpose and goal of the research

The goal of the study is to explore the perceptions of employees about the EAP.

### 1.3.2 Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study are:

- To define EAP and describe its different models through literature review;
- To determine the extent to which employees are aware of the in-house EAP service;
- To determine the perceptions of the employees regarding the in-house EAP model:
- To formulate the functioning of the in-house model; and
- To provide conclusions and recommendations.

## 1.4 Research question for the study

Bless and Higson-Smith (2000:25) state that a research problem is expressed as a general question about the relationship between two or more variables. The research question in this study is as follows:

**What are the NWDOE employees' perception regarding the utilization of the in-house EAP model used in the Department?**

## 1.5 Research approach

This study will be quantitative in nature, as the researcher will use numbers to determine and describe employees' perceptions towards the use of in-house EAP model. Fouché and Delport (2002:79) maintain that quantitative research is an inquiry into a social, human problem based on testing a theory composed of variables, measured numbers, and analysis with statistical procedures, in order to determine whether the predictive generalization of the theory hold true. Self-administered questionnaires will be used to collect data and validate perceptions about NWDOE employees' perceptions about the in-house EAP model as applied in the NWDOE.

## 1.6 Type of research

Huysamen (2001:34) classified research into two categories, namely applied and pure research. Pure research, which is also referred to as basic research, involves developing and testing theories and hypotheses that are intellectually interesting to the researcher and might therefore have some future social application. This is supported by Fouché

(2002:108) who adds the notion that basic research is not concerned with solving the immediate problems of the discipline, but rather with extending the knowledge base of the discipline.

The aim of applied research, according to Fouché (2002:108), is to solve specific policy problems or to help practitioners accomplish tasks.  Huysamen (2001:34) states that applied research is undertaken in order to solve some or other psychological, educational or social problems in counselling, educational, industrial, military, or forensic psychology or social work. This study is applied because its findings will be applied to solve problems of immediate concern at work.  The emphasis in the research is knowledge for practical utilization.

## 1.7 Research design and methodology

### 1.7.1  Research design
According to De Vos (2002:391), research design is a logical strategy for gathering evidence about desired knowledge.  It must yield knowledge sought, it should be the simplest, cheapest way of acquiring knowledge, it should be acceptable to parties involved, and it should be as methodically "tight" as possible. Fouché and De Vos (2002:138) distinguish between qualitative and quantitative designs. The authors contend that quantitative design includes experiments, surveys and content analysis. They further indicate that survey designs/ quantitative-descriptive, requires questionnaires for data collection. A randomized cross-sectional survey, one of the quantitative-descriptive (survey) designs, will therefore be used in the study.

### 1.7.2  Research methodology
According to Strydom (2002:255), research methodology should include a description of participants, sampling plan, data collection procedures, and instruments.

### 1.7.2.1  Data-collection methods
Bless and Higson-Smith (2000:97) state that data consist of measurements collected as a result of scientific observation. According to Delport (2002: 171), there are various data-collection methods that a researcher may utilise when using a quantitative approach, and these include questionnaires, checklists, indices and scales.  For this study, a questionnaire will be used. A self-administered questionnaire, which will be completed by respondents without assistance of the researcher, will be used (Bless and Higson-Smith, 2000: 105-106).

### 1.7.2.2 Data analysis

According to De Vos, Fouché and Venter (2002: 223) data analysis entails the breaking down of data into constituent parts to obtain answers to research questions and to test hypotheses. Authors further state that analysis means categorizing, ordering, manipulating and summarizing of data to obtain answers to research question. It is only after data has been analysed that it will be interpreted and a conclusion made regarding the research. As the size of the population in this study in not too big (50 employees), collected data will be analysed manually.

### 1.7.2.3 Data collection instrument

Delport (2002:172) describes a questionnaire as a set of questions that contains statements on which respondents are expected to react. Its objective is to obtain facts and opinion about a phenomenon from people who have information about a phenomenon. A questionnaire will be developed and tested on two participants in this study, to determine its user-friendliness. Where there are problems or misunderstanding by participants, adjustments will be made.

Nothing has so far been researched regarding the perceptions of employees with regard to the use of in-house EAP models in the NWDOE. The researcher will therefore explore ideas that will form a basis or a foundation for utilization of the in-house model by employees of the NWDOE in head office and in the central region.

## 1.8 Pilot study

According to De Vos (2002:410) pilot tests are designed to determine whether the intervention will work. Bless and Higson-Smith (2000:52) on the other hand, state that a pilot study involves testing the actual programme on a small sample taken from the community for whom the programme is planned. The purpose is for the researcher to identify difficulties with methods or materials used. It also allows the researcher to determine the community's likely response to the actual programme when implemented. Respondents in this case will not be part of the main study.

### 1.8.1 Feasibility of the study

The researcher is an employee in the NWDOE's human resource Management Directorate where EAP sub-directorate is located. Needed resources for the proposed research will therefore be available and no costs will be incurred to conduct the research. This means

that no special arrangements will be needed, as research will be conducted during office hours. A written application has been made to the Head of Department requesting permission to conduct research both in head office and in the central region. Research subjects will be informed and requested to give written consent to participate in the study.

1.8.2   Pilot testing of data collection instruments.

A good measuring instrument measures what it is intended to measure. An instrument which meets this requirement is said to be valid and reliable. To ensure validity and reliability of an instrument in this study, a small sample of three employees, one at head office and the other two from the central region will be drawn out of a population of 400 employees and will be from different levels, namely lower, middle and senior management levels. These three will not be included in the main survey. The people in the pilot sample will complete self-administered questionnaires for the purpose of bringing mistakes and/or omissions to the surface. Highlighted mistakes will then be rectified. According to Strydom (2002: 215) a pilot study must be executed in the same way as the main investigation is planned. Three respondents will therefore be randomly selected with one per stratum. As employees will be allocated numbers, number ten (tenth) from each stratum will be considered for a pilot testing. A stratum in this case means management levels, which are lower, middle and senior levels – accessible in the same office as the researcher.

## 1.9   Research population, sample and the sampling method

1.9.1   Research, universe and population

According to Strydom and Venter (2002:198), population is defined as a set of entities in which all the measurements of interest to the practitioner or researcher are presented. Huysamen (1997:5) defines population as the entire (finite or infinite) collection of cases (persons, objects, events etc), which are potentially available for observation, and which have the attributes in common to which our hypothesis refers. A population in this context will refer to all employees in different levels who are stationed in head office and central region. Head Office is situated in Mafikeng while the central region is formed by the following areas: Lichtenburg, Zeerust, Mmabatho and Atamelang. A payroll (a list of all employees in different levels who are paid by the Department) for employees in head office and the central region listed 400 employees who will be the population in this regard.

### 1.9.2   Boundary of sampling and sampling methods

A sample is defined by Huysamen (1998:2) as a relatively small subgroup of cases from the population.  According to Bless and Higson-Smith (2000:94), the more heterogeneous a population, the larger the sample must be to correctly cover the characteristics of the population.  Strydom and Venter (2002: 203) distinguish between two major groups of sampling procedure, which are probability and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling is based on randomization, while non-probability sampling is done without randomization.  Probability sampling, which will be used in this study, has various kinds, which includes simple random sampling, systematic sampling, stratified random sampling, cluster sampling, and panel sampling. Stratified random sampling consist of universe being divided into a number of strata that are naturally exclusive, and the numbers of which are homogeneous with regard to some characteristics such as gender, language and age. The sample will be 50 employees, which is 12, 5% of the total population. This sample will be determined as follows:

| Level | Total | % | Total sample |
|---|---|---|---|
| Lower | 256 | 12.5 | 32 |
| Middle | 120 | 12.5 | 15 |
| Senior | <u>24</u> | 12.5 | <u>3</u> |
|  | 400 |  | 50 |

Although the Department has five regions and a head office, one region, namely the central area, and the head office will be used in the study.  According to Fink (2003: 11), in stratified sampling the population is divided into subgroups or strata, and a random sample then selected from each subgroup. The sample will therefore be divided into three groups, namely lower, middle, and senior management levels. Each employee will be allocated a number from 1 to 400. A random sample will thereafter be made from employee marked 1st, 8th, 16th, 24th … and 400th .

## 1.10      Ethical issues

Ethics is the study of moral values and principles expressed in attitudes, beliefs and judgments concerning what is good and bad, right and wrong, what ought to be done and what ought not to be done (Cronjé and Fourie [Sa]: 176). Hall (1992: 9) defines ethics as knowing what ought to be done, and having a will to do it. For the purpose of this study, ethics means doing things or conducting a research in a legal, fair, and honest manner that will not hurt any respondent. The following are some of the ethical issues that need to be taken into account by a researcher when conducting a research:

i) Harm to experimental subjects and/or respondents

Polit, Beck & Hungler (2001: 75) argues that exposing study participants to experiences that result in serious or permanent harm is unacceptable. This opinion is supported by Strydom (2002: 64) who indicates that harm to respondents in social sciences will mainly be of an emotional nature, although physical injury cannot be ruled out completely. Harm to respondents in this case may be if their participation in the research is used to have them victimized by their supervisors. This may happen when they provide information that will have a negative impact on an organization or on the researcher. The researcher will ensure that no information will be provided to employees' supervisors, as this may harm participants.

ii) Informed consent

Informed consent, according to Polit, Beck & Hungler (2001: 78) means that participants have adequate information regarding the research, comprehend the information, and have the power of free choice, which enables them to consent voluntarily to participate in the research or to decline participation. Emphasis must be placed on accurate and complete information, however, so that subjects will fully comprehend the investigation and consequently be able to make a voluntary, thoroughly reasoned decision about possible participation (Strydom 2002: 65). In this study, the purpose of the study, its objectives and method to conduct it will be outlined. Respondents will be required to sign a written informed consent form, stipulating that participants will have freedom to withdraw should they feel uncomfortable with the study. The afore-mentioned information will also be indicated in the covering letter accompanying the questionnaire. If uncomfortable, they will just indicate their unwillingness to participate while if have no problems, will also indicate their willingness to participate. According to Christesen (2001: 118), it is ethically unacceptable to coerce a person to participate in a research. Information such as the name of contact person, telephone numbers, and the address where further information may be obtained and questionnaires submitted will also be indicated, so that participants may decide whether the information provided makes them comfortable and at ease to participate.

iii) Deception of subjects and/or respondents

Deception involves withholding information or offering incorrect information in order to ensure participation of subjects when they would otherwise possibly have

refused (Polit, Beck & Hungler 2001: 81; Strydom 2001: 66). Deception also involve telling participants for example that the study is about determining how EAP will assist them in getting promotion while it actually has to do with their expectations. Participants will be provided with correct and   appropriate information that will not be misleading.

iv)     Violation of privacy/anonymity/confidentiality
The researcher will respect the respondents' right of privacy and allow them to participate voluntarily.  Privacy is described by Strydom (2001: 67) as implying the element of personal privacy while confidentiality indicates the handling of information in a confidential manner. Anonymity occurs when even the researcher cannot link participant with his or her data (Polit, Beck & Hungler 2001: 82). As no names will be indicated in questionnaires, participants will be assured that their participation will not be made known in any way. This will assist in ensuring that they remain anonymous. In this study, The researcher will use numbers instead of participants' names in order to protect their identity, thus their participation in the study will remain confidential.

## 11.    Definition of key concepts
**Employee Assistance Programme**
The Employee Assistance Programme Association (EAPA) of South Africa (Standards and Professional Guidelines, 1999:1) defines EAP as a worksite-based programme designed to assist in the identification and resolution of productivity problems that are associated with employees impaired by personal concerns, but not limited to: health, marital, family, financial, alcohol, drug, legal, emotional, stress, or other personal concerns which may adversely affect employee job performance.

Terblanche (2003:5) define EAP as the work organization's resource that utilizes specific core technologies to enhance employee and workplace effectiveness through prevention, identification and resolution of personal and productivity issues.

Lovewell (2003:45) describes an EAP as a work-focused programme designed to help employees cope with stress affecting their work.

The researcher defines EAP as a programme intending to enhance workplace effectiveness by identifying and resolving employees' problems that impact negatively on their job performance.

