THE PERCEPTIONS OF SUPERVISORS ABOUT EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME REFERRALS WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

BY

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ABSTRACT

Employee Assistance Programme is a programme designed to assist employees who have a variety of problems affecting their productivity.   It is a fact that for the programme to be effective and functional there should be enough referrals to the programme. It is without doubt that supervisors play a pivotal role in the success of the programme.   However, this research focuses on explaining and understanding the perception of supervisors within the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) about EAP referrals.

DFA is one of the Governmental departments within South Africa. Their core function is implementing the South African Foreign Policy. The mission of DFA is mainly to promote South Africa's national interests and values, the African Renaissance and the creation of a better world for all.   To alleviate problems and enhance productivity, the Department introduced EAP system, but from statistics received from the EAP centre, it was evident that the utilisation rate is very low. It is unknown whether the low utilisation rate is due to a lack of referrals by supervisors, a lack of knowledge from both the employer and employees, or if the programme was not marketed properly.

The researcher utilised a qualitative research approach because she was interested in describing and understanding the perceptions rather than explaining them. She developed a semi-structured interview schedule and the respondents were interviewed and given a chance to comment and widely define issues. It was a one-on-one interview using a semi-structured interview schedule and the respondents were free to expand on the topic.

The researcher interviewed and tape recorded the responses of the respondents. The respondents were informed of the rationale for using a tape recorder and were requested to give consent in writing.

The research findings revealed that the EAP within the DFA was under-utilised and not effective. Supervisors were passive role players and were not confident of their role as referral agents. The supervisors clearly highlighted that they were not trained as referral agents and were also not aware of different types of referrals. They did not know about the referral procedures and the programme was not property marketed to them. Their main concern was that the programme did not receive enough support from management hence they were not confident of the services rendered by the Programme.

The researcher therefore recommended that the Department should review the policy on an ongoing basis to reach all levels of employee within the Department. A training programme to be developed and implemented, focusing on all aspect of the programme, as well as a training manual to be developed and made available to all levels of employees. The researcher further recommended that the EAP, within the DFA, be marketed, visible and accessible, with ongoing utilisation surveys to monitor the utilisation rate on an ongoing basis be conducted.

KEY CONCEPTS

Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)
Perceptions
Referral
Supervisor

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter serves to confirm that the document entitled, "The Perception of Supervisors about the Employee Assistance Program Referrals within the Department of Foreign Affairs", was proof-ready by the undersigned on Monday 24 September 2007.

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CHAPTER 1 :   INTRODUCTION

1.1   INTRODUCTION

Capace and Akers (1995) assert that supervisors play a major role in the operation and success of the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP); they are in a position to evaluate job performance and make recommendations for getting employees to use the EAP. The researcher supports the above authors, as she also believes that supervisors play an important role in the success of the EAP because they closely interact with employees on a daily basis.

Thome (1990:49) states that if supervisors are expected to make referrals, they must clearly understand when and how referrals should be done. He further indicates that in order to admit they need help with the troubled employees, supervisors must be confident that their inability to handle problems themselves will not be perceived as a weakness. The attitude within the organisation may work against instilling this type of confidence.

Cottongim (1995:25) indicates that the source of all supervisory referral to the EAP requires those supervisors to have:

- Knowledge of employee job performance;
- Knowledge of documentation and confrontation; and
- Knowledge of available resources and support.

Supervisors within the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) are in a position to understand work performance that may be associated with excessive use of alcohol, to a wide range of other problems. Consequently, management expects supervisors to evaluate employees according to the DFA's objectives and defined job performance standards. Hence, supervisors feel burdened when they are supposed to address the issues of a troubled employee.

The researcher identified through her interview with Ms Sethibe (2005) that within the DFA there are minimal supervisory referrals, as well as a resistance to utilise the EAP services. However the Psychologist, Ms Sithibe (2005), at the Employee Wellness Center (EWC) at DFA, stated that 60% of employees refer themselves and 40% are supervisory referral. The researcher further observed that employees experience problems that impacts on their job performance and productivity. According to Ms Sethibe, supervisors are not sure of their role within the EAP. She highlighted that supervisors are also not aware of the referral procedure. She alluded that although the programme was properly marketed at the beginning, she thinks marketing the program and updating both management and employees on new developments within the program should be an ongoing process. However Ms Maphanga (2006) an EAP practitioner at the DFA confirmed that supervisors usually conduct their own mini investigations about the practitioner before making a referral. They have this preference because they do not trust some of the practitioners. She further highlighted that supervisors generally do not refer employees to the programme. The large number of referrals to the EWC is self-referrals rather than management referrals. The practitioner confirmed that of all their clients at the EWC, 60% are self-referral while 40% is referrals from management. She indicated that although the programme was properly marketed when it was initially introduced, she believes that management should be updated about new developments on a regular basis.

Radebe (2006), an EAP practitioner at Nissan South Africa, indicated that management generally does not refer employees to the EAP. She highlighted that supervisors are more concerned with productivity hence they resort to punitive than corrective measures. At Nissan SA, 1% employees are referrals from management while 99% are self-referrals. She indicated that middle management is socialised to mainly concentrate on production hence they overlook or ignore employee's problems. She indicated that it does not matter how hard the practitioners try to market their service, supervisors, especially in

private companies, adhere to top management orders only. Hence she indicated that supervisors would only refer employees if top management mandated them.

The most important focus of this research was to explore the perceptions of supervisors towards EAP referrals within the DFA. Research findings will assist the Department in the problem of under-utilisation of EAP services by supervisors. The findings will also serve as a guiding instrument when the referral procedure for and training of supervisors is revised.

The ultimate advantage of undertaking the study will be to assist the DFA in developing the standard referral procedure for supervisors with the aim of increasing supervisory referrals and the EAP utilisation rate. The study will also assist the EAP in understanding the perception of supervisors about EAP referrals.

1.2   PROBLEM FORMULATION

According to Fouché (2002a:118) the formal problem formulation may serve as an effective point of departure for the proposal. Mark (1996:364) emphasises that the researcher should ensure that the problem has been defined specifically enough, so that the reader will understand what the proposed research study includes and what it leaves out. Bless and Higson-Smith (2002:16) indicate that in general the sources of research problems are to be found in a combination of direct observation and experiences, theory and previous investigations. Mouton (1996:66) asserts that by formulating the problem, we are "abstracting" from "the concrete" social phenomenon.

The DFA is one of the government departments within South Africa. Their core function is implementing the South African Foreign Policy. The mission of the DFA is mainly to promote South Africa's national interests and values, the African Renaissance and the creation of a better world for all. The Department is also

responsible in conducting and coordinating South Africa's international relations and to promote its foreign policy objectives. In addition to the above they are also responsible for monitoring international developments and advising the Government on foreign policy and related domestic matters. The Department has a population of approximately 1,300 employees where some of the employees are stationed at missions abroad. Due to a high level of stress both at the missions abroad and at head office within South Africa, the Department decided to implement the EAP.

The EAP was introduced in 1994 to alleviate problems and enhance productivity, but from the statistics mentioned earlier, it was evident that the utilisation rate of EAP is very low. It is not known whether the low utilisation rate is due to lack of referrals by supervisors, a lack of knowledge from both the employer and employees, or if the program was not properly marketed. The research findings will assist management within the Department in understanding the perceptions of supervisors and serve as a guideline in revising supervisory training. The researcher is of the opinion that in order for the programme to receive a high supervisory referral rate, the practitioner needs to know the needs and perceptions of supervisors towards EAP referrals.

According to the policy of DFA, supervisors can use the EAP as an aid in dealing with the problems of poor performance associated with personal problems. The supervisor's task is two fold:

- To bring the availability of the EAP to the attention of employees before social problems hamper their functioning; and
- To refer employees to the EAP when necessary.

The Department's policy also states that early intervention of employee problems and early referrals of such employees to the EAP will result in improved work performance, increased productivity and happier employees. It is therefore the

researcher's view that supervisors should work closely with employees and to notice any change in employee behavior and performance, hence she agreed that supervisors should play an important role in the referral process. She further agreed that in order for supervisors to fully participate in the process they need to be thoroughly trained and well informed about the programme, as a whole.

Supervisors are not expected to attend to employee problems over and above their duties. Hence, personnel development in the DFA established EAP in 1994, to address the needs of the "troubled" employees. The Programme changed to EWC in 2004 after the incorporation of psychological services. Within the DFA, the wellness model used by EAP consists of twelve aspects in the human life: family, physical health, mental health, social, career, learning, recreation, community development, retirement, spiritual, personal, marriage and family. The EAP service within the Department is an in-house model thus EAP practitioners are housed within the Department. Masi (2000:407) contends that an in-house model is the programme in which the entire EAP staff is employed by the company. The company managers supervise the programme, approve policy and finalise all procedures.

Within the Department, there is resistance on the part of supervisors to refer. The researcher is of the opinion that a lack of knowledge about the programme or a lack of proper referral procedures can cause resistance. Lack of referral or minimal referral from supervisors and managers contribute to problems in performance assessment. Productivity is affected and teamwork becomes more difficult for both the supervisor and the troubled employee. O'Connell (1987:64) identifies the following factors as causes of supervisory resistance.

- May be accustomed to handling problems themselves;
- May be suspicious that the EAP practitioner will make the supervisors' decision to dismiss an employee more difficult than it already is;
- May be concerned that the valuable employee may quit if confronted in the

way that the EAP counselor advises;

- May be threatened that the EAP counselor discloses to management instances of poor performance on the supervisor's part;
- May have a basic resistance to change; and
- May think the EAP diminishes the supervisor's role as a "counselor" to subordinates.

According to Cagney (2006:18), although consultation and training related to supervisory referrals are very important aspects of what EAP's have to offer, supervisors have never fully embraced this concept and many EAP's have abandoned it.

Minimal and lack of management referrals has a great impact on productivity and teamwork. Supervisors are not aware of what procedure to be followed, as well as a lack of knowledge about the EAP is also a contributing factor. Cottongim (1995:25) asserts that the ultimate success of the EAP rests with the supervisors. The author further highlighted that the source of all supervisory referrals to the EAP requires that the supervisors first understand three core issues about the employee and the EAP:

- Knowledge of employee job performance requirements;
- Knowledge of documentation and confrontation; and
- Knowledge of availability of resources and support.

The researcher therefore agrees that supervisors are faced with many responsibilities and challenges with regard to referring troubled employees hence supervisors are reluctant to be involved. The research findings will assist the Department in exploring the supervisor's perceptions and understanding of EAP referral. Thome (1990:49) indicates that if supervisors are expected to make referrals, they must clearly understand when and how referrals should be made. To be able to refer employees effectively, supervisors should familiarise

themselves with their EAP.