**EAP model**

Mahlahlane (2003:32) defines EAP model as a structural plan that explains the manner in which services will be rendered. Mthethwa (2002:34) on the other hand defines the EAP model as a framework from which the company will operate in order to provide a service to the troubled employee. From this definition it is clear that an employer can select from a variety of models an EAP structure to be used by an organization. It suggests that different models serve various different employees' needs directly. For the purpose of this study, an EAP model means a structure within which EAP operates in the Department.

**In-house model**

According to Mthethwa (2002:34) internal models refers to programmes staffed by personnel, even though they may consist of multi-disciplinary professionals who are employees of the organization. He identifies two internal models, namely employer as well as union initiated models. Sithole ([Sa]: 9) refers to an in-house model as an approach where employees are referred for assistance to someone within the organization, meaning to an EAP coordinator, and all counselling or therapeutic facilities are situated on the site. From the definitions, it is evident that an in-house model offers services within an organization, which provides a direct link between the EAP and the employee's workplace, in the form of staff members running the programme. An in-house EAP model therefore refers to a structure which is totally staffed, controlled and administered by the Department.

**Perceptions**

Perception refers to the ability to see, hear, or become aware of something through the senses (South African Concise Oxford Dictionary 2002: 864). Dictionary Information defines perception as the act of perceiving, cognizance by the senses, or intellect, apprehension by the bodily organs, or by the mind, of what is presented to them (Dictionary Information: Definition Perception [Sa], 1). For the purpose of this study perception will mean how an issue (in-house EAP model in this case) is viewed by employees in the Department.

## 1.12 Contents of the research report

Including this chapter, the report will be divided into several chapters. Each chapter will relate to a part of the research process.

Chapter 1 provides an introduction of what is to be studied, goals and objectives of the study; research question and approach; type of research to be conducted and its design; pilot study; sampling and ethical issues regarding the research.

Chapter 2 will deal with literature review regarding EAP models in general. Advantages and disadvantages of each model will be critically discussed. Lastly, criteria to be followed in choosing an appropriate EAP model will be discussed.

Chapter 3 will deal with the working conditions within the NWDOE-which could influence specific expectations regarding the EAP and specific model of an EAP.

Chapter 4 will deal with the empirical study on the expectations of the employees of the NWDOE, where the research findings will be outlined and interpreted.

Chapter 5 will deal with summary, conclusion, and recommendations derived from the study.

Several annexures and bibliography will follow the main body of the report.

**CHAPTER TWO**

**EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME: A LITERATURE REVIEW**

2.1 Introduction

An EAP needs to be introduced according to a specific model to meet the specific needs and demands of a specific organization. An ideal and suitable model could contribute to the enhancement of an effective service to employees (Terblanche, 1992: 19). Various models portray the tasks and roles of counsellors in the workplace. A number of models exist and an effective counsellor has access to a range of models applicable to different clients and different situations (Carroll, 1996: 25). Two main EAP models are presented below, namely, in-house and off-site models.

This chapter will consider each of these models as well as their advantages and disadvantages. A comparison between identified EAP models, and criteria to be used by an organization in choosing a model will also be discussed.

2.2    Types of EAP models

Different authors have identified various types of EAP models, and there is not a single model that fits all organisations. A model to be used by a particular organization will be determined by the size, location of an organization and the socio-demographics of the workplace (Mahlahlane, 2003:32). There are two main types of EAP models, namely in-house and off-site models. Each model is discussed below.

2.2.1   In-house model

In-house model, which is also called an internal programme, is a programme staffed by personnel who are employees of an organization they serve (Myers, 1984: 70). According to the EAPA Standards, internal programmes offer services rendered by EAP professionals employed by the organization (EAPA-SA, 1999: 20).

From the above definitions it is evident that an in-house model offers services within an organisation, in the form of the staff members running the programme, which provides a direct link between the EAP and the employee's workplace.

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An in-house EAP model may either be administered by an employer or by a union only. The different administrations are discussed below.

2.2.1.1 Employer

Myers (1984: 91) describes this model as having an EAP office located on the premises with a counsellor who is either a full-time or part-time employee of an organisation. A counsellor performs case monitoring to see how the employee is progressing, and could also provide some aftercare and job re-entry services if required. For these purposes, the client may need to maintain some records to measure activity and performance. Counsellor qualifications vary considerably.

Large organizations (3000 employees and more) often consider establishing on-site EAPs. The benefit of this model is that the services you want will be delivered, when you need them to be delivered (Bruce, 1990: 131).

2.2.1.2 Union only

Myers (1984: 94) states that some EAP programmes are totally union-operated, while others are management-initiated with various degrees of involvement. An exclusive union model is unique because typically it is originated, administered, and maintained by union members who usually volunteer for assignments. They alternatively use either the peer-confrontation approach or undertake activities that aim to motivate union members to seek assistance for their problems.

Programmes sponsored by unions generally evolve from a concern to protect union members. They may be as simple as peer counselling or a hotline. They may well result as part of a negotiated benefit package but once developed, are likely to depend heavily on a human resource manager to coordinate (Bruce, 1990:131).

The union programme operates at virtually no cost to the employer (Myers, 1984: 95) and management frequently grants union EAP volunteer's access to work areas because of their demonstrated success in helping problem staff.

A potential problem with shifting too much responsibility to a union, and the low costs incurred, is that an organisation may be perceived as not being as serious about addressing employee problems. It may be necessary to take steps such as allocating normal working

hours for counselling, so as to demonstrate the organisation's own commitment towards promoting the well-being of employees.

## 2.2.2 Off-site model

According to Straussner (1990:6) work organizations or unions make a contractual agreement with a self-employed social worker, or a group practice or propriety firm or workers. Personnel employed by an organization that offer EAP services operate external EAPs.

EAPA Standards state that external programmes offer services delivered by EAP professionals under contract with an organisation (EAPA-SA, 1999: 20). Social workers provide services concentrating on the needs of an organization, and programmes offered are sponsored by an organization.

Two main characteristics of the off-site model implied by the above explanation are:
- They offer specialized services that are paid for by the employer; and
- There is no direct link between the EAP staff and organisational staff.

Cagney (1999: 59) states that a majority of EAPs are external programmes provided to the employer organization today through outside contracting EAP vendors. A description of three external models is discussed below, namely hotline, consortium, and contractor models.

## 2.2.2.1 Hotline

Hotline model is either a local or long distance 24-hour telephone service available as a self-referral for troubled employees. Listeners, who are assisted by supervisors, staff the hotline. Records are maintained on all calls and activities, and summary reports are forwarded regularly to the sponsoring organisation (Bruce, 1990: 130).

The purpose of a hotline is for the employee to be referred to an appropriate service provider who is selected from a directory of service providers in the employee's community (Myers, 1984: 82). Assessment accuracy is usually a function of an employee's communicative skills and the receiver's ability to understand and classify what problems are being communicated.

## 2.2.2.2 Consortium

A consortium model is a non-profit organisation that meets the needs of small employers because it is set up to serve a number of organizations, and often the general public as well (Bruce, 1990: 130).

Myers (1984: 83) mentions that there are considerable differences among consortiums in both the number and the quality of functions performed. They are usually assigned to service several contracts and therefore counsellors learn general information about different management philosophies, which could in turn prevent them to fully understand each customer's personnel and procedures.

## 2.2.2.3 Contractor

A contractor model is different from a consortium in that a contractor is a profit-making agency that is paid by the contracting organisation. Contractors serve both self-referral employees and employees referred as a management response to problem behaviour on the job. Employers are able to contract for the provision of whatever kinds of services they decide upon (Bruce, 1990: 131).

Myers (1984: 88) mentions that usually the employer has an internal programme coordinator who is assigned either full-time or part-time. The co-coordinator establishes the communication and procedural links between the various Departments within an organization and the contractor.

## 2.2 Advantages and disadvantages of various models

When dealing with advantages and disadvantages of each model, three categories will be used, namely top management, employees, and EAP staff. This is because what may be an advantage to top management and company shareholder may not be beneficial to middle and lower level employees, and vice versa (Straussner 2001: 53).

### 2.2.1 Top management

2.2.1.1   In-house EAP model

2.3.1.1.1 Advantages of in-house model

2.3.1.1.1.1 Corporate policy

According to Goldstein (1997: 26) an in-house EAP is likely to more closely reflect corporate policy and be better able to provide services to match the company's goals. This will enhance integration with other company programmes, such as training of supervisors to detect employee performance problems.

2.3.1.1.1.2 Knowledge of an organisation

Cagney (1999: 64) states that an internal EAP knows the organisation in a way that few external vendors ever will, and is positioned to deliver high-quality organisational services designed for the specific organisation. Cagney (1999:65) further mentions that the internal EAP fits logically into a group of human resources. It is in a unique position to contribute to other areas in an organisation and to identify collaborative tasks between various human resource areas whilst focusing on its core components.

2.3.1.1.1.3 Communication within an organisation

Kunnes (1993:25) believes that communication within an organisation and on-site problem capacity are advantages of the in-house model. This leads to ownership of the programme, that is, "it's our programme" which encourages employees to make use of it, and also makes the EAP more credible with some supervisors within the organisation. It allows some opportunity for social workers to communicate with supervisors, top management, personnel managers, and union representatives.

2.3.1.1.1.4 Internal programme control

An internal model allows for closer management of EAP professionals. Bruce (1990: 131) emphasises that if the organisation provides the EAP, it is in a much better position to control costs attached to the programme.

2.3.1.1.2   Disadvantages of in-house model

2.3.1.1.2.1 Size of an organisation

Phillips and Older (1988: 134) raised a criticism that the model only caters for large organizations, as small companies could not justify full-time staff. The authors believe that in smaller organizations, a part-time person could mean an inadequately

trained person with insufficient time. Small staff numbers limits skills and expertise, while "burnout" is possible.

One could also envisage smaller organizations paying an internal specialist salary at periods when EAP service requirements are low.

#### 2.3.1.1.2.2 Knowledge of organization

Operating from an organization, EAPs may become "part of the system" and be affected by the environment to such an extent that it would be easy to collude with it. This would therefore, according to Franklin (2003: 29), affect the counselling process.

#### 2.3.1.1.2.3 Operating costs

Hartwell, Steele, French, Potter, Rodman & Zarkin (1996: 807) highlights differences in operating costs for internal and external programmes, and mentioned that for many small and medium-sized worksites, the high fixed cost of an internal EAP would make it financially difficult to consider this option.

### 2.3.1.2 Off-site EAP model

### 2.3.1.2.1 Advantages of off site model

#### 2.3.1.2.1.1 Costs

External models allow vendors to take advantage of economies of scale and centralized administrative services that lower the cost for the employer. The advantages of using EAPs outside the employer organisation depend largely on the availability of a greater breadth of expertise, and in diminished concern about confidentiality and potential conflicts of interest (Cagney, 1999: 66).

### 2.3.1.2.2 Disadvantages of off site model

#### 2.3.1.2.2.1 Lack of ownership of the programme

Phillips and Older (1988: 136) are of the view that an external model usually means no on-site counselling capacity and no ownership of an EAP by the organization that may have some supervisors who are reluctant to deal with "outsiders". This could decrease the number of referrals made to the EAP.

2.3.1.2.2.2 Less effective control

Not having ownership of an EAP may also result in less effective control of EAP costs by an organisation. As counselling time would presumably be the most important cost factor, an EAP provider may have little difficulty in justifying escalating bills. Conversely, managers in the organisation may be reluctant to initiate necessary EAP sessions for their staff, since every consultation incurs costs which do not reflect favourably on the budget for which they are accountable.

2.3.1.2.2.3 Lack of knowledge of the organization by service providers

Lack of knowledge of the organisation and insufficient communication between the service centre and work organizations can create frustration between the service provider and management. Googins and Godfrey (1987: 123) state that an off-site model requires a high degree of inter-organisation communication and co-operation, and that policy-making around the EAP becomes complex. During busy times or in fast-paced organizations this could inhibit staff members in utilizing the EAP, due to the extra administrative tasks.

2.2.2   Employees

2.3.2.1       In-house EAP model

2.3.2.1.1    Advantages of in-house model

2.3.2.1.1.1 Accessibility

Goldstein (1997: 26) mentions that in-house programmes are more accessible to employees, which can encourage early intervention. Tyler (2002: 8) found during his studies that supervisors refer employees to EAPs up to five times more often when the programme is available on-site (scheduled time or somebody on-site full-time).  He further indicates that the model has a higher utilization rate than other models, most probably because it is more accessible.

2.3.1.1.2    Disadvantages of the in-house model

2.3.1.1.2.1 Confidentiality

The major concern about internal programmes is that they may be perceived as being too closely identified with any particular department, group, or person in the organisation, and that it is difficult to protect the confidentiality of employee's problems (Cagney, 1999: 64).

Myers (1984: 91) named confidentiality and anonymity risks as the two principal disadvantages of the internal programme. Taking these issues into account, organizations should seriously consider where they locate their EAP offices and how they go about their referral process if they wish to make use of this model.

### 2.3.2.2 Off-site EAP model

#### 2.3.2.2.1 Advantages of off-site model

##### 2.3.2.2.1.1 Confidentiality

Most employees prefer an external EAP model, believing it is more likely to maintain confidentiality. Moss (2002: 10) concluded that most employers contract with third-party providers with whom they have an arm's length relationship, which helps to avoid a breach of confidentiality. Employers therefore place a high premium on confidentiality regarding their employees' problems, and favour the external EAP for this reason.

##### 2.3.2.2.1.2 Convenience

As an EAP makes provision for both an employee and his family members, family members may be more willing to seek help from an external EAP, because of its more convenient hours and location (Goldstein, 1997: 26). This is a very important factor when personal issues such as substance abuse need to be addressed, as support from the employee's family is vital for their recovery.

#### 2.3.2.2.2 Disadvantage of the off-site model

##### 2.3.2.2.2.1 Lower utilisation rate

Masi (2000: 320) states that EAPs that provide an off-site service only tend to be used far less as a part of a core human resource and business practice. Seventy percent (70%) of referrals tend to be self-referrals, and are primarily used for self-management purposes, and tend to mirror more of a mental health insurance product. Dependent on the reason for the company's investment in an EAP, this could be seen as counter-effective.

##### 2.3.2.2.2.2 Knowledge of organization

Franklin (2003: 29) argues that utilizing an offsite model may result in a counsellor taking a longer time to understand the culture of an organization they serve. This therefore is not beneficial to the employer.

2.3.3 EAP staff

2.3.3.1    In-house EAP model

2.3.3.1.1 Advantages of the in-house model

2.3.3.1.1.1 Referrals

Masi (2000: 320) states that EAPs who provide services on-site or have a balance of on and off-site service-rendering tend to have a balance between self-referrals and those referred by line or human resources. This tendency identifies accessibility and trust as big issues in the EAP referral process. It also shows the importance of raising awareness of existing services.

Googins and Godfrey (1987: 119) commented on the internal programme's visibility and accessibility as advantages as well. This allows for immediate response by EAP staff in crisis situations, as no delays are caused by scheduled hours or distance.

Merrick (2002: 45) is of the view that firms can "grow their own" EAPs, as services which are provided internally may have a better understanding of the culture of the organisation. This could certainly increase the effectiveness of programmes offered and employee response to them.

2.3.3.1.2    Disadvantages of in-house model

2.3.3.1.2.1 Termination

Terminating EAP services is more difficult in the internal model than in any of the other models (Myers, 1984: 93). The main difference is that EAP personnel must be either reassigned other duties or outplaced. According to Carroll (1996. 35) a counsellor can be vulnerable if reorganization takes place in an organization. A counsellor could as well be used by individual employees against an organization.

2.3.3.2    Off-site EAP model

2.3.3.2.1    Advantage of off-site model

2.3.3.2.1.1 Professional staff

External EAPs often have a more diverse staff contingent, consisting of experts able to handle different types of client problems (Goldstein, 1997: 26). It also provides small employers access to human resource consultation services that they would otherwise have been lacking (Cagney, 1999: 66).

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2.4    Comparison between in-house and off-site EAP models

In a study conducted to test the hypothesis that "EAP providing internal treatment differs from those that refer externally for such treatment," Brummett (2000:25) highlights the following findings:

**Table 2.1: Brummett's findings when comparing in-house and external EAP models**

|  | Internal EAP | External EAP |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Employees served by male EAP's | 45.96% | 60.88% |
| 2. Male employees as clients | 39.19% | 54.9% |
| 3. Provision of internal stress-management workshops | 95.1% | 66.7% |
| 4. Provision of internal treatment Report | 72% | 53.3% |
| 5. Clients requiring marital/ family problems services | 100% | 93.3% |
| 6. Age | 45 | 53 |
| 7. Non-white participants | 12.2% | 3.3% |
| 8. Years of service | 6.9 years | 8.7 years |

It is interesting to note from the above information that not one model is preferred over the other but different circumstances call for a specific model. Older employees/participants in the above study for example, preferred external model. The statement is supported by the mean age of 53 years, while the mean age of 45 years preferred an internal model. For an issue such as internal stress-management workshop, 95.1% of participants preferred an internal model, while 66.7% preferred external model.  This therefore suggests that different issues lead to the choice for different models.

Below is a table indicating differences between in-house and off-site EAP models as summarized by the researcher.

**Table 2.2: Differences between in-house and off site EAP models**

|     | In-house model/Internal programme | Off-site model/External programme |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1.  | EAP services located on-site and therefore easily accessible | EAP services located away from workplace, which could be less convenient for some employees |
| 2.  | Location visible within workplace, which could endanger privacy | Location ensures anonymity of user and guarantees privacy |
| 3.  | Patterns of communication already exist inside organization | Lines of communication between EAP service provider and organisation need to be established |
| 4.  | Supervisor has direct contact with EAP staff, which could threaten confidentiality | Confidentiality is ensured since reports are mostly the only access supervisor has with EAP staff. |
| 5.  | Employees' family members are unlikely to be willing to access EAP if it is located at workplace. | Family members of employees are more likely to utilise EAP if it is offered at a separate venue. |
| 6.  | EAP services can be accessed during workday, which does not infringe on employees' free time | EAP services can be accessed outside of working hours, which does not take worker out of the office. Could be more convenient as worker is more relaxed after hours. |
| 7.  | EAP provider is familiar with the company policies, procedures and goals – EAP in line with above | EAP provider has only a broad view of organizations purposes, but more counselling experience due to referrals from a variety of agencies. |
| 8.  | Level of referrals is high due to "ownership" of EAPs by service providers | High proportion of self-referrals due to employees confidence in outside agency to deliver service |

| 9.  | Immediate response/ EAP services possible in crisis situations | Time between referral and response dependant on service provider's waiting list |
|-----|----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 10. | EAP services necessitate extra staff or create more administrative work for existing staff. | Utilisation of economies of scale e.g. centralised administrative services lower cost to employer |
| 11. | Suitable for large organizations with high turnover and a large human resources Department | Suitable for small and medium enterprises for whom it is cheaper to outsource EAP services than to employ staff to deliver services |
| 12. | Replicates already existing community service organizations | Better identification and utilisation of existing community resource |
| 13. | Small number of staff available, often with experience of counselling a limited range of problems | Staff have more diverse experience to support employees with different problems they may be facing |
| 14. | Termination of services is difficult as an employee must leave the company, be re-assigned, or made redundant | Terminating services is simpler, since a contract can be terminated at any time (Services can be provided on a pay-as-needed basis) |

2.5     Criteria for considering the selection of a suitable model

Myers (1984:70) states that an EAP is established to help the organization effectively meet its long-term goals or purposes. This has an influence on the EAP model that an organisation will choose. According to the EAP Standards (EAPA-SA, 1999: 19) it is important to select a model that is consistent with organisational and employee needs.

2.5.1   Organisational goals

Cagney (1999: 59) mentions that EAP models respond to the marketplace. From this we can deduce that EAP models are not fixed and may change as needed by the organisation's goals and employees. It can also indicate that the initial EAP model selected

by an organisation may not be adequate, as organisational goals change. The organisation may need to change to, or add, an alternative EAP model to deliver effective EAP services to all of its employees.

## 2.5.2 Design of the programme

Oher (1999: 69) mentions that EAP designs are tailored to suit the workforce, the variations being infinite. An increasingly common realisation, however, is the pressure on employers to respond to employees' personal problems and to minimise the impact that these personal problems have on the workplace. With this in mind, the differences between the various models should be considered before deciding on the specific model that will be utilised by the organisation to meet its needs.

## 2.5.3 Size of an organisation

The size of the organization also plays a significant role in the decision on an EAP model. Other factors to be considered include: size and diversity of employee population, number and location of sites, budget, and existing internal resources (EAPA-SA, 1999: 19). Brummett (2000:19) maintains that internal treatment occurs mostly in large EAP's with large budgets serving large organizations. This may mean that an internal EAP programme is more cost-effective for a large organisation, but that it would be better for a small company to be part of a consortium which serves the needs of all small organizations.

## 2.5.4 Resources

The EAP requirements of an organisation may vary considerably over time. Depending on the nature of the agreement with the EAP vendor, organizations could benefit from external models in that they only pay for EAP services as and when needed.

This may be particularly true of smaller organizations, where one less employee in need of EAP counselling in a particular month may have the amount of resources required during the previous month. Not using an external model requires an organisation to always have sufficient resources available to cater for the maximum anticipated need.

## 2.5.5 Physical location of EAP's

Physical location of EAP offices determine, to a larger extent, the

degree in which the programme will be supported by employees (Terblanche, 1992:22). Employees will find it difficult to make use of the service if offices are located where they will be noticed every time they visit them.

## 2.6    Conclusion

If there were to be a competition between an in-house model and off-site model for providing the best EAP services, there would be no clear winner. The advantages and disadvantages of the different models need to be looked at from an organisational point of view in terms of its goals and commitment to employee health.

As a general rule of thumb, however, smaller organizations, where EAP needs are usually more difficult to predict, may benefit more using external EAP models. By the same token, larger organizations, with more consistent EAP requirements, may find in-house models more effective. Each EAP model has its own set of qualities that would make it appropriate for the needs and requirements of a specific organisation and therefore the responsibility lies on the employers to evaluate and select the model, which will provide them the best results.

CHAPTER THREE

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME IN THE NORTH WEST
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a theoretical discussion of the working conditions under which employees of the NWDOE are working. Contributions of conditions to stressful situation are also highlighted.

Schedule 8 of the Labour Relations Act, 1995, has to do with the Code of Good Practice in an organization and deals with dismissal of an employee due to incapacity. Paragraph 8 of the schedule stipulates that an employee may not be dismissed for unsatisfactory performance, unless the employer has given an employee an appropriate evaluation, instruction, training, guidance, or counselling. Paragraph 10, on the other hand, indicates that dismissal depends on the degree of incapacity. In the case of certain kinds of incapacity, such as alcoholism or drug abuse, counselling/rehabilitation would be an appropriate step for an employer to consider.

As the Department's EAP unit is newly established, stipulations of the Act have not yet been fully adhered to, due to the size of the Department and the insufficient capacity to render counselling services.

3.2 Problems that are common in the workplace

3.2.1 Absenteeism

Absenteeism takes place in various ways in an organization, which includes paid versus unpaid absenteeism, long-term versus short-term absence. This concept may be further complicated by at- work-absenteeism or presenteeism. Presenteeism refers to a situation where an employee is at work but does not utilize his/her mental or physical abilities for the benefit of the Department (Uys 1994:117).

A high absenteeism rate in the Department may be very costly even if employees are on unpaid leave. As a result of the negative effect of absenteeism, the Department's service rendering could be compromised, as its strategic goals would not be reached at a given time. According to the Department's Oversight Report for the 2004/05, 12.5% of employees

faced disciplinary hearings as a result of absenteeism. The following statistics indicates the rate at which employees took leave between 1 April 2004 and 31 March 2005 (Annual Report 2005:93).

Table 3.1: Absenteeism in the North West Department of Education
for the period 1 April 2004 to 31 March 2005

| Type of leave | Numbers of days utilized |
|---|---|
| Vacation with full pay | 15 539 |
| Without pay | 5 373 |
| Sick | 13 893 |

3.2.2 Stress

Stress refers to a psychological and physiological condition that occurs as a result of a particular condition in an individual's environment. This may include noise, pressure, promotion, or even the effect of circumstances under which an employee is operating (Uys 1994: 115). Kroon (1990: 444), on the other hand, describes stress as an energy-sapping, negative, emotional experience that usually follows a stimulus that is consciously or unconsciously interpreted as a threat, and that leads to a response aimed at ending the experience. Stress may be divided into the following categories (Uys 1994:115):

3.2.2.1 Intra-institutional stressors.

This includes aspects such as decision making in an institution, interpersonal relationships, and policy in respect of compensation. The nature of work to be performed, lack of autonomy, shortage of staff, and one's supervisor, can all cause stress to an employee. The problem of restructuring the public service in terms of the Public Service Coordinating Bargaining Council (PSCBC) Resolution 7 of 2002 is the one serious contributing factor in the Department. As a result of the resolution, some employees had to be transferred from their previous workplaces to new ones with the result that they are in most cases forced to relocate and separate from their families.