Dugan (1992:48) also confirms that supervisors are in a unique position to influence troubled employees to seek help. If supervisors perceive referrals to the EAP in a positive manner, the supervisory referral to the EAP can be a powerful tool in helping employees improve job performance by obtaining the help they need. It is the researcher's view that a lack of training has a negative impact on how supervisors perceive referrals and their role as referral agents.

1.3   PURPOSE, GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

1.3.1   Purpose

Babbie (2001:88) indicated that exploratory studies are quite valuable in social scientific research. The author alluded that exploratory studies are most typically done for three reasons:

- To satisfy the researchers curiosity and desire for better understanding;
- To test the feasibility of understanding a more extensive study; and
- To develop methods to be employed in any subsequent study.

Mouton (1996:103) asserts that the aim of exploratory studies, which includes pilot studies and other kinds of qualitative research studies, is to establish the "fact" to gather new data and to determine whether there are interesting patterns in the data. The purpose of exploratory research is to gain insight into a situation, phenomenon, community or person (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2002:41; Fouché, 2002b:109).

The researcher explored the perception of supervisors about EAP referrals within the DFA; hence the main purpose of the study was exploratory. The research findings will assist the EAP to understand supervisor perceptions about the EAP

and to identify problems contributing towards lack of referral.

1.3.2 Goal

The term 'goal' implies the broader, more abstract conception of "the end toward which effort or ambition is directed" (Fouché & De Vos, 2005:104). According to these authors, the goal is the "dream". The goal of this research was to explore the perceptions of supervisors about the EAP referrals within the DFA.

1.3.3 Objectives

Fouché and De Vos (2005:104) described objectives as the more concrete, measurable and more specific attainable conception of such an "end toward which effort or ambition is described". Objectives are thus steps one has to take in order to attain the dream. The objectives were the following:

- To offer theoretical information on supervisory referral and referral services through an in-depth literature review;
- To collect data through an empirical study on the perception of supervisors about EAP referrals within DFA; and
- To make recommendations to management on how to improve EAP utilization rate within the Department of Foreign Affairs.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION

Creswell (1998:99) asserts that research questions are open-ended evolving and non-directional; restate the purpose of a study in a more specific term. According to Grinnell and Richards (1997:109) research questions guiding qualitative studies may be exploratory, descriptive or explanatory. The researcher is going to use exploratory research questions. The aforementioned authors indicated that the exploratory research questions may ask how and what, but they also

want to know why and seek to demonstrate relationships between variables. The researcher wants to know what the perceptions of supervisors are and the research question will serve as a starting point for this scientific research study.

The research question for this study was: *"What are the perceptions of supervisors on EAP referrals within the Department of Foreign Affairs?"*

1.5 RESEARCH APPROACH

The researcher utilised a qualitative research approach. Babbie and Mouton (2001:270) contend that the primary goal of studies using this approach is defined as describing and understanding rather than explaining human behavior. The authors further assert that qualitative research is especially appropriate to the study of attitudes and behavior best understood within their natural settings as opposed to the somewhat artificial setting of experiments and survey. McLaughlin (2007:36) concludes that the qualitative methods focus on individuals, their interactions, emphasising interpretation and meaning and the ways in which mutual understandings are negotiated. The researcher thus seeks to explore with the intention of understanding the supervisor's perceptions and the meaning they attach to referral and the program as a whole.

The qualitative research approach was relevant and most appropriate to assist the researcher in her goal of exploring perceptions of supervisors towards EAP referrals. The researcher was interested in describing and understanding the perceptions rather than explaining them. Babbie and Mouton (2001:271) indicate that the qualitative researchers have always primarily been interested in:

- Describing the actions of the research participants in great detail, and then
- Attempting to understand these actions in terms of the authors own beliefs, history and context.

Since the goal of the study was to explore the perceptions of supervisors about EAP referrals within the DFA, the researcher needed rich and qualitative information. The qualitative research method was the most appropriate research approach for this study as Grinnell and Richards (1997:21) indicated that qualitative research is the study of people in their natural environment as they go about their daily lives. It tries to understand how people live, how they talk and behave and what captivates and distress them. More importantly, it strives to understand the meaning people's words and behaviours have for them. The qualitative approach assisted the researcher to understand and explore the perceptions of supervisors about EAP and the meaning that they attach to the EAP referral and EAP services.

1.6   TYPE OF RESEARCH

The researcher used applied research for her study. Applied research is defined by Fouché (2002b:108) as scientific planning of induced change in a troublesome situation. Grinnell and Richards (1997:20) contend that most applied research findings have implications for knowledge development. However Fouché (2002b:108) contends that applied research is aimed at solving specific policy problems or helping practitioners accomplish tasks. It is focused on solving problems in practice.

The researcher intended to explore perceptions and ultimately come up with an effective and standard referral procedure. The findings will assist the Department in enhancing EAP service utilisation and improve employee productivity. To solve the problem of minimal referral, the Department would need further knowledge about the perceptions of supervisors.

1.7   RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

1.7.1   Data Collection Method

The researcher utilised a phenomenological research strategy. Fouché (2002c:273) contends that the phenomenological approach aims to understand and interpret the meaning those subjects give to their everyday life. However, Cresswell (1998) regards the phenomenological study as a study that describes the meaning that experience of a phenomenon, topic or concept has for various individuals.

The phenomenological study was relevant to the researcher's topic because the researcher wanted to explore and understand the supervisor's perceptions about EAP referrals. Her intention was to explore the subjective meaning the supervisors attached to referral and to the programme as a whole. According to Rubin and Babbie (1997:377), the term phenomenology is used to emphasise a focus on people's subjective experiences and interpretation of the world. The researcher's aim corresponds with the above statement made by Rubin and Babbie as she aimed at collecting subjective perceptions of supervisors and to understand the reason for their reluctance to refer.

The researcher used a qualitative method of collecting data. Greeff (2002:292) asserts that an interview is the predominant model of data or information collection in qualitative research. Bless and Higson-Smith (2002:104) state that an interview involves direct personal contact with the participant who is asked to answer questions. Greeff (2002:292) defines qualitative interviews as attempts to understand the world from the participant's point of view, to unfold the meaning of people's experiences.

Greeff (2002:302) indicates that the researcher uses a semi-structured interview

to gain a detailed picture of participant's beliefs about perceptions, or accounts of a particular topic. The researcher developed a semi-structured interview schedule where the respondents got a chance to comment and widely define issues (see annexure 2). The respondents were free to expand on the topic. The interviews were flexible, as Corbetta (2003:270) indicates that when conducting a semi-structured interview, the interviewer makes reference to an "outline" of the topic to be covered during the course of the conversation. He further indicates that this way of conducting the interviews gives both the interviewer and the respondent ample freedom, while at the same time ensuring that all the relevant themes are dealt with and all the necessary information is collected.

1.7.2   Data Analysis

The researcher used Creswell's model of analysing data. Creswell (1998:340) identified the following process of data analysis:

Collecting and Recording Data

The researcher interviewed and tape recorded the responses of the respondents. Each interview was on a one-on-one basis, using a semi-structured interview schedule. The respondents were informed of the rationale for using a tape recorder and were requested to give consent in writing.

Managing Data

The researcher organised her data into computer files. The researcher then developed transcripts of all interviews. Marshall and Rossman in De Vos (2002:343) suggest that the process of preserving the data and meaning on tape and the combined transcriptions and preliminary analysis greatly increases the efficiency of data analysis.

Reading and Writing Memos

The researcher read through all scripts and made memos. The memos were developed to be short phase ideas in order to identify certain patterns. De Vos (2002:343) contends that writing memos in the margins of field notes or transcript helps in this actual process of exploring database.

Describing, Classifying and Interpreting

The researcher read through the transcript repeatedly in order to gain heightened awareness of data. After reading and understanding the transcript, the researcher then identified salient themes, received ideas and patterns of belief that linked people and setting together. De Vos (2002:344) indicates that at this stage, the researcher does not search for the exhaustive and mutually exclusive categories of the statistician, but instead seeks to identify the salient, grounded categories of meaning held by participants in the setting.

Classification

The researcher then identified themes and sub-themes depending on the data collected. The researcher took the data collected and matched or grouped the data or categorise it according to different themes and sub-themes. Creswell (1998:144) states that classification means taking the text or qualitative information apart and looking for categories, themes or dimensions of information.

Interpretation

The researcher formed larger or broad opinions of what were the perceptions of supervisors. The researcher was able to interpret categories and patterns that emerged from the data, and by so doing, made sense of the data. De Vos (2002:344) explains that interpretation involves making sense of the data, the

'lessons learned'.

Representing and Visualising

In the final part of data analysis, the researcher presented data of what was found in the text. An in-depth literature review will be done after the data collection in order that the literature did not influence or tamper with the researcher's objectivity. The researcher created a visual image of the data by motivating and comparing with literature. The researcher developed a table to make different comparisons of themes and categories.

1.8   PILOT STUDY

A pilot study is defined in the New Dictionary of Social Work (1995:45) as the process whereby the research design for a prospective survey is tested. A pilot study is a technique used to evaluate and improve the methods and materials of a programme (Bless & Higson–Smith, 2002:52). In quantitative research the purpose of the pilot study is to determine whether the relevant data can be obtained from the respondents.

1.8.1   Pilot testing

Bless and Higson-Smith (2002:52) indicated that a pilot study as a pilot survey involves the testing of the actual programme on a small sample taken from the community for whom the programme is planned. According to Singleton in Strydom (2002a:211) the pre-testing of a measuring instrument consists of trying it out on a small number of persons having characteristics similar to those of the target group of respondents. Fouché and Delport (2002:91) assert that it is advisable to test the schedule with one or more of the respondents so as to enable the researcher to do a practice run before conducting the main study. The researcher conducted a pilot testing with two respondents who were not

included in the main study in order to be able to identify gaps and problems. The respondents were Deputy Directors from head office in Pretoria. After the pilot testing the researcher was satisfied with her data collection tool but added a question on the respondent age for the purpose of demographic analysis.

1.8.2   Feasibility of the Study

Bless and Higson-Smith (2002: 47) assert that it is often very useful to assess the feasibility of a research project, the practical possibilities to carry it out, the correctness of some concepts, the adequacy of the method, and the instrument of the measurement.   Probability does not normally play a role in the pilot testing because the researcher does not plan to generalise the findings.

The researcher received the Director-General's permission to conduct the study within the Department of Foreign Affairs (Annexure 3). The respondents were available within the building and the researcher arranged an appointment with them. The building is within Pretoria and no costs were involved. The duration of the interviews took twenty minutes each.