3.2.2.2    Extra-institutional stressors

These stressors include family commitments and uncertainty about employees' own economic welfare. An issue of one's financial resources, i.e. financial management skills, come into the picture. An employee who could not cope with his salary while staying with his family would be worse-off when transferred to another place, as he would have to maintain two households. His expenditure in terms of transport and accommodation would rip him off, resulting in a stressful situation (Uys 1994: 116).

3.2.3   Staff turnover

Staff turnover refers to the movement of staff in and out of the Department. The movement in most cases determines the stability of the workplace. The high rate of staff turnover in the Department may be undesirable and may be too costly (Uys 1994:117). As skilled employees leave the Department because of lack of promotion to senior positions and recognition for their capabilities, new employees have to be recruited. The process of recruiting in itself means that, while the recruiting and selection process is taking place, other employees' workload would increase, causing unhappiness.  The following indicates the rate of staff turnover in the Department between 1 April 2004 and 31 March 2005 (Annual Report 2005:85):

**Table 3.2: Annual turnover rates for the period 1.04.2004 to 31.03.2005**

| Salary Level | Number of employees per level as on 1 April 2004 | Appointments and transfers into the Department | Terminations and transfers out of the Department | Turnover rate % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Senior Managers | 33 | 7 | 3 | 9.1 |
| Junior and Middle Managers | 3430 | 19 | 104 | 3 |
| Lower level employees | 32 472 | 6 279 | 5 120 | 53.2 |
| **Total** | 35 935 | 6 305 | 5 227 | |

It is clear from the above table that seven (21.2%) of the employees on senior management level were appointed or transferred into the Department while three, (9%) of the employees on the same level left the Department during the period 1 April 2004 to 31 March 2005. A lot of movement took place in the lower levels namely, fifty three comma two percent (53,2%) as against three percent (3%) on the junior and middle levels and nine comma one percent (9,1%) on the senior managers level.

It therefore is the researcher's view that employees at middle to lower levels are the ones who are most affected by staff turnover in the North West Department of Education. This may therefore hamper service delivery as it is these levels that actually render services.

### 3.2.4 Lack of loyalty

According to Lynch (1998:134), loyalty is linked to the trust that employees have in an organization. Although employees may be loyal to the company, they may become suspicious of an organisation's trustworthiness.

The following statistics show promotions made between 1 April 2004 and 31 March 2005 (Annual Report 2005:89):

Table 3.3: Appointments/promotions of employees within the Department against those from outside

| Levels of appointment/ Promotions | Number of appointments/promotions | |
|---|---|---|
| | Within the Department | From outside the Department |
| Senior Managers [Directors and above] | 5 | 7 |
| Middle Managers [Deputy Directors] | 106 | 8 |
| Junior Managers [Assistant Directors] | 312 | 129 |

The above statistical information indicates that employees within the Department are mainly considered for promotions to junior and middle management levels only, while outside candidates are favoured when it comes to senior management level. Seventy comma seven percent (70,7%) of promotions to junior level, and ninety two comma nine percent (92,9%) of promotions to middle management levels are given to employees within the Department. However, fifty eight percent (58%) of appointments to senior management level were filled by outside candidates.

It therefore is the researcher's view that once employees within the Department are not considered for promotion to senior management level, they will become disgruntled. This may therefore cause them to lose confidence in the Department, and thus not fully support its strategic objectives.

### 3.2.5 Alcoholism

Throughout history people have swallowed, sniffed, smoked, or otherwise taken into their bodies a variety of chemical substances for the purpose of altering their moods, levels of consciousness, or behaviour. The widespread use of drugs in our society today is readily apparent in our vast consumption of alcohol, tobacco, coffee, medically prescribed tranquilizers, and illegal drugs such as cocaine, marijuana, and heroin (Sue and Sue, 2003:265).

According to the Department's Annual Report (2005:98), two comma nine percent (2,9%) of cases of misconduct addressed during the disciplinary hearings in the Department during the 2004/05 financial year resulted from being under the influence of alcohol while on duty. In terms of the Public Service Act, 1994, if an employee reports for duty under the influence of intoxicating liquor, he or she is deemed guilty of misconduct. The above-mentioned cases are therefore those where appropriate stipulations of the said Act were followed.

It is the researcher's view that very few cases of alcoholism were reported during the 2004/05 period. A lot therefore needs to be done by the EAP unit to ensure that the situation does not get out of hand. The lower the number of cases reported on and dealt with, the lower the quality of education that will be offered to learners by troubled teaching staff.

## 3.3  EAP policy and procedure

### 3.3.1 Policy statement

The policy statement should reflect or emphasise the fact that EAP practitioner should not be involved in the disciplinary procedures in the workplace. The Department does have an approved EAP policy that regulates EAP activities in the Department. The policy was last reviewed in 2004 and was distributed to all regional offices as well as the corporate centre. According to the Department's Annual Report for the 2004/05 financial year, although 104 employees went through disciplinary hearings (2005:98), not a single employee was referred to the EAP unit for correctional counselling.

The researcher is of the opinion that it should be indicated that involvement of EAP practitioners in disciplinary procedures would jeopardize the programme.

### 3.3.2 Confidentiality

Confidentiality is a very important aspect in an EAP setup. It intends to seek to protect the privacy of the individual employee and the interests of all stakeholders (Standards Committee of EAPA-SA 2005:16). It is important to note that confidentiality arises from an ethical code of the counsellor's profession. In some cases, EAP counsellors are psychologists or social workers by profession. They therefore have to be regulated by a code of ethics by a council such as the South African Council for the Social Service Professions. In a study comparing in-house and contracted EAP, Straussner (1988: 54) found that, when asked whether they did have any problem or incident regarding confidentiality, 47% of in-house and 25% of contracted respondents indicated that they did have problems. This therefore suggests that in-house programmes could be more vulnerable to breaches of confidentiality.

It is the researcher's view that for effective counselling to take place, the aspect of confidentiality in the Department could not be overemphasized.

### 3.3.3 Accessibility

Accessibility or location of the programme is very important in ensuring that the programme is effectively utilized. EAP offices must therefore be located where clients will easily reach them. According to Sithole (Sa), these offices must be in a convenient place that does not demand a lot of travelling or transport before they could be reached. The Department's EAP offices are located within the offices in head office as well as in regional offices; they are therefore easily accessible to employees.

As outlined in the Constitution Act, 1996, all persons have the right to have access to health care services and appropriate social services. Location of the programme or its accessibility is very important in the programme, and according to the viewpoint researcher, must be seriously considered when deciding on the location of the programme.

### 3.4 Position of EAP practitioners within the Department

The position of EAP practitioners' within an organization is very important, as it can contribute to the support (or lack thereof) that an EAP can enjoy from potential consumers of the service.

EAP practitioners are placed on various levels within the Department's orgarnogram, depending on their experience. The unit structure is as indicated in Annexure D below, with

the deputy director reporting to the Director of Human Resources Management.   A Psychologist, Social Worker, and Assistant Wellness Manager are on Assistant Director's level.

3.5  Qualification of EAP practitioners

The success of the programme depends, to a large extent, on the level of education that the practitioners have. The situation in the Department is such that for one to be employed as an EAP practitioner, one has to be in possession of a Bachelor's degree in Psychology/Social Work plus registration with the Health Council as well as at least two years' working experience.

The researcher is of the opinion that although qualification is not the only factor that determines one's capability, it is important that EAP practitioners be well qualified and registered members of the Health Council, so that their activities could be well regulated.

3.6  Record-keeping system

EAPA-SA Standards for Employee Assistance Programs (2005: 17), stipulate that the EAP should maintain records.  In terms of the standards document, there should be record on:

- administrative matters;
- minutes of meetings;
- clinical information;
- corporate and client information;
- evaluation data;
- marketing and promotional material; and
- training material.

Carroll (2000:138) indicates that records refer to accounts of information on the work of counsellors.  The researcher agrees with the above point, as each counsellor has to keep record of all what he or she is doing or of information gathered from clients. From this it can be seen that EAP records are not exclusively records of therapeutic interventions.  This is because there are many other people, contacts (or engagements) that EAP officers are involved with, and data that needs to be collected and preserved.

Records in the Department, are kept separate from employees' personal files, and can only be accessed by employees in the EAP unit. In terms of the Department's EAP Policy, all records must be kept in a locked, secured location (EAP Policy, 2006: 12).

The researcher is of the opinion that record keeping is very essential because without it, employees will have no confidence in the programme, and will therefore not utilize it.

## 3.7    Conclusion

The main purpose of this chapter was to discuss conditions under which employees in the NWDOE are operating. Statistical information about issues of serious concern has been provided to support highlighted problems within the Department. The EAP unit's structure was also provided.

CHAPTER FOUR

EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION INTO THE PERCEPTIONS OF
EMPLOYEES REGARDING THE UTILIZATION OF THE IN-HOUSE EMPLOYEE
ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME MODEL IN THE NORTH WEST
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

4.1     Introduction

A literature study was done on the Employee Assistance Programme, and the focus was on the perceptions of employees regarding the utilization of the in-house Employee Assistance Programme model in the Department of Education. A survey was conducted wherein 50 employees were selected and requested to complete a questionnaire. Forty six questionnaires (92%) were completed and returned accordingly. The literature study was used as a background for the research and to compile the questionnaire as a technique for collecting data in the research.

Information gathered from an empirical investigation is presented as indicated below:

- Place of the study;
- Empirical data; and
- Results of the empirical research

4.2     Place of the study

Research was conducted in the Department of Education in Head Office [Mafikeng] and the central region [Mafikeng, Zeerust, Lichtenburg, and Delareyville] which was the working area of the researcher.  Respondents were the employees in Head Office and the central region in all the five levels of management, that is, senior, middle, junior, lower and general assistant levels.

4.3     The empirical part of the research

The data collection can be described as quantitative in nature. The quantitative approach was followed as the researcher has more than twenty years' experience in the Department, and is familiar with almost all activities of the Department of Education, and according to De Vos (2002: 391) this approach requires that the researcher should have extensive prior knowledge of the culture and environment in which the study occurs.

The research was also descriptive in nature, in that according to Fouché (2002: 109), this method is used in order to try to understand "the way things are", for example, what are the perceptions of employees regarding the use of an in-house EAP model by the Department of Education. The study was quantitative also in that a self-administered questionnaire was used as a data collecting instrument according to a descriptive survey as research design (Delport, 2002: 172).

### 4.3.1 The Sample

The employees in Head Office and the central region were the population used for the study. A sample was drawn from the population, excluding those employees who were selected for the pilot study. The principle of a stratified random sampling technique was used to select a representative sample from all the management levels (Fink, 2003: 11). Employees were drawn from the list at each management level. As indicated in chapter one, a total sample of 50 of the participants was identified.

### 4.3.2 The questionnaires

A questionnaire was used as a data-collecting instrument in the study. A questionnaire was compiled and given to respondents for completion, and sent back as indicated.

Before the final questionnaire was distributed to respondents, a pilot test of the questionnaire was done in accordance with De Vos (2002 410), by involving three (3) employees of the Department. The three (3) employees were not included in the actual research, and no loopholes or problems were identified.

Attached to the questionnaire was an informed consent form (See annexure A) as well as instructions for completing a questionnaire, which included that the questionnaire would be completed anonymously and should be completed with the honesty it deserves.
Forty six (46) of the fifty (50) questionnaires were fully completed and submitted, and all were useful.

### 4.3.3 Data Presentation

Obtained results were analysed manually, and will be provided in tables and charts. Results of the questionnaires will be presented according to the following sections:

Section A: Demographic details

Section B: Work history

Section C: Awareness of the EAP

Section D: Perceptions towards the in-house EAP model

### 4.3.3.1 Demographic details

As shown in Table 4.1 – 4.3 the respondents' biographical data relates to gender, age, and marital status.