1.9   RESEARCH POPULATION, SAMPLE AND SAMPLING METHOD

Strydom and Venter (2002:198) stated that the universe refers to all potential subjects who possess the attributes in which the researcher is interested. In this study the universe will be the 195 Deputy Directors who occupy middle management positions and Supervisory positions within the Department of Foreign Affairs in Gauteng.

1.9.1   Population

Bless and Higson - Smith (2002:84) define population as the set element that the researcher focuses upon and to which the results obtained by testing the sample

should be generalised. However Babbie and Mouton (2001:173) define population as the theoretically specified aggregation of the study elements.

Arkava and Lane (in Strydom & Venter, 2002:198) indicate that the population is a term that sets boundaries on the study. It refers to individuals in the universe who possess specific characteristics, whereas, Mc Burney (2001:248) refers to the population as the sampling frame. Due to the large number of Deputy Directors (supervisors) and the length and time needed to interview all the respondents, the research population consisted of 40 Deputy Directors that were situated at head office in Pretoria.

1.9.2 Sample

Arkava and Lane (in Strydom & Venter 2002:199) quote that a sample comprises of the elements of the population considered for actual inclusion in the study. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001:164) sampling is a process of selecting observations.

Arkava and Lane (in Strydom and Venter, 2002:199) further indicate that a study of a phenomenon in it's entirely would be tedious and time-consuming and would produce a massive amount of data, which by implication, would be difficult to process, analyse and interpret. The researcher agreed with the above named authors as she defined sampling as a process of reducing data to a manageable amount of information.

Bless and Higson-Smith (2002:84) state that the subset of the population, the sample, must have properties which makes it representative of the whole. The researcher took 25% of the population as her sample, although Grinnell and Williams (1990:127) indicate that a 10% sample should be sufficient for controlling sample errors. In this study, the researcher conducted interviews with 10 respondents.

1.9.3   Sampling Method

Babbie and Mouton (2001:203) highlight that the basic principle of probability sampling is that a sample will be representative of a population from which it is selected as all members of the population have an equal chance of being selected in the sample. Bless and Higson-Smith (2002:85) also state that probability sampling occurs when the probability of including each element of the population is determined. However, Seaberg (in Strydom & Venter, 2002:203) also mentions that probability sample is one in which each person or other sampling unit in the population has the same known probability of being selected. The best suitable sampling type for this study was a probability sampling method, as the Deputy Directors had an equal chance of being selected.

The researcher used a systematic random sampling method. According to Babbie (1990:85) systematic sampling is regarded as having a higher value than simple random sampling, at least as far as convenience is concerned. However Bless and Higson-Smith (2002:88) mention that this method also has constraints. It relies on the availability of a complete unbiased population list. The researcher eliminated this shortcoming by requesting a printout or a list of Deputy Directors from the personnel officer, who had reliable data, and recent a list of the employees. The researcher chose the first respondent randomly from head office and then an interval of four was used until the tenth respondent had been selected.

1.10   ETHICAL ISSUES

Babbie (1990:439) states that ethics are confirming to standards of conduct of a given profession or group. However Bless and Higson-Smith (2002:100) assert that throughout the process of data collection the problem of persuading participants to co-operate with the researcher is ever-present. They continue to add that lack of co-operation can be disastrous in a research project as

participants have the right to refuse to participate.

May (2001:59) highlights that ethics in social research is concerned with what is right or just, in the interest of not only the project, its sponsors or workers but also others who are the participants in the research. Hence Babbie and Mouton (2001:520) agree that the scientist have the right to search for truth but not at the expense of the right of other individuals in society.

The researcher's opinion on ethics is that it is a set of moral principles and standards, which is suggested by an individual or group, it is subsequently accepted rules and behavioral expectations about the most correct conduct toward experimental subjects.

The following ethical issues are relevant in this study:

Harm to Experimental Subjects

Strydom (2002b:64) indicates that respondents should be thoroughly informed beforehand about the potential impact of the investigation. Such information offers the respondents the opportunity to withdraw from the investigation if they wish so. Babbie and Mouton (2001:522) further indicate that the clearest instance of this norm in practice concerns the revealing of information that would embarrass them or endanger their life, friendship and jobs.

To eliminate the possibility of harming the respondent, the researcher thoroughly informed the respondents about the impact of the study on them and they were able to make an informed decision about participation or not.

Informed Consent

Strydom (2002b:65) asserts that informed consent implies that all possible or

adequate information on the goal of the investigation, the procedure that will be followed during the investigation, the possible advantages, disadvantages and dangers to which respondents may be exposed as well as the credibility of the researcher, be rendered to potential respondents.

The researcher provided accurate and complete information to the respondents and consequently the respondent made an informed decision about the participation (Annexure 4). The researcher informed the respondent of the nature of the research and informed them of their right to withdraw if necessary.

Violation of Privacy / Anonymity / Confidentiality

The clearest concern in the protection of the subject's interest and well-being is the protection of their identity, especially in survey research (Babbie, 1998:444; Babbie & Mouton, 2001:523).

The researcher never wrote names on the data. The respondents were assigned numbers instead of using their own names. By so doing, the responses or data would be anonymous meaning their identities were protected. She also assured the respondent of confidentiality, by not sharing the respondent's opinions with top management.

The researcher used a tape recorder while analysing data and the respondents were informed in advance. The research will explain the issue of confidentiality, privacy and anonymity before and during the research. Strydom (2002:69) indicates that in all cases in the research the above aspects must be negotiated with respondents, their cooperation respectfully requested and their importance carefully explained, if refused, however, this must be accepted and respected.

Release or Publication of the Findings

Strydom (2002b:72) indicates that the research report should include doing all that can be done to ensure a report that is as clear as possible and contains all the information necessary for readers to understand what has been written. Babbie and Mouton (2001:526) indicate that the researcher should at all times, strives to maintain objectivity and integrity in the conduct of scientific research. The researcher gave an objective analysis and reporting of the research to the respondents.

Deception of Respondents

Strydom (2002b:66) indicated that no form of deception should ever be inflicted on respondents. The author further indicated that should it happen, it must be rectified immediately after or during the debriefing interview. Neuman (2000:229) highlights that deception occurs when the researcher intentionally misleads the subjects by way of written or verbal instructions, the actions of people, or certain aspects of the setting.

The researcher thoroughly explained the purpose of the research so that the respondent could make informed decisions. The respondents were given a chance to ask questions before the interview started in order to address their fears and doubts.

Action and Competence of the Researchers

Strydom (2002b:67) indicates researchers are obliged to ensure that they are competent and adequately skilled to undertake the proposed investigation. However Babbie (2001:475) alludes that the entire research project must run its course in an ethically correct manner. The author further indicates that an obligation rests on the researcher towards all colleagues in the scientific

community to report correctly on the analysis of the data and the results of the study.

The researcher is a qualified social worker with a research theoretical background, is registered with the South African Council for Social Service Professions, and is fully aware or regulations regarding the research investigation. She utilised her expertise to investigate and report the research findings with utmost dedication and honesty.

1.11 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

Perceptions

Jordaan and Jordaan (1995:329) define perception as a name given to the human ability to process, interpret and attribute meaning to the information received via the sensory system. However, Bergh and Theron (1999:116) assert that perceptions help us to recognise objects and scenes in our environment to interpret this information and to extract meaningful and useful representation of our world from it. Robbins, Odendaal and Roodt (2004:107) define perception as a process by which individuals organise and interpret their sensory impressions in order to give meaning to their environment. The researcher's definition of perception is the meaning people attach to the information received through interaction with the environment.

Employee Assistance Programme

Hall and Flatcher (1982), as cited in the EAPA Exchange (1993:14), defines EAP as a program which has the explicit aim of improving the quality of life of all its employees and their families by helping to alleviate the impact of everyday work and personal problems.

An Employee Assistance Programme is a work-site based programme designed to assist in the identification and resolution of productivity problems 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 (EAPA SA, 2005:6). The researcher therefore defines EAP as a service rendered by the organisation either in-house or off-site, specifically to assist employees with either personal or work related problems.

The researcher therefore agrees with all the above definition. The authors all agree that the programme deals with any problem that may impair productivity, from family problems to work-related problems. The definitions clearly state that the employer is not only interested in productivity but is also interested in employees involved. The researcher then fully supports Hall and Flatcher (1982) that the programme is aimed at improving the quality of life of all its employees and their families. It is the researchers view that in developing the EAP, not only do employees benefit but the employer also reduces costs related to the employee's problems e.g. absenteeism and underperformance.

Referral

Klarreich, Francek and Moore (1985:72) define assessment and referral as linking people in need with appropriate assistance. They further indicate that following immediately upon the conclusion of an assessment the entry of the employee into treatment begins. Supervisory referral to the EAP should not be viewed as a disciplinary action but rather as another tool or option for the employee to use in improving job performance (Cagney, 2006:20).

EAPA SA (2005:17) identifies the goal of referral as matching the individual who has an identified problem with a cost effective and appropriate level of care. The researcher's definition of referral is that an individual with a problem is linked to

necessary resources.

Supervisor

Cottongim (1995:25) identifies supervisors as the best individuals to evaluate an employee's job performance. Emener, Hutchison and Richards (2003:150) define or identify a supervisor as a key individual in the first-line or front-line of attainment of the organisation's goals. However the researcher's definition of a supervisor is the person who supervises and evaluates the daily work performance of an employee.

1.12   LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The researcher had time frames on different objectives but was unable to achieve them on the scheduled dates. The following limitations impacted negatively on the research plan:

- The researcher was unable to obtain approval from the Director-General timeously because the submission had to go through the Deputy Director, Director: Employee Wellness and Chief Director Human Resource before the submission could be signed off by the Director - General;
- Three of the respondents were on vacation and the researcher had to wait until they returned to work; and
- The researcher had to conduct her interviews during lunch time since the respondents were busy during office hours, and at times difficult due to appointments being postponed.

Marshall and Rossman (1995) as quoted by De Vos *et al.* (2002) outline the key questions that highlight limitations of a qualitative study as follows:

- How transferable and applicable are the findings to another setting or group

of people?

- How can we be reasonably sure that the findings would be replicated if the study was conducted with the same participant in the same context?
- How can we be sure that the findings are reflective of the subject and the inquiry itself, rather than the creation of the researchers' biases or prejudices?

The researcher concurs with the abovementioned author because the presence of the researcher influenced the findings to some extent. However the data collected was qualitative and rich hence if the same study was repeated the researcher would not guarantee the same results.

1.13   CONTENTS OF THE RESEARCH REPORT

Chapter One: General introduction and research methodology.

Chapter Two: Literature study on supervisory referral and referral services in the DFA.

Chapter Three: Empirical data, analysis and interpretation of the study

Chapter Four: Conclusion and recommendations.

1.14   CONCLUSION

This chapter described in-depth how the research was conducted and how the methodology was used in the study. The research problem was discussed in detail including the method used to collect empirical data. The chapter further highlighted the limitation of the study and the ethical issues within the study itself. The next chapter will focus on an in-depth literature review on supervisory referrals, and the referral service within the DFA. The researcher will critically analyse the importance of training and marketing within the EAP.

CHAPTER 2: REFARRAL AND REFFERAL SERVICES IN THE DFA

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the researcher is going to discuss in depth the literature on supervisory referral and referral services within the Department of Foreign Affairs. The chapter will further focus on the elements of effective EAP and the importance of policy within an organisation. Factor and constraints affecting the success of the EAP will also be discussed. Different types of referral and the importance of training will also be discussed. The chapter will conclude by discussing the importance of marketing and the need for and importance of research on referral and supervisory resistance.

2.2 RATIONALE FOR EAP DEVELOPMENT

Klarreich, *et al.* (1985:7) contend that the rational for introducing EAP in the workplace is diverse, ranging from the need to create a job position for a relative or a friend (qualified or not), to well planned programmes based upon "need assessment", inquiry and research. The rational for a program influences the type of EAP model a company decides to use. The researcher believes that the employer sometimes introduces the programme to eliminate absenteeism caused by personal- and work-related problems that ultimately affect productivity. However Myers (1984:4) highlighted that there are two motives for employers' assistance to employees. One is humanitarian and the other economic.

Humanitarian Motives

Sonnenstuhl and Trice (1986:6) contend that the humanitarian believes that the EA programs are adopted because employers believe that helping employees to

solve their personal problems is good business undertaking and demonstrates social responsibility. However national surveys conducted by Roman (1982) cited in Sonnenstuhl and Trice (1986:6-7), using both qualitative and quantitative method, indicated that employers were concerned about their employees welfare and those about social responsibilities to the community were more likely to adopt the EAP's, than employers who did not express this sentiment. However the researcher further believed that the employers introduced the programme in order to reduce their losses caused by absenteeism and other problems that would impact on productivity.

Economic Motives

When conducting the cost / benefit analysis and studying the effects of treatment on workers productivity, it remains clear that the benefit are more than the costs incurred during the EAP process. Conducting the cost / benefit analysis ideally should be a significant component of every EAP's business plan, and it is for this reason that the employer can weigh the pros and cons of implementing EAP's (Collins cited in EAP Exchange, 1993:16).

The reason for developing an EAP service differs from one company to the other depending on the size of the company and the needs of that particular company. However Klarreich *et al.* (1985:6) indicates that most companies sincerely care for the health and welfare of their employees and dependents. The primary reason is humanitarian, but to some it also makes good business sense to invest in the development of human resources. However the authors further mentioned that the intent of an EAP should be defined clearly to maintain proper focus.

According to Sonnestuhl and Trice (1986:6) EAP's are adopted by organisations for various reasons. They claim that some organisations logical reason is based on social responsibility and that it is good business to assist employees in addressing their personal problems. The authors also mentioned the cost

effectiveness of EAP within organisations as another reason. However Challenger (1988:7) adds the following factors as the rationale for developing EAP's in the origination.

- EAP's may be implemented to retain valuable employees;
- EAP also enhances the relationship between management and the Union; and
- The companies adopt EAP's because of the "no loose situation" that they create by receiving a high return on investment as a result of offering assistance to staff members and their families.

The researcher is of the view that the rationale for EAP development depends on the different needs and structures of different organisations.

2.3   THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS FOR AN EFFECTIVE EAP

For the effective EAP Klarreich *et al.* (1985:14) and Dickman *et al.* (1988:111) stated that in order to reach a high level of effectiveness, every EAP requires certain ingredients. They identified the following essentials.

2.3.1 The Policy Statement

The authors asserted that the policy should include the following aspects:

- The service is primarily designed to assist employees and or members of their immediate families who are experiencing personal difficulties;
- No personal information that is given to the counsellor in the process of assisting the clients will be shared with any other source;
- Employees may gain access to the programme through voluntary, suggested or mandatory referrals;
- The policy maintenance, planning and evaluation of the EAP are the

responsibility of a committee made up of representatives from the cross section of company employees;

- The professional contracted to deliver the services on this project will maintain a clear role in matters affecting the relationship of the company, its employee representative group and the employee;

- The professional who deliver the direct service on this project will work within the frame of reference of the EAP design and are primarily accountable to the providing agency or department;

- To have problems is human, and the workplace is not immune;

- The company prefers the interfering problem to be dealt with as early as possible;

- Problems brought to the EAP will be treated confidentially and will not become a part of an employee's personnel file;

- Alcoholism and other drug abuses is a disease to be treated, not a behaviour to be punished;

- The EAP existed to assist employee and other families not as a substitute for usual disciplinary principles and policies; and

- In no case will the employee be coerced to use the EAP.

The researcher believes that the organisational policy plays an important role in the development of the EAP because it lays the ground rules of how the programme operates. Dickman *et al. (*1988:111) stated that every industry instituting an EAP must have a clear policy statement as to the philosophy and intent of the programme. The policy statement makes it clear that human problems are inevitable, and that these problems often interfere with the work performance, rather than terminating the impaired, trouble employee, and the company would prefer to restore the employee to the full capacity by providing the appropriate assistance in a confidential and professional manner. An effective policy statement makes clear the following. Dickman *et al.* (1988:112) further indicated that the abovementioned principles, if properly stated, serve to protect the employees who choose to use the EAP.

However if during the planning and designing of the programme policy the employees are properly consulted, they will own the policy and will definitely use it. However, if the policy is unilaterally decided and planned by the practitioner, employees will be suspicious of the programme's motives. The policy that clearly states the goals and objective of the programme will assist the practitioners in marketing their programme

2.3.2   The Objective of the Programme

According to Klarreich *et al.* (1985:14) the EAP should have draw up simple and measurable objective such as:

- To implement a confidential counselling service to assist employees and their families with problems that affects the personal and on-the-job functioning;
- To deliver training and orientation session to all company employees; and
- To develop a public relations and orientation session to all company employees.

Watkins (2004:7) supports the aforementioned author by indicating that EAP's vary widely in their objectives and a successful programme recognises specific objectives and establishes activities aimed at reaching them.

The researcher is also for the opinion that the objectives of the programme gives direction of how the programme operates and is assessed.

The researcher supports the statement made by Carnot and Emener (2003:37) that central to the initiatives, mission, goals and objectives of Employee Assistance Programmes, is the uniquely defined and targeted constituency group of troubled employees in the organisation.

2.3.3 Roles and Responsibilities

- **The Steering Committee**: The committee is responsible for coordinating training and orientation programmes in the firm.
- **The Trainer**: The trainer works in collaboration with the counsellor and the committee to deliver programmes to employees at all levels of the services as either a recipient or a referral agent.
- **The Counsellor**. The Counsellor is the guardian of confidentiality of information. This person offers a broad-brush treatment service for the total range of psychological problem.
- **Supervisor and Managers**: the supervisor management team of the company is expected to support the programme and provide information, where necessary, to employees as to the appropriate use of the service.
- **The Union**. The senior official will help plan and support the programme and encourage members to use it.
- **The Occupational Health Department**. A Medical Department will operate within the general policies of the programme.
- **The Employee.** The employees' responsibility is to acquaint themselves with the programme and to seek help from the programme, hopefully, before job performance is affected.

The researcher believes that outlining the role players and their responsibilities have reduces confusion and clarifies the service users of the services rendered.

2.3.4 Management Endorsement

The authors indicated that it is an absolute necessity that Management, at its highest level, endorses and actively supports their EAP. Top Management backing can insure that the following occurs:

- Doors will open to EAP personnel at all other levels of management;

- Adequate financial support to begin the EAP will be made available for mail outs, lower supervisory training and initial diagnostic sessions;
- Enthusiastic support of middle and lower management more likely will model and reflects top management initiatives; and
- A beginning to enlist the support of local top management will be maximised. Watkins (2004:7) further highlights that a successful and effective EAP has the understanding and support of management and labour at all levels.

The researcher agrees with the aforementioned authors because should the programme win the support of top management, it would receive financial support and employees will be instructed to attend training, including EAP briefings. If top management believes in the programme then the entire workforce will follow suit.

2.3.5 Labour Endorsement

Watkins (2004:7) mentioned that a number of structures and activities can be implemented that encourage positive labour management climate and support for the EAP. These often include joint policy committees, full involvement of both labour and management in programme implementations, involvement of key individuals from labour and management, joint training and publicity and adequate provisions for training new and management staff. The researcher is of the opinion that since the Union has a close relationship with employees, especially troubled employees, the programme would received support from them and they in turn would definitely refer and encourage their colleagues to utilise the programme.

2.3.6   Confidentiality

The researcher concurs with Dickman *et al.* (1988:112) that confidentiality is the cornerstone of an effective EAP. The authors mentioned that unless absolute

confidentiality is kept at all levels, the EAP will not be successful. The researcher is of the opinion that when a worker is referred to the EAP by a supervisor, he or she needs to be assured that no information will be noted in any official files. Unless confidentiality is kept at all levels, the EAP will not be successful. It is essential and ethical for the practitioner to maintain confidentiality at all times so that rapport should easily be established. An employee does not expect their private matters to be handled carelessly. For the employees to trust and use the programme effectively, they need to be assured of confidentiality as a result there will be a trusting relationship between the practitioner and the employees. Klarreich *et al.* (1985:121) further highlighted the need to preserve sensitive and confidential data in a professional way to be clearly understood by all those directly involved. If employees needing help fear that their personal sensitive data may be revealed or kept in personnel files, their participation will be significantly less.

According to Klarreich *et al.* (1985:387) lack of programme utilisation represents the Achilles heel of the employee movement. It indicates that, in spite of a heavy promotional emphasis, the employee assistance movement has failed to become an integral part of the workplace. The authors further indicated that in order to determine why referrals were not being made, we need to examine who benefits and who is responsible for generating referrals. The authors further identified the following key concepts in effectiveness.

- **Comprehensive Scope**. EAP's must include, and be designed to deal with, a comprehensive range of personal problems;
- **Integration with the Workplace**. To be effective, programs must be an integral part of the workplace. Thus the EAP is said to be an essential component of good management;
- **Employer Support**. Responsibility for programme implementation rests with senior management. Management should be operational throughout;
- **Professional Clinical Resources**. Referral of a broad range of problems

based on performance deficit necessitates provision of professional clinical resources as a central component of the programme;

- **Positive Programme Definition**. EAP's profess to be unique in their ability to capitalise on the standards and sanctions of the workplace as a means of motivating employees to seek help. A more fruitful approach will be to accept the workplace as it is, on the understanding the programme will free management to become more effective.