### 4.3.3.1.1 Gender

Table 4.1 Gender

| Management level | Gender | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Male | Female | N=46 |
| Senior | 2 (4%) | 1 (2%) | 3 (6%) |
| Middle | 2 (4%) | 4 (9%) | 6 (13%) |
| Junior | 7 (15%) | 17 (37%) | 24 (52%) |
| Lower | 0 (0%) | 10 (22%) | 10 (22%) |
| General Assistant | 2 (5%) | 1 (2%) | 3 (7%) |
| Total | 13 (28%) | 33 (72%) | 46 (100%) |

Discussion of Table 4.1

Table 4.1 indicates that 28% of the respondents were males and 72% females. Most of the females, 37%, were on the junior management level, and most of the males, 15%, were on the junior management level. This could be attributed to the fact that administrative posts in the Department are predominantly occupied by female employees, as males in this level are very scarce.

This will not influence the results of the study, however, because one does not have to state one's gender to indicate one's perception on the model.

### 4.3.3.1.2 Age of Respondents

Respondents were requested to indicate their age so that the researcher could determine their level of maturity and to classify their perceptions in categories as follows, junior employee, middle-aged employee, and senior employee.

Table 4.2 Age

| Management Level | AGE | | | | | Total N=46 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 20 -30 | 31 – 40 | 41 -50 | 51 - 60 | 60 + | |
| Senior | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 3 (7%) | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 3 (6.5%) |
| Middle | 0 (0%) | 2 (4%) | 2 (4%) | 1 (2%) | 1 (2%) | 6 (13%) |
| Junior | 1 (2%) | 8 (17%) | 12 (26%) | 3 (7%) | 0 (0%) | 24 (52%) |
| Lower | 1 (2%) | 4 (9%) | 5 (11%) | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 10 (22%) |
| General Assistant | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 2 (4%) | 1 (2%) | 0 (0%) | 3 (6.5%) |
| Total | 2 (4%) | 14 (30%) | 24 (52%) | 5 (11%) | 1 (2%) | 46 (100%) |

Discussion of Table 4.2

Table 4.2 indicates that 52% of the respondents are between the ages 41 – 50, 30% of respondents are in the age group of 31-4 0, 11% of respondents in the age group of 51 – 60, above 60 is the lowest age group. From the above information, it is clear that the Department has an aging workforce which may have an impact on the view of those employees regarding EAP services. Brummett(2000:25) is of the view that older employees are likely to use an external EAP services as against younger once.

4.3.3.1.3 Marital Status

Table 4.3 Marital Status

| Management Level | Marital Status | | | | | | Total N=46 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Single | Married | Separated | Widowed | Divorced | Cohabiting | |
| Senior | 0 (0%) | 2 (4%) | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 1(2%) | 0 (0%) | 3 (6.5%) |
| Middle | 1(2%) | 3 (7%) | 0 (0%) | 1(2%) | 1(2%) | 0 (0%) | 6 (13%) |
| Junior | 12 (26%) | 9 (20%) | 0 (0%) | 1(2%) | 2 (4%) | 0 (0%) | 24 (54%) |
| Lower | 6 (13%) | 2 (4%) | 0 (0%) | 1(2%) | 1(2%) | 0 (0%) | 10 (22%) |
| General Assistant | 2 (4%) | 1(2%) | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 3 (6.5%) |
| Total | 21 (46%) | 17 (37%) | 0 (0%) | 3 (6%) | 5 (11%) | 0 (0%) | 46 (100%) |

Discussion of Table 4.3

Table 4.3 shows that 46% of respondents are single, 37% married, 11% divorced while 6% are widowed. The likelihood is that 55% of the total population may have used counselling services through church, social workers or even private therapists in their life especially during marriage, after the divorce process as well as during bereavement.

4.3.3.2    Working Hours

As shown in Table 4.4 – 4.7 the respondents' work history relates to years of experience in the Department, years of experience outside the Department, their positions, as well as their qualifications.

4.3.3.2.1    Years of service in Department of Education

Table 4.4 Years of service in Department of Education

| Management Level | Years of service in the Department | | | | | Total N=46 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 – 5 | 6 - 10 | 11 – 15 | 16 - 20 | 21 + | |
| Senior | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| Middle | 3 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 6 |
| Junior | 3 | 4 | 2 | 9 | 6 | 24 |
| Lower | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 10 |
| General Assistant | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Total | 8 (17%) | 9(20%) | 5 (11%) | 15 (32%) | 9 (20%) | 46 |

Discussion of Table 4.4

The table shows the distribution of respondents per management level according to their years of service in the Department of Education. 32% of respondents have been in the Department for 16 – 20 years, 20% of respondents have  6 – 10 years experience, and 20% of the respondents have 21+ years experience.  Those employees who have been in the Department for a longer period may experience a stronger awareness of the EAP, which may result in a higher penetration rate compared to those respondents not in service for a long time.

4.3.3.2.2    Experience outside the Department

Table 4.5 Experience outside the Department

| Management Level | Years of service outside the Department | | | | | | Total N=46 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 0 | 1 – 5 | 6 - 10 | 11 - 15 | 16 - 20 | 21 + | |
| Senior | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Middle | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 6 |
| Junior | 17 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 24 |
| Lower | 7 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 10 |
| General Assistant | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Total | 29 (63%) | 6 (13%) | 5 (11%) | 4 (9%) | 0 (0%) | 2 (4%) | 46 |

Discussion of Table 4.5

A large number of employees, 63%, had 0 years of experience, of which 59% are on junior management level while 3% is on senior management level. Employees who at one stage or the other worked in another Department may have knowledge of EAP, as it could have been provided even if he/she is not aware of those services provided by the Department.

### 4.3.3.2.3 Current position

Table 4.6 Current position

| Management Level | Number |
|---|---|
| Senior | 3 (6.5%) |
| Middle | 6 (13%) |
| Junior | 24 (52%) |
| Lower | 10 (22%) |
| General Assistant | 3 (6.5%) |
| Total | 46 (100%) |

Discussion of Table 4.6

Respondents were selected from all levels of operation in the Department. Table 4.6 indicates how they were selected using the principles of the stratified random sampling technique identified by (Fink, 2003: 11). This information is given on the 50 respondents to ensure that the outcome hereof covers all levels of employment within the Department. The size of the strata is different from what was planned, due to the fact that lower management level was broken down and clearly defined. This was done to indicate that even the lowest category of employees in the Department was considered in the study.

### 4.3.3.2.4 Qualification

Table 4.7 Qualification

| Management Level | Educational Level | | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Below Matriculation | Matriculation | Post Matriculation | N=46 |
| Senior | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 3 (6.5%) | 3 (6.5%) |
| Middle | 0 (0%) | 1 (2%) | 5 (11%) | 6 (13%) |
| Junior | 3 (6.5%) | 16 (35%) | 5 (11%) | 24 (52%) |
| Lower | 2 (4%) | 7 (15%) | 1 (2%) | 10 (22%) |
| General Assistant | 3 (6.5%) | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 3 (6.5%) |
| Total | 8 (17%) | 24 (52%) | 14 (31%) | 46 (100%) |

Discussion of Table 4.7

Respondents were requested to indicate their qualifications so that the researcher may have an idea of their level of education. The above Table indicates that 52% have matric qualifications, 31% have post matric qualifications, while 17% have qualifications below matric. The implication is that those employees with below-matriculation qualification may

find it difficult to read messages and flyers circulated or placed in notice boards about EAP activities in the Department.

### 4.3.3.3 Awareness of the Employee-Assistance Programme

#### 4.3.3.3.1 Hearing about the EAP

Question 2.1

Respondents were requested to indicate whether they have heard about EAP.
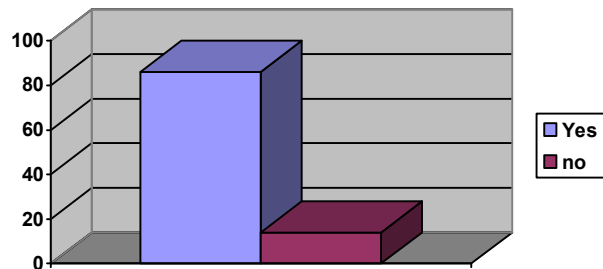


Figure 4.1

Discussion of Figure 4.1

According to figure 4.1, 86% of respondents indicated that they heard about the EAP while 14% have not heard any thing about it before.

This therefore suggests that the Department's marketing strategy must be intensified to ensure that all employees become knowledgeable about the programme.

#### 4.3.3.3.2 Rationale of the EAP

Question 2.2

Respondents were requested to indicate whether they know the rationale of EAP.
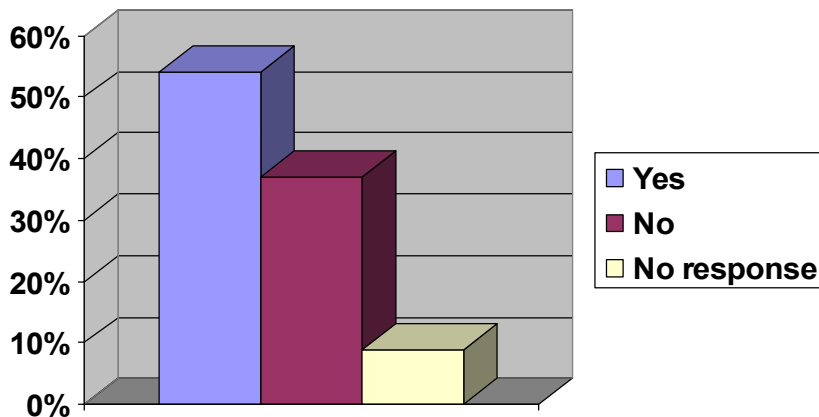
Figure 4.2

Discussion of Figure 4.2

From the above information, 54% of respondents know the rationale of EAP, 37% do not know, while 9% did not respond. The following are comments made by those employees who indicated that they know the rationale of EAP:

- It helps employees deal with stress;
- It assists employees overcome work-related problems;
- It is concerned with personal problems affecting employees' wellbeing and job performance;
- It assists with mental health and fitness programmes;
- It provides motivation that increases productivity;
- It provides confidential and professional counselling services;
- It provides social and psychological support to employees;
- It is a wellness programme; and
- It protects employees against job loss.

As indicated in paragraph 4.3.3.3.1 above, marketing of the programme will ensure that those employees who did not know about the programme, as well as those who did not respond, will become aware and know the rationale thereof.

4.3.3.3.3  Provision of EAP services in the Department

Question 2.3

Respondents were requested to indicate whether EAP services are provided in the Department or not.
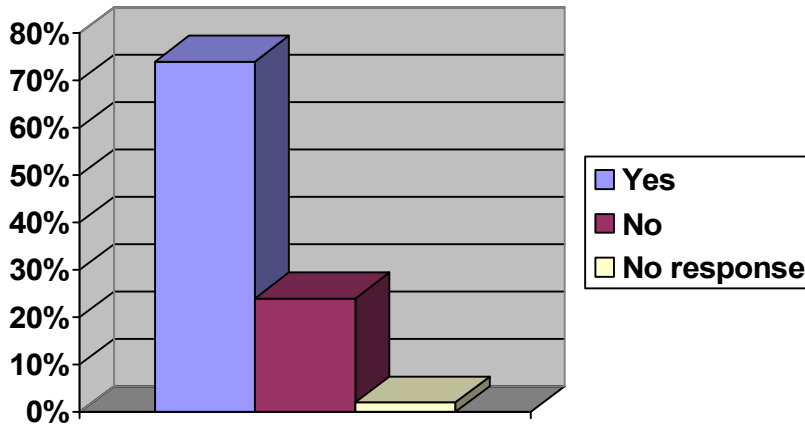
Figure 4.3

Discussion of Figure 4.3

According to figure 4.3, 74% of respondents indicated that EAP services are provided in the Department, 24% indicated that services are not provided, while 2% did not respond. This suggests that almost two thirds of respondents are not aware of services provided in the Department.