- **Use of Natural Roles**. By defining discipline as a management function and treatment as a professional function, an effective programme facilitates the effectiveness of each programme constituent.

- **Behaviour Health Model**. In order to be truly effective, the employee assistance movement will need to enlist the support and cooperation of the mental health services delivery systems.

- **Programme Education**. Effective programmes do not demand a superior level of supervisory skills or expertise. However, they do provide extensive, clearly focused educational programmes.

- **Responsibility for Ongoing Education**. EAP's need much broader sponsorship. Professional training, research and theoretical support for the programme advances.

2.4 GOVERNMENT INCREASING ROLE AS INTERDEPENDENT SERVICE PROVIDER

Traditionally, public organisations were granted authority and control over when and by whom services would be provided. In return for being granted significant discretionary powers over services delivery, public agencies were expected to act in the public's best interest regardless of implementation costs or fiscal consequences on the agencies resources. Increasingly shared power over agencies actions typically slows the implementation process. This fosters the perception that government cannot make decisions in a timely fashion, which places public managers in highly stressful 'no win scenarios". However private

enterprises operate in a more "closed" discussion making structured business, through executive decisions-making act quickly based on external feedback (market analysis) to maximise their profit potential or market penetration. These circumstances resulted in higher stress levels for those acting in the public interest (Emener *et al. 2003*:272).

2.4.1   Constraints of Civil Service System

Government also differs from business in its ability to terminate employees who are performing poorly.   In business, especially in a non-union environment, individuals work on an "at-will" basis.   At-will employment means that the employer can terminate employees' at-will when business needs necessitates this actions. The at-will concepts provide the employer the leverage needed to terminate redundant or unproductive employees.   Moreover, even with the at-will option available when they experience declining work performance due to personal problems rich literature indicates that EAP's have demonstrated positive outcomes (Emener *et al*. 2003:273).

In many government departments, at-will standards are not applicable.   In these systems a public agencies efforts to terminate is more difficult to obtain and more time consuming than comparable to similar situations within the private sector. Moreover, civil servant policies frequently provide rehabilitation assistance before termination proceedings can be carried out.   Thus the public service supervisor should often work with the employee through her / his problems, more than do managers with the at-will employee in the private sector (Emener *et al.* 2003:273).

2.4.2   Public Scrutiny of the Government

Government also operates in a more accessible working environment. They frequently are required to respond to aggressive media and assertive public

working oversight. As a society we demands public accountancy to ensure public interests are being served effectively. Broad public scrutiny benefits the community but comes at a cost for the public employees. It imposes increased stressors on public employees resulting in increased needs for mental health intervention, whereas corporate leaders can request the media to leave its facilities without comments to reporters' inquiries (Emener *et al.* 2003:273).

2.5 GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME UTILISATION

It makes prudent economic sense for government to promote comprehensive health initiatives to aid their employees who are experiencing problems. Moreover public organisations should encourage early self referral as a means for improving the individual potential for recovery. Installing a belief that the ultimate goal of the organisation and its EAP is to rehabilitation rather than punitive, facilitates the successful applications of the EAP services within one's workforce (Emener *et al.* 2003:276).

2.5.1   The Department of Foreign Affairs and the EAP

The DFA is one of the government departments within South Africa. Their core function is diplomacy. The mission of the DFA is to mainly promote South Africa's national interests and values, the African Renaissance and the creation of a better world for all. The Department is also responsible to conduct and coordinate South Africa's international relations and to promote its foreign policy objectives. In addition to the above they are also responsible for monitoring international developments and to advise the government on foreign policy and related domestic matters. The Department has a population of approximately 1,300 employees, where some of these employees are stationed at missions abroad. Due to high levels of stress both at the missions abroad and at head office within South Africa, the Department decided to introduce the EAP.

According to the policy of DFA, supervisors can use the EAP as an aid in dealing with the problems of poor performance associated with personal problems. The supervisor's task is twofold namely:

- To bring the availability of the EAP to the attention of employees before social problems hamper their functioning; and
- To refer employees to the EAP when necessary.

Within the Department, Deputy Directors are referred to, as Middle Management and holds supervisory positions. They have direct and close relationships with employees within the department, at the same time having a very close relationship with top management. They are responsible for developing the directorate's business plans including employee's job descriptions. They are further responsible for monitoring and supervising their job performance. They are also tasked with instituting correctional and disciplinary proceeding related to poor job performance including referring the employees to the EAP if the need arise. They report directly to Top Management and continually update them on progress pertaining productivity. Their subordinates or employees include diplomats, who are referred to as the line function employees and administration workers, referred to as support services workers. The corporate services within the department include finance, internal auditing, budget, employee wellness practitioners, cleaners and security officials.

The Department's policy also states that early intervention of employee's problems and early referrals of such employees to the EAP will result in improved work performance, increased productivity and happier employees.

Supervisors were not expected to attend to employee problems over and above their call of duty. When troubled employees needed help, a personnel developmental plan, in the DFA, was established in 1994. The EAP changed to Employee Wellness Centre in 2004 after the incorporation of psychological services.Within the DFA, the wellness model used by EAP consists of twelve

aspects in the human life: family, physical health, mental health, social, career, learning, recreation, community development, retirement, spiritual, personal, marriage and family. The EAP service within the Department is an in-house model thus EAP practitioners are housed within the Department. Masi (2000:407) contends that an in-house model is where entire EAP staff, is employed by the company. The company managers supervise the programme, approve policy and finalise all procedures.

2.6 SUPERVISORS AND THE EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME

EAPA SA (2005:8) described a supervisor as a person in a position of authority and who oversees the performance of subordinate staff. Watkins (2003:7) mentioned that supervisors are responsible for monitoring and evaluating job performances. This places them in an ideal position to do something about employees who can be helped through an employee assistance programme. Beidel and Brennan (2006:29) further confirmed that supervisors are responsible for helping work teams identify and achieve goals, supporting the productivity of each team member and resolving any difficulties that could arise. Within the Department of Foreign Affairs, supervisors actively contact and communicate with the employees on daily basis. They evaluate their work performance and are also in a better position to observe any changes in behaviour and performance. Therefore the researcher agrees that the supervisor's position in confronting troubled employees is critical and pivotal.

The researcher concurs with Thome (1990:49) that if supervisors are expected to make referrals, they must understand when and how referrals should be done. He further indicated that in order to admit they need help with troubled employees, the supervisors must be confident that their inability to handle problems themselves will not be perceived as a weakness. The researcher believes that supervisors also need to be supported by both the practitioner and

top management in their difficult positions of confronting troubled employees. Enough support will boost their confidence and they will be open in discussing the challenges they are faced with, in relation to being a referral agent.

Osborne and Wiechetek (1991:40) indicate that good fitness-for–work policies should clarify the role of the supervisor. However Dugan (1992:48) asserts that supervisors are in a unique position to influence troubled employees to seek help. He further mentioned that if properly executed, the supervisory referral to the employee assistance programme can be a powerful tool in helping employees improve job performance and get the help they need.

2.6.1 The Supervisor and the Troubled Employee

Dugan (1992:48) offers the following guidelines for supervisors in dealing with employees whose personal problems may be interfering with job performance:

Observe Employees Job Performance

Recognise that a problem exist based on job performance. Job performance deficiency caused by personal problems needs to be differentiated from, from other reasons of poor performance. However the practitioner needs to establish clear job performance expectations for the employee (EAPA SA, 2005:8).

The author asserts that supervisors must begin to sharpen their observation skills. They need to be aware of the all warning signs indicative of a problem employee. The researcher further believes that supervisors should avoid assuming, and have fact before confronting a troubled person. They should document the problems including any sessions she or he had with troubled employees and also highlighting the existing problems to the employee (Schwartz, 1987:21).

Consult with the EAP

The EAP consultant can add a sense of objectivity to the situation and coach the supervisor on how to proceed. Supervisors should not handle this difficult situation on their own. The researcher is of the view that supervisors should always consult if they are not sure of actions to be taken.

Documentation

Accurate information and specific incidents of sub-standard job performance should be documented over a period of time. Documentation should be in writing and include dates, times, places and events (EAPA SA, 1999:5-6). After the supervisor recognises that a problem exists, the next step involves doing something about it. The effective supervisor will document this type of information for a short period of time so that a particular pattern can be identified, but will not wait so long that a crisis or tragedy occurs. The supervisor should then confront the employee, having the support of documentation to make confrontation easier for the supervisor to stick to the discussion of performance and avoid being manipulated into a personality conflict. The researcher is of the opinion that the documentation will assist the supervisor to remember facts, dates and times of the said incidents. However it is important that the meeting with the employee includes some discussion about a plan of action for achieving the objectives and the goal identified (Schwartz, 1987:21).

Constructive Confrontation

Constructive confrontation is a highly structured event involving the supervisor and the employee with personal concerns that may affect job performance (EAPA SA, 2005:6). The supervisor briefly explains the purpose of the session and then asks the employee to remain silent while he / she present his / her concern. Osborn and Wiechetek (1991:43) mention that confrontation is not an

easy task and if done properly, it can be accomplished with a minimum of discomfort.

Schwartz (1987:72) asserts that the most difficult, anxiety provoking step for the supervisor attempting to get an employee to change is the face-to-face meeting that entails confronting the employee. However the researcher believes that in as much as it is difficult to confront troubled employees, practitioners should make it their mission to train and support the supervisor all the way. The researcher is of the opinion that supervisors should be trained to confront employees because if confrontation is done incorrectly it might cause more harm than good.

Schwartz (1987:21) highlighted that one of the difficulty duties of managers and supervisors is the effective confrontation of employees with the chronic performance problem.

Thome (1990:50) asserts that confronting a troubled employee is particularly likely to be stressful for supervisors who have worked with the employee for a considerable length of time. Because of the risks to interpersonal relationships inherent in accusing others of deviant, it is common for supervisors to rationalise an employee's inappropriate behaviour. The author further mentioned that to be able to admit they need help with a problem employee, supervisors must be confident that their inability to handle the problem themselves will not be viewed as a weakness. Supervisors may also feel a sense of inadequacy or even failure as a supervisor if an employee exhibits problems (compare Schwartz 1987:21; Thome 1990: 50). Hence the researcher believes that with adequate training and knowledge, supervisors will feel more comfortable and confident when confronting the employee.