4.3.3.3.4 Contact details of EAP professionals in the Department

Question 2.4

Respondents were requested to indicate whether they know contact details of EAP professionals in the Department.
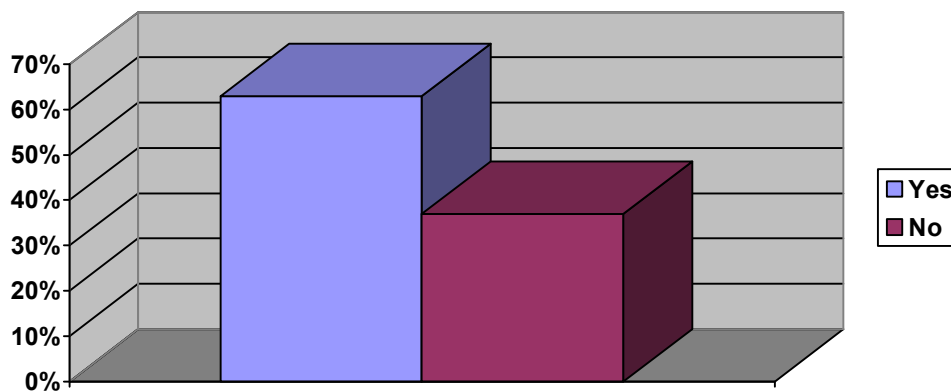


Figure 4.4

Discussion of Figure 4.4

According to figure 4.4, 63% of respondents indicated that they know contact details of EAP professionals in the Department while 37% did not have contact details. This suggests that

information is not clearly availed to employees so that they could be aware of issues affecting them in the workplace.

4.3.3.3.5  Awareness of confidentiality of EAP services

Question 2.5

Respondents were requested to indicate whether they are aware that EAP services are confidential.
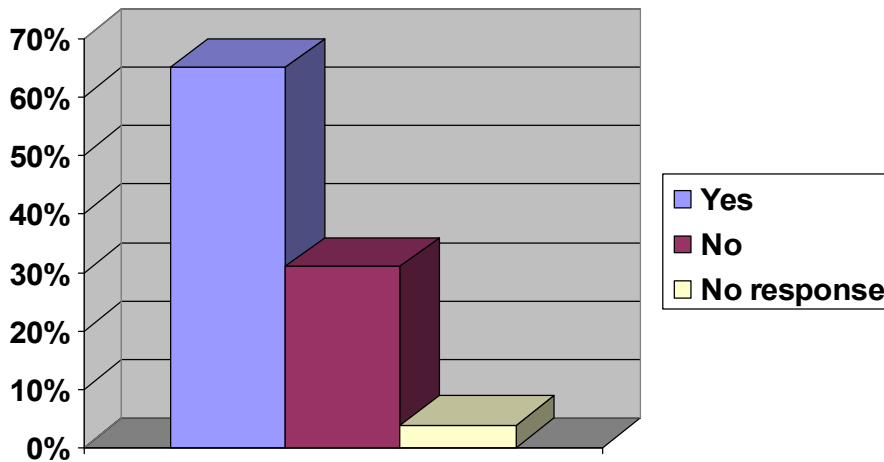


Figure 4.5

Discussion of Figure 4.5

The above figure indicates that 65% of respondents were aware that EAP services are confidential, 31% were not aware, while 4% did not respond. The fact that 4% of respondents did not respond to the question may indicate that they were not aware that EAP information is kept confidentially. The fact that 35% of respondents are either not aware or did not respond to the question is supported by Cagney (1999: 64) in that according to him, an in-house model may find it difficult to protect confidentiality of employees concerned.

4.3.3.3.6  Location (offices) of EAP professionals in the Department

Question 2.6

Respondents were requested to indicate whether they know the location (offices) of EAP professionals in the Department.
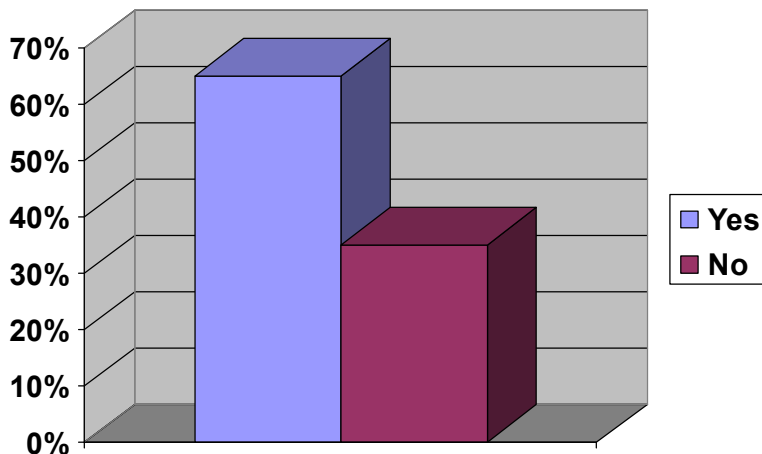
Figure 4.6


Discussion of Figure 4.6

According figure 4.6, 65% of respondents where aware of the location (offices) of EAP professionals, while 35% were not aware of the location of their offices. It is clear that although 74% of respondents indicated that they were aware that EAP services are provided in the Department (paragraph 4.3.3.3.3), only 65% of respondents knew the location from where services are provided. Of the 35% respondents who were not aware of the location of EAP offices, the following observation was made:

Work experience

- 31% (5) of respondents have 6 – 10 years of experience;
- 19% (3) of respondents have 1 – 5 years of experience;
- 19% (3) of respondents have 21 years + of experience;
- 13% (2) of respondents have 11 – 15 years of experience;
- 13% (2) of respondents have 16 – 20 years of experience


Position

- 6% (1) is on senior management level;
- 19% (3) is on middle management level;
- 37% (6) is on junior management level;
- 19% (3) is on lower level; and
- 19% (3) is on general assistants' level.

The information provided suggests that there seems to be a problem across all management levels of employment and from all employees, irrespective of their years of service in the Department.

4.3.3.3.7  Accessibility of EAP services

Question 2.7

Respondents were requested to indicate whether EAP services are easily accessible.
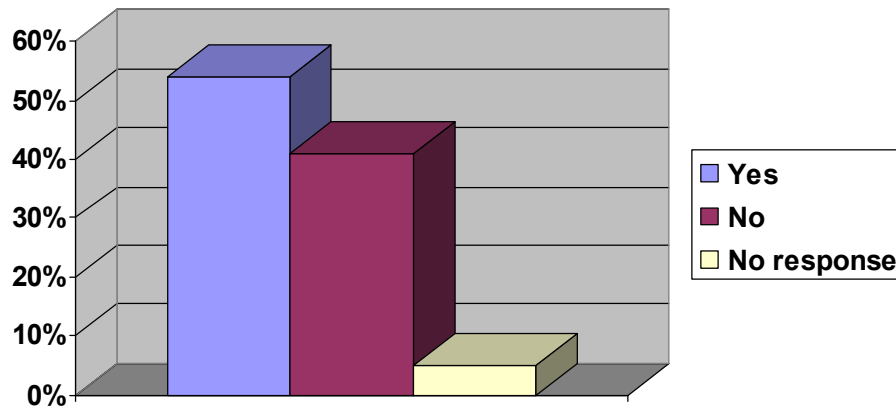


Figure 4.7

Discussion of Figure 4.7

Figure 4.7 indicates that 54% of respondents indicated that EAP services are easily accessible, 41% indicated that they are not accessible, while 5% did not respond. Although 54% of respondents indicated that services are accessible, those who do not know as well as those who did not respond represent a bigger number of respondents, namely 46% (41% said no while 5% did not respond). A lot of employees therefore seem uncomfortable with accessibility of EAP services in the Department.  The higher percentage of respondents who indicated that services are accessible are supported by Tyler (2002:8) who is of the view that an in-house model has a higher utilisation rate than other models as it is more accessible.

4.3.3.3.8  Idealness of the location of the Department's EAP offices

Question 2.8

Respondents were requested to indicate whether the location of the Department's EAP offices are ideal.
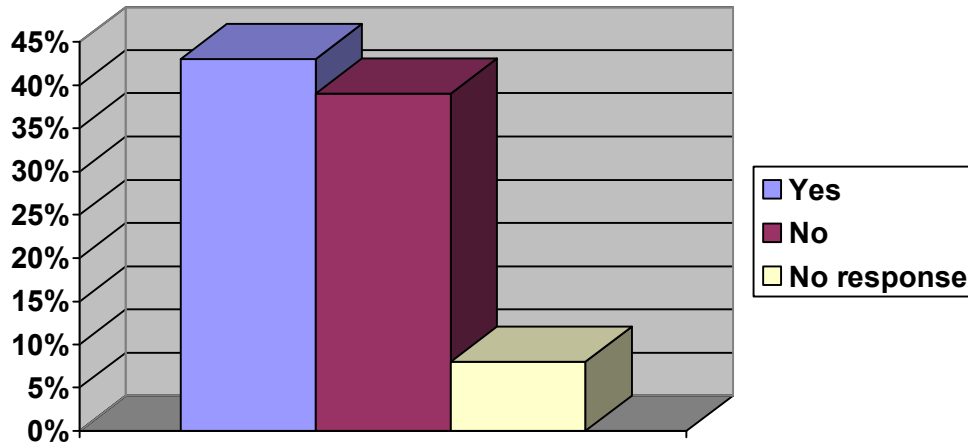
Fig 4.8

Discussion of Figure 4.8

From figure 4.8, it is clear that 43% of respondents were of the opinion that location of EAP offices are ideal, 39% indicated that they are not ideal, while 18% did not respond. From those respondents who responded to the question, the following comments were made:

- Services are accessible
- Offices help them with difficult problems;
- Help reduce corruption; and
- Reduce transport costs.

Some respondents who indicated that the location of EAP offices is not ideal suggested that they should be where they will be accessible and where confidentiality would be maintained. This supports an idea that "employees find it difficult to freely use the service because it is located where everybody notices when one consults". The fact is supported by Goldstein (1997:26) who is of the view that services must be where they will be easily reached at any convenient time by employees.

4.3.3.4 Perceptions towards the In-House EAP model

4.3.3.4.1 Employees' involvement in activities regarding EAP

Question 3.1

Respondents were requested to indicate whether they have been involved in and the extent to which they have been involved in different activities.

Table 4.8  Employees' involvement in activities regarding EAP

|  | Not at all | Rarely | Occasionally | Frequently | No response |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Substance abuse | 31 (68%) | 2 (4%) | 1 (2%) | 0 | 12 (26%) |
| Financial problems | 10 (22%) | 10 (22%) | 11 (23%) | 5 (11%) | 10 (22%) |
| Domestic violence | 28 (60%) | 7 (15%) | 0 | 0 | 11 (15%) |
| Stress | 6 (13%) | 15 (33%) | 10 (22%) | 6 (13%) | 9 (19%) |
| Others | 0 | 0 | 2 (4%) | 0 | 44 (96%) |

Totals in Table 4.8 could not equal 100%, as respondents had the opportunity to select more than one response.

Discussion of Table 4.8

Substance abuse: Seventy four percent of respondents have been involved in substance abuse;

Financial problems: Seventy eight percent of respondents have financial problems;

Domestic violence: Seventy five percent of respondents have been involved in domestic violence;

Stress: Eighty one percent of respondents have been involved in a stressful situation; and

Others: Four percent of respondents have been involved in other abuse such as panic attacks and work conflicts.

4.3.3.4.2  Help needed to deal with problems in paragraph 4.3.3.4.1

Question 3.2

Respondents were requested to indicate whether they need any help to deal with issues mentioned in paragraph 4.3.3.4.1 above.
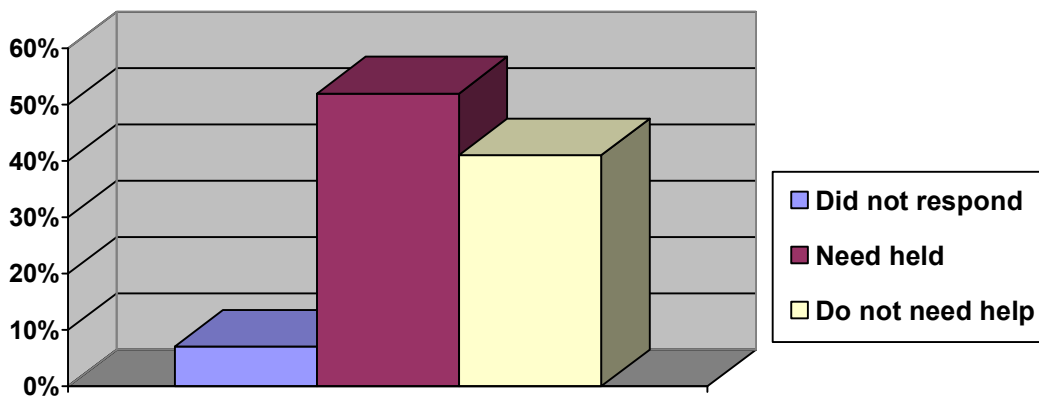


Figure 4.9

Discussion of Figure 4.9

According figure 4.9, 52% of respondents indicated that they need help to address problems mentioned in paragraph 4.3.3.4.1, 41% indicated that they do not need any help while 7% did not respond. Information gathered indicates that employees within the Department are in need of assistance in order to deal with various problems they are encountering. Statistical information as indicated in Table 1.1 supports the findings with regard to cases dealt with between May 2004 and February 2005. If not assisted, those problems would have negative impact in terms of employee morale, health as well as productivity.