EAP and Progressive Discipline

Schwartz (1987:21) indicates that supervisors should build into the confrontation

meeting a mechanism for evaluating or measuring specific change in work performance.

If progressive discipline becomes necessary, it is important to refer the employee to the EAP at each stage of discipline and document that you have done so (Dugan, 1992:48).

The Back-To-Work Conference

Returning to work can be difficult and awkward, yet the EAP can assist in this transition by arranging the back-to-work conference with the employee and the supervisor after referral and treatment (Dugan, 1992:48).

The following are do's and don't for the supervisor as identified by Dugan (1992:49).

DO'S	DON'TS
Do establish performance expectations, and monitor employee outputs.	Don't generalise about the employee's job performance.
Do recognise when a problem exists.	Don't try to diagnose the problem or discuss the employee's personal affairs.
Do consult with the EAP as soon as you suspect a problem.	Don't take responsibility for solving the employee's problem.
Do document problems in employees' job performances.	Don't preach or moralise. Focus only on the job performance.
Do intervene with care and concern.	Don't cover up or enable. This only delays the employee from receiving help.
Do refer the employee to the EAP.	Don't be misled by tactics that evoke

DO'S	DON'TS
	sympathy, anger or denial.
Do insist that job performance improves whether or not the employee went to the EAP.	Don't delay
Do follow through and hold the employee accountable.	

2.6.2 Basic Supervisory Characteristics

Foster (1982:132) indicates that managers, like most people, develop specific patterns for responding to difficult interpersonal situations. However the researcher is of the opinion that there are some managerial characteristics that can also hinder or disturb the use of the EAP. However Foster (1982:132) identified the following basic supervisory characteristics as creating roadblocks to the process of referral:

- **The Ostrich.** These kinds of manager's often associate great discomfort with the thought of addressing employee problems.

- **The Armchair Therapist.** Occasionally a supervisor will attempt to take responsibility for resolving what he or she perceives to be an employee's emotional or behavioural problem.

- **The Negotiator.** The author indicated that this type of manager can most readily be identified within the public sector. Contrary to popular opinion, it is indeed possible to constructively coerce an employee into treatment for varying performance impairing social health problems.

- **The Frustrated Parent.**   This kind of supervisor can be compared to a desperate, frustrated parent who presents his or her rebellious teenager to a local youth service.

2.7   SUPERVISORY RESISTANCE

O'Connell (1987:63) said that while various organisational constraints might have a bearing on a low rate of supervisory referrals at a specific company, supervisory resistance to the EAP concept and system is certainly an important factor. However the author further mentioned that the willingness of supervisors to use the EAP becomes a crucial training issue when resistance to the programme is high.

2.7.1   Sources of Supervisory Resistance

Dugan (1992:48) asserts that intervening with a troubled employee can be awkward and intimidating, and many supervisors prefer to do nothing, hoping that the problem will go away. Other supervisors enable employees by covering up problems or helping employees avoid natural consequences of their actions. Often, supervisors avoid asking for assistance because they feel responsible for handling these problems on their own, yet dealing with troubled employees can be stressful and overwhelming. O'Connell (1987:63) identified the following aspects as sources of supervisory resistance:

- May be accustomed to handling problem on his or her themselves without outside help;
- May be suspicious that the EAP practitioner will make the supervisor's decision to dismiss an employee more difficult than it already is;
- May be concerned that a valuable employee may quit if confronted in the way that the EAP counsellor advises;

- May be threatened that the EAP counsellor will disclose to management instances of poor performance on the supervisors part;
- May distrust outsiders and doubt an EAP professional's ability to know "what is really like down there on the shop floor";
- May distrust or feel threatened by mental health counsellors or "shrinks";
- May have a basic resistance to change;
- May feel that any performance problem can be handled by effective supervision or by terminating the service of the employee; and
- May believe that the EAP diminishes the supervisor's role as a counsellor to subordinates.

The researcher is of the opinion that the sources of supervisory resistance are vast but the effective remedy to the resistance is training and ongoing marketing and promotion of the services rendered by the programme. However if supervisors are not competent and confidence in their position as referral agents they will not refer or participate in assisting troubled employees.

2.7.2 Stages of Supervisory Resistance

Cooper (1988:33) mentions that there are many personality variables as there are supervisors; several commonalities appear in the ways that supervisors respond to troubled employees. Supervisory resistance to facing the issue of troubled employees parallels the stages of the grief process. However the author highlighted that being aware of the six stages of supervisory resistance to dealing with troubled employees makes it easier for the EAP professionals to understand the feelings behind such resistance.

Following is the six stages of supervisory resistance as mentioned by Cooper (1988:28) and the solutions as to how to overcome problems within the different stages of resistance:

- **Stage 1 - Denial.** In this stage supervisors are aware of irregularities in job performance, but he or she joins the troubled employee in the delusion that there is really not a problem. The author mentioned that the easiest way to break through denial is for the EAP to provide supervisors with instructions on how to document employee's problems.

- **Stage 2 - Anger.** Supervisory anger can be directed in any of three directions. The supervisor may be angry at the troubled employee, he may be angry at the company's management he or she can be angry at himself or herself. The second stage is particularly critical to the EAP referral. If supervisors allow anger to overcome their objectivity, an uncomplicated EAP referral is impossible. The author highlighted that to deal with troubled employees, supervisors need to work through their anger and regain their objectivity. The purpose is to ease the supervisor from a reactive to an active position with the EAP.

- **Stage 3 – Resentment.** Related to anger. Resentment occurs when the supervisor begins to see the employee's dysfunctional behaviour as intentional and personal, that is, something directly aimed at the supervisor. At this stage the supervisor begins to resent the way the employee is abusing their relationship and, consequently, resent the employee. The author asserts that the best way for the EAP counsellor to counteract the resentment stage is with education.

- **Stage 4 – Guilt.** At this stage the supervisor is unable to deny the problem anymore. In this stage most supervisors are pre-occupied with their own mistakes and faults and see themselves as inadequate supervisors. The author mentions that this is the stage where a well established supervisor / EAP relationship can make a difference. When the supervisor refers someone to the EAP, the supervisor is entrusting the EAP with more than just an employee, a friend or a co-worker, the supervisor is also entrusting the

EAP with a small part of his or her ego, that is why personal contact which has been established between the EAP counsellor and the supervisor is vital in making a trusting relationship possible.

- **Stage 5 - Rejection.** At this stage supervisors give up some of their resistance and send their troubled employees to the EAP for assessment. In essence the supervisor is rejecting the employee. The author further mentioned that to overcome rejection supervisory training sessions need to emphasise the positive image of the EAP. Such training must stress that referrals to the EAP is a way for supervisors to get help for their troubled employees.

- **Stage 6 - Acceptance.** This is the final stage of supervisory resistance. With the help of an EAP counsellor, the supervisor is able to accept the situation and recognise the need for a referral. The supervisor at this stage also has a clear idea of his or her role and limitations in dealing with trouble employees and is not looking for a miracle form either the employee or the EAP. At this stage the team's goal is clear; the team is trading an opportunity to deal with the problem for the possibility of getting a competent, experienced employee back on the job.

The researcher agrees that if supervisors are trained properly they will increase the effectiveness and the utilisation of the EAP services. Resistance to use the EAP might be caused by variety of reasons but preparation, training and the EAP policy might play a pivotal role in improving utilisation and effectiveness of the program.

2.8   REFERRALS

According to Myers (1984:69) the referral activity determines an EAP's success because without sufficient referrals the programme becomes a dormant expense.

Winkelpleck and Smith (1988:47) assert that planning for the effective referral to the EAP really begins during the initial planning for the EAP. However it is the researcher's view that for the programme to be regarded as successful there should be a high number of referrals of employee to the EAP.

Rumsey (1992:42) indicates that when enough information to understand the employee's problem is gathered, the next steps are as follows:

- Identify your concern;
- Identify possible solutions;
- Develop strategy for the employee to look for and resolve in treatment;
- Match the employee with the provider(s);
- Discuss providers; and
- Refer to the Providers.

Dugan (1992:48) indicated that supervisors are in a unique position to influence troubled employees to seek help. If properly executed, the supervisory referral to the EAP can be a powerful tool in helping employees with their job performance to get the help they need. EAPA SA (2005:17) takes it further by saying that appropriate referrals should increase the likelihood of increased job performance and employee wellbeing.

A description of the various methods that bring employees into contact with the programme is perhaps the most important part of the elements. The methods should be thoroughly explained to Management, the Union and employees of the company. The researcher also believes that when different referral types are clearly stipulated, referral agents will be able to match different problems with the appropriate type of referral depending on the training offered by different organisations.

2.8.1 Types of Referrals

Literatures distinguish between self referral, management / supervisory referral and mandatory referral.

Self Referrals

Cunningham (1994:55) mentioned that self referral is when EAP clients seek assistance voluntarily without any intervention by managers. In this instance no contact with others in the organisation is possible without written client consent, except, for legally determined exceptions to the various confidentiality statuses. Thome (1990:48) mentioned that self referral employees contact the EAP directly or ask their immediate supervisor or union representative to arrange an appointment.

Winkelpleck and Smith (1988:47) define self referrals as a self initiated request for assistance by an individual eligible for EAP services in an increasingly common utilisation form. Wrich (1980:62) mentioned that self referral is a common characteristic of the more successful employee assistance programme. The researcher supports the aforementioned authors but further adds that in self referrals, the employee realises and acknowledges that he or she has a problem and takes it upon him / her to seek assistance.

Winkelpleck and Smith (1988:47) further indicated that self referrals is an especially useful referral mechanism for EAP practitioners who wish to target executives, upper-level managers and professionals in organisations who enjoy relatively high levels of job discretion and autonomy. The authors further mentioned that the primary responsibility of the occupational social work with regard to self referral is that of accurately communicating the services and benefits available through the EAP, providing assurance of confidentiality and becoming known and acceptable.

Winkelpleck and Smith (1988:49) further mentioned that this type of referral is when an individual may go to a counselling service outside the company on their own volition, their own referral without fear of being identified. The major advantage of indirect referral is the extraordinary protection of the workers right to confidentiality.

However Cagney (2006:20) identified self referral as initiated by employees who are aware of a problem or are experiencing enough discomfort to seek resources. They possess some level of insight or at least are motivated to obtain relief. The author further indicated that self referrals contact the EAP using their own initiative and take advantage of the ease of access offered by the EAP. No feedback is given to the employer or supervisor with this type of referral. However the researcher also believes that self referral is an indication of a successful EAP because employees can only refer themselves if they see the results and reputation of the program.

Supervisory Referrals

Berington (2006:22) states that she prefers to use the term management rather than supervisor, because the word "supervisor" typically refers to the lowest level of management.

Cagney (2006:18) mentioned that the basis for supervisory referrals is the argument that the supervisor is in a good position to identify employee problems through deterioration in work performance and to confront the employee, break through the denial, and leverage the contract to encourage the employee to take action. Thome (1990:49) indicated that some EAP's encourage supervisors or peers to suggest a referral when they have reason to believe an employee has a personal problem that could lead to impaired performance. The author further indicated that if supervisors are expected to make referrals, they must clearly

understand when and how referrals should be done.

Although referring people to the programme might seem simple and quick, it is the researcher's view that supervisors should be trained to avoid mistakes that will be detrimental to the employee's integrity. There should be standard referral procedures and an EAP policy that addresses the referral problems within an organisation.

Although the number of supervisory referrals has declined in most programmes, heaps still place an especially high priority on being able to respond quickly to requests for help from management (Cunningham, 1994:52). Cagney (2006:20) indicated that the most valuable services offered by the EAP's are the management referral, which is directly related to job performance. A management referral and participation in the EAP does not constitute formal steps in the disciplinary procedure or condition precedent to commencement of disciplinary action. A management referral to the EAP should not be viewed as a disciplinary action but rather as another tool or option for the employee to use in improving job performance. However the author further mentioned that communication with the referring manager is often limited to whether the employee followed through and a release was required. The researcher is of the opinion that supervisors should be made aware that referring the employee to the programme is not punitive but rather correctional.

Cunningham (1994:52) also mentioned that another scenario is the management referral based not on job performance problems but on the manager's awareness that a worker is encountering personal problems that might be relieved through the EAP. However the researcher agrees that supervisors are in a position to understand the employees behaviours holistically, hence are in better position to observe changes in behaviours.

Cagney (2006:18) mentioned that although EAP's have well established history

of helping employees with behavioural health problems and the constructive confrontation model has been shown to be effective when used properly by supervisors faced with the challenge of managing a troubled employee, only a minority as supervisors actually look to the EAP as a resource. The author further indicated that supervisory referral rates appears to run well below estimates of the prevalence of problems in the workplace; although they are relatively high in newly implemented EAP's, they decline rapidly thereafter. Googings (1990) cited (in Cagney 2006:18) describes three indicators of the growing dissonance between the model and practice of EAP:

- The number and percentage of supervisory referrals have declined significantly over time;
- Supervisory training, which prepares supervisors to become an effective early intervention and prevention agent, has been either abandoned or minimised in many EAP's; and
- Employees with substance use disorders arrive at the EAP in later stages of the disease rather then being identified early through declining job performance.

Winkelpleck and Smith (1988:49) identified two types of supervisory referral

- **Informal Supervisory Referrals**

The supervisor's role is to encourage troubled employees to seek help. Informal supervisory referrals are made by a supervisor who has a personal relationship with the employee who is being referred. Tiner (2006:26) agreed that in an informal referral the supervisor may inform the employee of the benefits provided by the EAP and give the employee the EAP's telephone number. The supervisor may contact the EAP to provide information regarding an informal referral and the circumstances leading to it. However the researcher is of the opinion that in this type of referral the supervisor does not take any responsibility and further

does not document any information. This could create a problem if the supervisor had to make reference to such a referral, and if the problem persisted and there would be a need for further steps to be taken.

- **Formal Supervisory Referral**

In this type of referral, the supervisor formally responds to employee performance problems and the un-assessed personal problems that may lie behind them. In this sense the referral is a management action and not the act of a lay counsellor. This type of referral is carefully supported by documentation and constrained by the limits of proper supervisory authority.

Cagney (2006:20) asserted that without formal referral a supervisor is unable to play a role in the unique process that a supervisory referral to an EAP sets in motion. By avoiding formal supervisory referrals based on documented job performance issues, the employee can much more easily visit the EAP to satisfy the supervisor but deny the existence of a problem. However the author further mentioned that coaching the supervisors to understand the power of formal supervisory referrals and the process of constructive confrontation could help return this core service of EAP's to our toolbox. The researcher believes that with documents supporting confrontation, troubled employee will be convinced that the supervisor cares and also take responsibility.

Cagney (2006:18) indicated that evidence has accumulated which shows that supervisors are reluctant to use supervisory referral strategy, leading to a serious shortfall in EAP's potential effectiveness. The author further indicated that research has found that supervisory referral rates are surprisingly low even when considering the severity of a subordinate's problems, and the referral rate of only one per supervisor for every six years employed is not uncommon.

Mandatory Referrals

Thome (1990:49) referred to mandatory referrals as an option available to management in cases where poor work performance has been documented. The "carrot and sticks" approach is usually taken to encourage the employee to follow the EAP counsellor's recommendations. If the employee resolves the problem, there will be no punishment, if the problem is to resolved, consequences can be as serious as dismissal, depending on the extent of performance impairment. Cagney (2006:20) perceives mandatory referral as controversial high stakes and high energy situations. These referrals are seldom proactive referrals based on patterns of declining performance, rather they are reactive referrals based on triggered events. The triggering events are often visible and routinely rise to a disciplinary level that could result in termination. Mandatory referrals give employees one last opportunity to turn things around. The author further indicated that a mandatory referral is made in combination with progressive, corrective discipline and involves a formal personnel action. Compliance with this mandatory referral most often is a clear condition of employment. However the researcher added that if not properly used, the supervisors could manipulate the employee into succumbing to the employer's need.

MacDonald, Trudeau, Day, Edgeworth, Hicks, Roznowsky, Kotyk and Ladd (1987:49) indicated that mandatory referrals were instrumental in fostering serious organisational troubles for the EAP staff in that they found themselves in the untenable position of trying to serve three masters none of whom spoke the same language; individuals who have been mandatory referred to the program often had no well defined change that they desire except to placate the referring manager; the management wanted EAP staff to "fix " individuals and make them more productive; and the union felt EAP counsellors should act as advocates for employees during disciplinary proceedings. Cagney (2006:21) asserted that EA professionals feel that mandatory referrals produce a superficial, resentful

compliance rather than a commitment to change. They fear that mandatory referrals position the EAP to be seen as a tool of management rather than a neutral employee resource. The author further mentioned that a mandatory referral is considered mitigation, since it is an alternative consequence to the loss of employment or serious disciplinary action.

Thome (1990:49) asserted that the range of referral options varies from programme to programme. The author also mentioned that most comprehensive EAP's allow all types of referrals, while some that handle addiction issues alone, will accept only mandatory referrals from management. Since the EAP's policy and procedure regarding referrals directly affect supervisors role within the programme, supervisors must be aware of how their company's EAP expect referrals to be done. However the researcher supported the statement made by Cagney (2006:20) that each type of referrals requires a different level of confidentiality, has a different relationship to the disciplinary process, and assumes a very different role for the EA professionals.

Winkelpleck and Smith (1988:50) also mentioned that each of the referral mechanisms described its own unique advantages and problems. The author further mentioned that in most assessments the use of a variety of referrals mechanism is preferred over reliance on only one. The researcher is of the opinion the supervisors should be educated about all types of referrals and when and how referral types are applicable.

2.9 SUPERVISORY TRAINING

Thome (1990:49) mentioned that if supervisors are expected to make referrals, they must understand early when and how referrals should be made. However Cooper (1988:29) lamented that although supervisory training lays the groundwork for a referral, a good referral heavily depends on the relationship between an EAP practitioner and supervisor. Watkins (2003:7) agreed with the

aforementioned author and added that good training is crucial for supervisors given their primary duty to maintain production goals. The researcher believes that training and marketing are two major sources of a successful and effective EAP within any organisation.

An excellent strategy for companies interested in maintaining a stable and productive workforce is to provide first-line supervisors and cooperative managers with ongoing opportunities for training (Schwartz, 1987:73). The researcher agrees with the authors but also believes that training should be ongoing so that it offers supervisors an opportunity to be updated on new changes and developments, not only of their programme but other programmes outside of their organisation.

2.9.1 Goals for Supervisory Training

Goals

According to EAPA SA (2005:20), the goal of training of managers, supervisors and union representatives is to equip them to fulfil functional roles regarding the EAP in terms of access and utilisation. Tiner (2006:25) mentioned that the overall goal of supervisory training is to equip supervisors to handle the myriad issues of employee supervision that arise on a day to day basis. Understanding the essential components of EAP supervisory training is crucial for supervisors to utilise in their work with all employees and especially troubled employee who are experiencing work performance problems.

The primary goal of training sessions should be to help managers to become better equipped in recognising the warning signs indicative of a problem, or a troubled employee and to ultimately intervene so that the employee becomes motivated to improve his or her performance (Schwartz, 1987:73).

Winkelpleck and Smith (1988:51) mentioned that it is important that supervisors have a broad understanding of the EAP and become familiar with all the referral mechanisms the EAP employs. They also need to be trained in order to alert the EAP staff when crises occur. The authors further indicated that the employee utilisation of EAP is, to a great extent, a function of the success of ongoing workplace education and supervisory training. The researcher further believes that if supervisors are properly trained they will be equipped to make informed decisions when it comes to choosing the correct type of referral to be implemented.

Schwartz (1987:73) highlighted that the key in helping supervisors feel more comfortable about intervening with the problem employee is for companies to feel more comfortable about acknowledging that all supervisors can benefit from ongoing training. The researcher further adds that the other purpose of training is boosting the supervisor's confidence in their role as referral agents. EAPA SA (2005:21) identified the following as objectives for supervisory training.

- To enhance the functioning of the EAP in the organisation; and
- To provide clarity to potential referring supervisors about their role in the assessment of poor performance and the referral process.

2.9.2 Guidelines for Supervisory Training

Winkelpleck and Smith (1988:53) identified four guidelines for supervisory training:

- Supervisors need to be encouraged to acknowledge the existence of employee problems so that appropriate managerial assistance can be employed. Supervisors need to understand that their job is to deal with job performance issues. If appropriate performance supervision and training has occurred and thus the probable reason for an employee's impaired job

performance is personal, the supervisor's job is not identifying the personal causes;

- Supervisors need to be guided to see EAP as a resource to assist them with their human resource management task. EAP staff are available as consultants to guide supervisors in dealing with troubled employees;

- Supervisors need to know the manner in which potentially involved parties will relate. In the most helpful EAP's, the outside referral is collaborative. Supervisors must be told of the limits of collaboration; and

- Supervisors need to be supported in dealing with all troubled employees in a manner that accords with organisation policy and good management but that expresses a human respect for each employee. This implies such behaviour as talking with an employee in a private space.