4.3.3.4.3   Utilisation of EAP services provided by the Department in case of problems

Question 3.3

Respondents were requested to indicate whether they would utilise EAP services provided by the Department if they have problems.
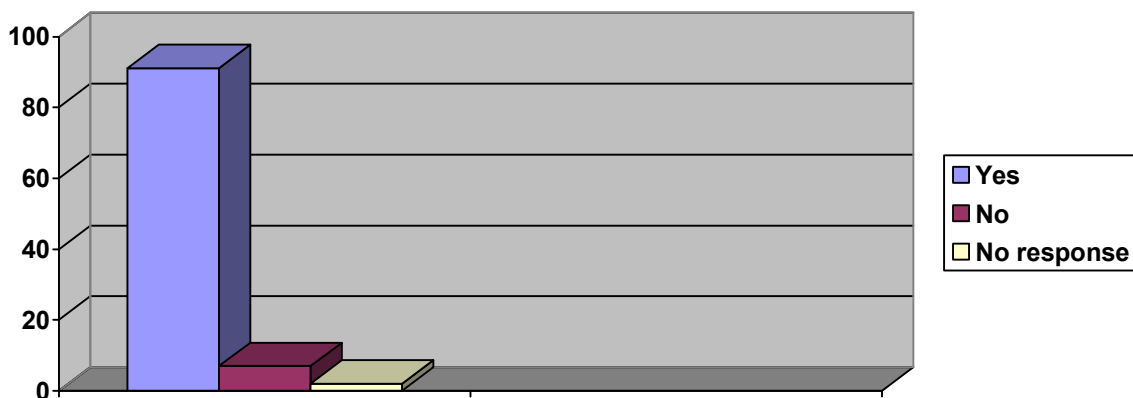


Fig  4.10

Discussion of Figure 4.10

In terms of figure 4.10, 91% of respondents indicated that they will utilise EAP services in the Department when they have problems, 7% indicated that they will not utilise services provided in the Department, while 2% did not respond. The following motivation was made by those respondents who indicated that they will not utilise EAP services provided:

- o   cope with current medical support;
- o   lack of professionalism and confidentiality; and
- o   not comfortable talking to strangers.

A large number of respondents who are willing and will utilise EAP services provided in the Department shows that they have confidence in the Department's EAP services. Much more, still needs to be done for other employees to have confidence in the Department's EAP services provided, however.

4.3.3.4.4  Information provided to EAP counsellors is recorded and kept in a safe place

Question 3.4

Respondents were requested to indicate whether they are aware that information provided to EAP counsellors is recorded and kept in a safe place.
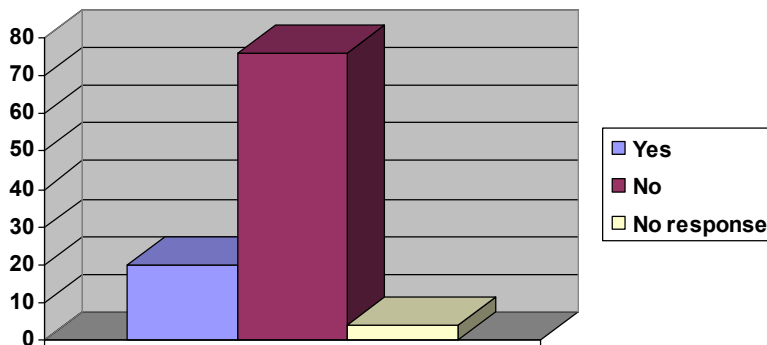


Figure 4.11

Discussion of Figure 4.11

According to figure 4.11, 76% of respondents were of the opinion that information provided to EAP professionals is recorded and kept in a safe place, 4% indicated that information is not recorded and kept safely while 20% did not respond. The fact that 20% of respondents did not answer the question suggests that they are not aware that information provided is recorded and kept in a safe place. This therefore suggests that a total of 24% of respondents are of the view that information provided is not recorded and kept confidentially as outlined in the Department's EAP Policy (EAP Policy, 2006:12) . This view will only change when information is provided to employees.

4.3.3.4.5  Employees' confidence in Departmental EAP counsellor(s)

Question 3.5

Respondents were requested to indicate whether, if they have used EAP counsellors, they have confidence in them.
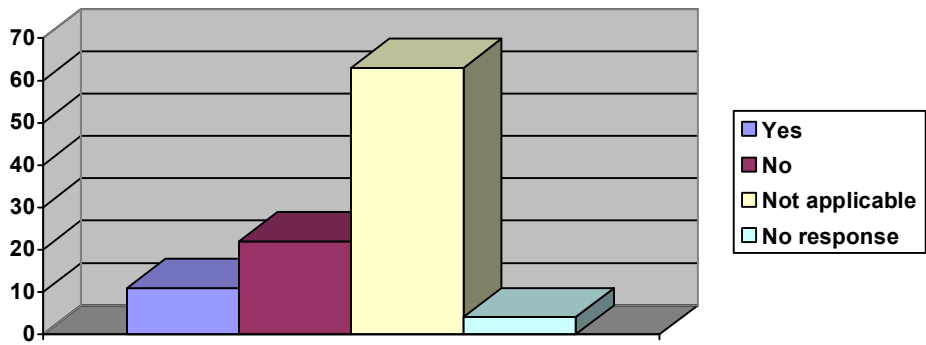
Figure 4.12

Discussion of Figure 4.12

According to figure 4.12, 11% of respondents have confidence in Departmental EAP counsellors, 22% indicated that they don't have confidence in Departmental EAP counsellors, 63% indicated responded by "not applicable" to the question while 4% did not respond. Two respondents indicated that they had referred subordinates who later showed an improvement.

4.3.3.4.6  Employees' view on EAP counsellors

Question 3.6

Respondents were requested to indicate how they view EAP counsellors.
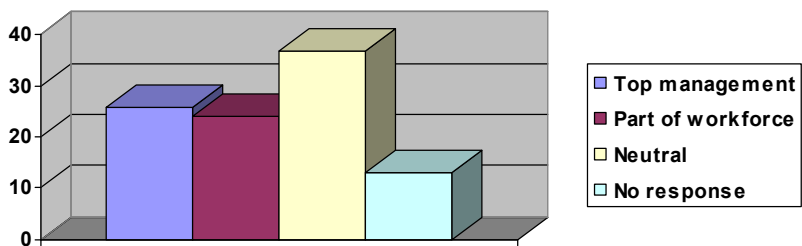


Figure 4.13

Discussion of Figure 4.13

According to figure 4.13, 26% of respondents view EAP counsellors as part of management, 24% view them as part of the workforce, 37% view them as neutral while 13% did not respond. Respondents who did not respond may view them as officials who could be influenced by management or who could report client's problems to management.

4.3.3.4.7  EAP services needed by employees in the Department

Question 3.7

Respondents were requested to indicate whether employees in the Department needed EAP services.
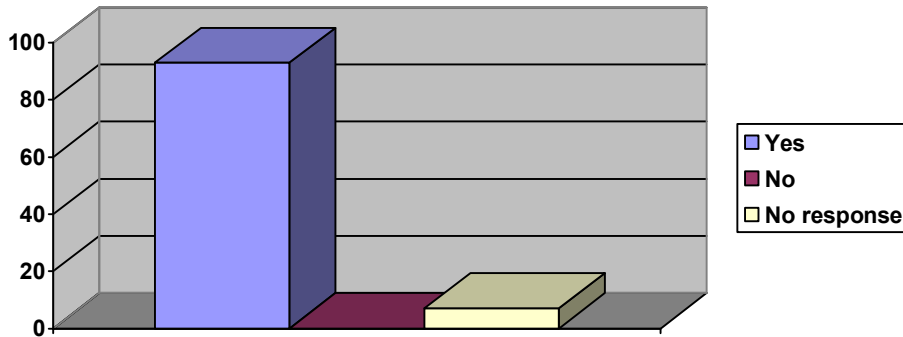


Figure 4.14

Discussion of Figure 4.14

According to figure 4.14, 93% of respondents were of the opinion that EAP services are needed by employees in the Department while 7% did not respond. This shows a positive attitude by employees towards dealing with problems they may be encountering. This further proves that employees will accept assistance if there is a need.   The following motivation was submitted:

- twenty respondents (43%) indicated that services are needed in order to assist employees with various problems;
- four respondents (9%) indicated that services are needed to motivate employees;
- four respondents (9%) indicated that services are needed to ensure employee well being;
- four respondents (9%) indicated that services are needed to ensure efficient and effective running of the Department;
- one respondent (2%) indicated that work ethics and culture warrants that employees help one another;
- one respondent (2%) indicated that EAP is to be used in the absence of other support systems;
- one respondent (2%) indicated that EAP deal with changing demands caused by changing environments; and

- one respondent (2%) indicated that some employees cannot afford outside services.

## 4.4    Conclusion

In the study, 46 of 50 respondents who are all employees of the Department in head office and the central region were used as a sample. They all completed the questionnaire.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## 5.1 Introduction

In this chapter the researcher discusses the results gathered after reviewing the perceptions of employees regarding the utilization of an in-house Employee Assistance Programme model in the North West Department of Education. The researcher further provides conclusions and recommendations, which might be useful in dealing with employees' perceptions regarding the use of an in-house EAP model in the Department.

## 5.2 Conclusions and recommendations

### 5.2.1 *Awareness of the Employee Assistance Programme*

5.2.1.1 Hearing about the EAP

**Conclusion**

A large number of respondents have heard about EAP.

**Recommendation**

That the Department keep on providing employees with information with regard to EAP activities in the Department.

5.2.1.2 Rationale of the EAP

**Conclusion**

Slightly more than half of respondents know the rationale of the EAP programme.

**Recommendation**

That the other employees who do not know the rationale of the programme be informed about it, The Department should ensure that it market the programme extensively by developing a marketing strategy, implementing it, and monitoring it thereafter.

5.2.1.3 Provision of EAP services in the Department

**Conclusion**

Twenty six percent of respondents are not aware that EAP services are provided in the Department.

**Recommendation**

That efforts be made to ensure that all employees are reached and made aware of services provided as well as of its benefits.

5.2.1.4 Contact details of EAP professionals in the Department

Conclusion

Thirty seven percent respondents do not know the contact details of EAP professionals in the Department.

**Recommendation**

That more posters as well as flyers indicating contact details of EAP professionals be placed in strategic areas where they will be accessed by all employees.

5.2.1.5 Awareness regarding confidentiality of EAP services

**Conclusion**

Thirty five percent of respondents are not aware that EAP services are confidential.

**Recommendation**

That more workshops and seminars be organized where employees will be assured that EAP services are confidential.

5.2.1.6 Location (offices) of EAP professionals in the Department

**Conclusion**

Only sixty five percent of respondents knew the location of EAP professionals in Department.

**Recommendation**

That EAP offices be clearly marked so that employees could easily Identify them. There has to be directions in corridors indicating room numbers and floor ($1^{st}$, $2^{nd}$ or $3^{rd}$) where EAP offices are located.

## 5.2.1.7 Accessibility of EAP services

**Conclusion**

Fifty four percent of respondents indicated that EAP services are accessible.

**Recommendation**

That efforts be made to make all employees aware as to how easily accessible EAP offices are.

## 5.2.1.8 Idealness of the location of the Department's EAP offices

**Conclusion**

Forty three percent of respondents are of the opinion that EAP office is in an ideal location.

**Recommendation**

That employees be made aware as to why the location of EAP offices should be where they are. This must include advantages as well as disadvantages of their present location.

### 5.2.2 *Perceptions towards the in-house EAP model*

## 5.2.2.1 Employees involvement in activities regarding EAP

**Conclusion**

More that seventy percent of respondents have been involved in one or more of the following activities:

- Substance abuse;
- Financial problems;
- Domestic violence; and
- Stress.

**Recommendation**

That the Department provide employees with mechanisms of coping with these activities so as to decrease the number of employees involved.

5.2.2.2 Help needed to dealing with problems in par 5.2.2.1

**Conclusion**

Fifty nine percent of respondents indicated that they needed help to deal with issues such as substance abuse, financial problems, domestic violence, and stress.

**Recommendation**

That regular workshops, seminars and posters be arranged wherein employees would be helped and informed on how to deal with whatever problem they may have.

5.2.2.3 Utilisation of EAP services provided by the Department in case of
 problems

**Conclusion**

Ninety one percent of employees are willing to utilize EAP services in the Department.

**Recommendation**

That employees who are not willing to use services provided by the Department be provided with details of alternative service providers who could be contacted. They should however be informed of the advantages and disadvantages of using an outside service provider as opposed to the one within the Department.

5.2.2.4 Information provided to EAP counsellors is recorded and kept in a safe place,

**Conclusion**

Eighty percent of respondents are of the opinion that information provided to EAP counsellors is not recorded and kept in a safe place.

**Recommendation**

That during workshops and seminars, employees be informed on how information is recorded and kept within the EAP unit.

5.2.2.5 Employees' confidence in the Departmental EAP counsellor(s)

**Conclusion**

Only eleven percent of respondents have confidence in counsellors they have dealt with in the Department. This may be because those respondents who have no confidence in counsellors in the Department doubt their credibility as their opinion in paragraph 5.2.2.4 is that information provided is not recorded and kept in a safe place. They therefore are of the opinion that whatever they would say, will be known by other employees.

**Recommendation**

That by informing employees on how EAP counsellors perform their duties, their work experience as well as their qualifications will assist in ensuring that employees have confidence in the way they operate.

5.2.2.6 Employees view on EAP counsellors

**Conclusion**

Most employees (37%) view EAP counsellors as neutral, others (26%) view them as part of management, while the other group (24%) view them as part of the workforce.

**Recommendation**

That employees be made aware of what the role of EAP counsellors are, how they report and to whom do they report so that they could be viewed as neutral as they are supposed to be.

5.2.2.7 Employees in the Department need EAP services

**Conclusion**

Ninety three percent of respondents need EAP services.


**Recommendation**

The Department should do much more than it is presently doing to ensure that it assist its employees in accessing the services they so much require for normal functioning and healthy living.


**5.3    Conclusion regarding objectives of the study**

The objectives of the study were:

- To define EAP and describe its different models through literature review;
- To determine the extent to which employees are aware of the in-house EAP service;
- To determine the perceptions of the employees regarding the in-house EAP model:
- To formulate the functioning of the in-house model; and
- To provide conclusions and recommendations.


The researcher has been able to meet the objectives of the study in that:

- EAP was defined and its different models described through literature review;
- The extent to which employees are aware of the in-house EAP service was determined;
- The perceptions of the employees regarding the in-house EAP model was determined;
- The functioning of the in-house model was formulated; and
- Conclusions and recommendations were provided.

## 5.4 Conclusion regarding the research statement

It can be concluded that the statement, "The NWDOE's employees' perceptions regarding the utilization of the in-house EAP model by the Department is unknown" is invalid. It is clear from the information provided that most employees' perceptions are skewed towards been negative as most of them are not conversant with most issues raised in the questionnaires.

## 5.5 Concluding/Final recommendation

For an in-house EAP model in a large Department such as NWDOE to be functional, the researcher makes the following recommendation:

5.5.1  Management support.

Senior managers must support the programme and take it as one of those programmes that when properly utilized will assist the employer to attain the employer' strategic goal.

5.5.2  Marketing the programme.

An extensive marketing strategy has to be put in          place and implemented. This, *inter alia*, outlines the rationale, advantages and disadvantages of the programme in general, as well as an in-house EAP model in particular. This could also motivate the reason why an in-house EAP model is a viable option for the Department.

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ANNEXURE A

Ref  : T.N. Chabeli
Tel  : 018 387 4110
Cell : 083 335 7104
Email : Tchabedi@nwpg.gov.za


Dear Respondent

**PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH PROJECT: PERCEPTIONS OF EMPLOYEES REGARDING THE UTILIZATION OF THE IN-HOUSE EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME MODEL IN THE NORTH WEST DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

The research project is aimed at determining the perceptions of employees regarding the utilization of the in-house employee assistance programme (EAP) in the North West Department of Education.

The EAP can be described as a programme intending to identify and resolve employees' problems which impact negatively on their job performance, and to enhance workplace effectiveness.

You are kindly requested to complete the attached questionnaire with the honesty it deserves. The questionnaire is also to be completed anonymously in order to ensure confidentiality.

Please return the completed questionnaire to me by internal mail or submit it to the box provided at the entrance of room 126, First Floor, Ga Rona Building in Mmabatho.


Yours sincerely



T.N. CHABELI                                        PROF L.S. TERBLANCHE
RESEARCHER                                      SUPERVISOR

# QUESTIONNAIRE

**PERCEPTIONS OF EMPLOYEES REGARDING THE UTILIZATION OF THE IN-HOUSE EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME MODEL IN THE NORTH WEST DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

## INSTRUCTIONS

Please answer ALL questions by marking with an [X] in the appropriate box.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS

1.1    Gender

| | |
|---|---|
| Male | |
| Female | |

1.2    Age

| | |
|---|---|
| 20 - 30 | |
| 31 - 40 | |
| 41 - 50 | |
| 51 - 60 | |
| 61 + | |

1.3    Marital Status

| | |
|---|---|
| Single | |
| Married | |
| Separated | |
| Widowed | |
| Divorced | |
| Cohabiting | |

Other (Specify):    …………………………………………

SECTION B : WORK HISTORY

1.4    Years of experience in the Department

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 –  5 | |
| 6 – 10 | |
| 11 – 15 | |
| 16 – 20 | |
| 21 + | |

1.4    Years of experience outside the North West Department of Education

| | |
|---|---|
| 0 | |
| 1 -   5 | |
| 6 - 10 | |
| 11 - 15 | |
| 16 - 20 | |
| 21 + | |

1.6    Current Position

| | |
|---|---|
| Senior Manager     (SL 13 and above) | |
| Middle Manager     (SL 9 to 12) | |
| Junior Manager     (SL 6 to   8) | |
| (SL 3 to   5) | |
| General Assistants (SL 1 to 2) | |

1.7    Educational level (Tick the highest)

| | |
|---|---|
| Below Matriculation | |
| Matriculation | |
| Post Matriculation (National Diploma/Degree etc.) | |

SECTION C: AWARENESS OF THE EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME

2.1    Have you heard about the EAP?

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | |
| No | |

2.2    Do you know the rationale of the EAP?

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | |
| No | |

If 'yes', briefly specify
……………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………

2.3    Are EAP services provided in the Department?

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | |
| No | |

2.4    Do you know the contact details of EAP professionals in the
       Department?

| Yes | |
|-----|---|
| No | |

2.5    Are you aware that EAP services are confidential?

| Yes | |
|-----|---|
| No | |

2.6    Do you know the location (offices) of EAP professionals in the
       Department?

| Yes | |
|-----|---|
| No | |

2.7    Are EAP services easily accessible?

| Yes | |
|-----|---|
| No | |

2.8    Are you of the opinion that the location of the Department's EAP offices
       is ideal?

| Yes | |
|-----|---|
| No | |

       Please motivate your answer: …………………………………………………
       ……………………………….…………………………………………………..
       …………………………………………………………………………………

SECTION D: PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS THE IN-HOUSE EAP MODEL

3.1    Have you been involved in the following activities

|  | Not at all | Rarely | Occasionally | Frequently |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Substance abuse | | | | |
| Financial problems | | | | |
| Domestic violence | | | | |
| Stress | | | | |
| Other (please specify) | | | | |

3.2    Do you need any help in dealing with any of the above problem(s)?

| Yes | |
|-----|--|
| No | |

3.3    If you had any problem, would you utilize EAP services provided by the Department?

| Yes | |
|-----|--|
| No | |


If "no" please motivate: ……………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………
..…………………………………………………………………………………

3.4    Information provided to EAP counsellors is recorded and kept in a safe place,

| Yes | |
|-----|--|
| No | |


3.5    If you have made use of Departmental EAP counsellor(s), please indicate whether you have confidence in such counsellor(s),

| Yes | |
|-----|--|
| No | |
| Not applicable | |

Please motivate your answer: ……………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………

3.6    How do you view EAP counsellors?

| As part of management | |
|-----------------------|--|
| As part of work force | |
| Neutral | |

3.7     Employees in the Department need EAP services,

| Yes | |
|-----|---|
| No  | |

Please motivate your
answer:…………………………………………………...........................
……………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………

**Thank you for your participation!**

**Department of Education**

Lefapha la Thuto

*Departement van Onderwys*

NORTH WEST PROVINCE

1ᵉ Floor
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E-mail: Tchabeli@nwpg.gov.za

## DIRECTORATE: HRM SERVICES

Reference   : Chabeli TN
Enquiries   : Sibanyoni FN
Telephone  : 018-387 4102

Mr TN Chabeli
Department of Education
MMABATHO
2735

Dear Mr Chabeli

**PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

Approval has been granted for you to conduct a research in the Department of Education for a Masters Degree in Social Science: Employment Assistance Programme, on condition that you submit a copy of your dissertation to the Department for SMT to engage with.

The Department would like to wish you well on the undertaking of your Masters Degree.

Yours faithfully

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
ARTS & CULTURE
PRIVATE BAG X2044

1 4 JAN 2005

MMABATHO 8681

NORTH WEST PROVINCE

Re a Soma Dikolong • Re a dira mo dikolong • Ons werk in ons skole • We are working in our schools • Re a sebetsa dikolong • Siyasebenz' ezikoleni • Ha tirha eswikolweni • Re a shuma zwikoloni • Siya sebenta etikoleni • Siyasebenz' ezikolweni • Siya berenga ezikolweni

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# INFORMED CONSENT FORM

**Participant's Name:** …………………….……………….……....... **Date:** ……………..…

**Principal Investigator:** Teboho Nicolaas Chabeli
Department of Education
Private Bag X 2044
Mmabatho

**Informed Consent**

1. **Title of Study**:   Perceptions of employees regarding the utilization of in-house employee assistance programme model by the North West Department of Education.
2. **Purpose of the Study***:*  The purpose of this study is to explore perceptions of employees regarding the utilization of the in-house employee assistance programme model in the North West Department of Education.
3. **Procedures***:*   I will be asked to complete a questionnaire relating to my understanding and awareness of an in-house EAP model used in the Department.
4. **Risks and Discomforts***:*   There are no known medical risks or discomforts associated with this study.
5. **Benefits***:*  I understand there are no known direct benefits to me for participating in this study.  However, the results of the study may help a researcher gain a better understanding of how we perceive in-house EAP model utilized by the Department.
6. **Participant's Rights***:*  I may withdraw from participating in the study at any time.
7. **Confidentiality***:*  I understand that my comments will be kept confidential unless I ask that they be released.  The results of this study may be published in professional journals or presented at professional conferences, but my records or identity will not be revealed unless required by law.
8. If I have any questions of concerns, I can call the investigator @ 083 335 7104 at any time during the day or night.

I understand my rights as a researcher subject, and I voluntarily consent to participation in this study, I understand what the study is about and how and why it is being done.  I will receive a signed copy of this consent form.


_____                                         _____
Subject's Signature                                                                    DATE



_____
Signature of Investigator

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

ANNEXURE D

**Departmental EAP Organisational Structure**

Deputy Health and Wellness Manager
(Deputy Director Level)

| Psychologist (Assistant Director Level) | Social Worker (Assistant Director Level) | Assistant Health and Safety Manager |
|---|---|---|
| 1 x EAP Practitioner | 2 x EAP Practitioners | 3 x Health and Safety Practitioners |