2.9.3 The Value of Supervisory Training

The researcher supports Watkins (2003:7) that good training is crucial for supervisors given their primary duty to maintain production goals. The author further mentioned that to help supervisors do their jobs effectively, employee assistance, benefits and human resource managers must demand that their providers be accountable in their area of training and that the organisation allows supervisors time to be trained.

According to Beidel and Brennan (2006:30) there is no doubt that training is becoming more valued within work organisations, but the clear value that EAP supervisory training brings to individual managers and the organisation as a whole, goes well beyond an understanding of and a feeling of comfort with the mechanics of making a supervisory referral to the EAP. An EAP that positions its supervisory consultation and referral process within the larger organisational context is better able to not only demand supervisory training time but also demonstrate the value of that training on multiple levels.

The researcher concurred with Schwartz (1987:73) that an effective EAP training session should not teach supervisors how to make mental health or substance abuse diagnosis, but should definitely discourage supervisors from providing "amateur" counselling to employees. Supervisory training should be designed to reinforce many of the skills that all supervisors need to use on a day-to-day basis. The author further indicated that the key in helping supervisors feel more comfortable about intervening with problem employees is for companies to feel more comfortable about acknowledging that all supervisors can benefit from the ongoing training and that some personnel problems may require the consultation services offered by a professional staffed EAP.

Tiner (2006:26) eluded that training supervisors on how to identify troubled employees, how to document changes in work performance and how to make an appropriate referral to EAP services, can be crucial in helping assist and retain troubled employees. However the researcher further believes that through supervisory training the employer will be investing in its employees, especially skilled and competent employees.

2.10   MARKETING

Francek cited (in Dickman *et al.,* 1988:25) defines internal marketing as a systematic promotion of an EAP to a specified employee population. The promotion is carefully tailored to meet the unique needs of the workforce.

Oher (1991:91) indicated that whether promoting the assessment and referral service of the programme, announcing a training activity or advancing a new service component, the marketing of those efforts is as important as the activity or service being promoted.

EAPA UK (1998:31) and EAPA SA (2005:21) agree that the importance and the need for EAP promotion and marketing are encouraging the utilisation of its

services, which ultimately impact on the healthy functioning of the organisation. They further highlight that the EAP that is visible and presented in a positive light, encourages members of the organisation to fully utilise the programme services.

However Francek cited (in Dickman *et al.*, 1998:24) highlighted that the programme is not successfully implemented until it has been satisfactorily marketed inside the organisation.

According to the Association for Fitness for Business (1992:62) successful marketing involves more than simply informing employees about the programme. The marketing campaign should also accomplish the following:

- Create awareness for the programme, its mission and various ways in which employees may participate;
- Motivate employees to participate in special events; and
- Sustain participation through the use of the ongoing marketing strategies.

According to Harlow (2003:19), common sense tells us that to be effective, an EAP must be seen. Attitudinal research has shown that the visibility of the EAP not only increases the utilisation but also increases the perceived value of the program amongst those who used it. Although Watkins (2004:7) agrees with the aforementioned author he further mentioned that the perceptions of employees and family members have of the EAP comes from different sources, including programme publicity, orientation and training, comments from people who have used the programme, preconceptions about what such a programme might be like and grapevine information containing varying amounts of factual information, distortions and preconceptions. Successful EAP's influences their image through the actual services provided, the qualifications of the staff and its outreach activities.

The researcher is of the opinion that marketing plays an important part in the

success of the EAP; however the organisation should have a clear and effective marketing strategy. Marketing the services should be ongoing and reach all levels of employees within the organisation, which will enhance visibility and transparency. The employees should be involved in the policy making and development of the marketing strategy so that they must have a sense of ownership, have confidence in utilising the services and also refer employees in need of the services offered.

The researcher's perception of marketing is advertising and promoting the services. Educating and encouraging employees to access and use the available product or service.

2.10.1   Goals and Objectives of Marketing

Goals

According to EAPA SA (2005:21), the goal of marketing is to ensure that EAP is highly visible and presented in a positive light to encourage members of the organisation to appropriately utilise the programme.

Objectives

The researcher is of the opinion that with any marketing campaign an EAP promotional effort must have clear and distinct goals and objectives which are measurable and attainable. The following objectives were identified:

- To increase employees' knowledge of EAP and its services, activities and the key components and to ensure that programme promotion is ongoing and directed at all levels of the organisation;

- To increase familiarity and comfort with the EAP operations and to enhance the acceptance and the use of the services by employees, managers, labour representatives and the organisational leadership;
- To market the programme in such a way that all people in the organisation would feel comfortable making use of the EAP;
- To provide regular information to employees aimed at increasing their awareness of factors that affect their personal well being and impact on job performance;
- To increase utilisation of the programme at all levels throughout the organisation;
- To enhance the integration of the EAP within the host or contract organisation and to promote a feeling of ownership for the programme on the part of the organisation, its managers and employees; and
- To maintain visibility of the EAP and its presence as a vital contributor to the organisation's productivity and efficiency and to the wellbeing and general work general work life of the employees and managers (EAPA SA, 2005:21; Oher ,1999:91).

2.11   NEED FOR RESEARCH

The researcher supports the statement by O'Connell (1987:66) that the effectiveness of the strategy for overcoming supervisory resistance to EAP's as described should be researched. Changes in supervisory attitudes towards the EAP incurred through training strategy, as well as changes in the number of referrals generated, should be tested.

According to Harlow (2003:18), EAP should be data-oriented. The author further mentioned that being data-oriented means contributing in whatever way possible to research that advances the quality and effectiveness of EAP practice. Participation may be as simple as contributing information to a wider data set, or it may involve undertaking scientific research within the EAP.

However the researcher agrees that in-depth research, especially qualitative research about supervisory resistance, should be conducted. The findings will then serve as guideline of how the resistance can be dealt with effectively.

2.12   CONCLUSION

This chapter thoroughly examined literature on referral and supervisory training, the importance of training and its effect on referral. It became clear that referrals are a challenge especially to supervisors because they are in a good position to observe behaviour change

Supervisory resistance is an ongoing problem that needs to be further researched because the causes of supervisory resistance in one organisation might not necessarily be the cause in the other organisation. The next chapter will focus on data collection and analysis, comparing the findings with the literature existing on the topic of supervisory referral.

CHAPTER 3: **EMPIRICAL DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

3.1 **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter will discuss the data analysis and interpretation of the received data, which will be analysed and discussed based on the central themes extracted from a total of ten respondents who were interviewed. The respondents were Deputy Directors who are on a supervisory level within the Department of Foreign Affairs. The respondents were interviewed using the semi-structured interview schedule and a tape recorder.

The researcher developed transcripts of all the interviews, which she repeatedly read to gain heightened awareness of the data. After reading the data she then identified salient themes. The researcher then formed a larger opinion of what the perceptions of supervisors were. The researcher used the qualitative research method to collect data because the study is more interested in understanding than explaining the respondent behaviour.

The semi-structured interview schedule was compiled and used to collect the qualitative data. The respondents were given ample freedom to explain and give in-depth information about the topic but the researcher continuously made reference to an "outline" of the topic to be covered. The researcher conducted a pilot testing for the purpose of testing and detecting gaps within her interview schedule. This was done by interviewing two Deputy Directors who were not selected for the main study and interviewed them using the semi-structured interview schedule. However data collected during the pilot testing was not incorporated into the actual study findings. After the pilot testing the researcher was satisfied with her data collection tool but added a question on the respondent age for the purpose of demographic analysis.

Before the actual study commenced, the objective of the study was

communicated to the respondents and they were asked to sign consent forms. The researcher also attached her signature to each document. The researcher took notes during the interview and the voice recorder was used to assist the researcher when the transcripts were developed. The respondents were informed beforehand of this method. However in this section the researcher will also give a brief description of the respondent demographic profile.

3.2   RESPONDENTS PROFILE

TABLE 1:   AGE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS

YEARS	TOTAL
25-30	2
31-35	2
36-40	2
41-45	3
46-53	1
N	**10**

The respondents' ages fell within the age group of 25 to 53. The ages represent the newly appointed as well as the senior employee within the Department.

TABLE 2: GENDER OF RESPONDENTS

GENDER	TOTAL
Male	4
Female	6
N	**10**

Both genders were represented, namely four males and six females.

**TABLE 3:   YEARS EXPERIENCE OF RESPONDENTS AS DEPUTY
              DIRECTORS**

YEARS	TOTAL
0-1	1
2	2
3	3
4	1
5	2
6	0
7	1
N	**10**

Years of experience ranges from one to three years. The reason for not having
lengthy experience is due to promotions and better offers outside of the
Department.

TABLE 4:   RACE

RACE	TOTAL
Black	7
White	3
N	10

In terms of race Blacks and Whites where represented however Coloureds and
Indians were not selected during the sampling process.

3.3   CENTRAL THEMES

Cresswell (1998:144) states that classifying means taking the text or qualitative
information apart and looking for categories or dimensions of information. As
Cresswell (1998:144) and Delport and Fouché (2005:354) have indicated, the

following seven themes and sub themes have been identified.

TABLE 5:   THEMES AND SUB-THEMES

THEMES	SUB-THEMES
1. Understanding EAP	
2. Referral	1. Formal referral 2. Informal referral 3. Challenges in referring 4. Reasons for referral
3. Expectations of Practitioners	1. Competence 2. Confidentiality 3. Trust
4. Training	
5. Management Support	
6. Marketing	
7. Effectiveness of the EAP	

The researcher will present, describe and interpret the data collected during the interviews as follows

THEME 1:   UNDERSTANDING THE EAP AND RATIONAL FOR THE PROGRAM

Different feedback surfaced during the interviews about the respondents understanding of EAP. The following statements were drawn from the responses.

"EAP is a programme designed to assist workers with problems. Variety of problems."

"Programme that assist employees with performance problems related to their personal problems."

"*EAP offers support to employee within the Department who experiences problems.*"

"*Assist employees who experiences problems including illnesses.*"

"*Assist in relation to personal problems and job related problems.*"

"*A centre where employees can get assistance with matters such as physical well-being, emotional, social life and work life.*"

"*Programme is designed to assist employees with both personal and work related problems.*"

"*Programme is designed to assist employees of the department in dealing with problems that affects their work.*"

"*Centre where employees get assistance with emotional and physical well-being.*"

Sonnenstuhl and Trice (1986:1) defines EAP as a job-based programme operating within a work organisation for the purpose of identifying "troubled employees", motivating them to resolve their troubles, and providing access to counselling or treatment for those employees who need these services. The authors further contend that the term 'troubled employees' refers to those individuals whose personal problems such as alcoholism, drug addiction, marital difficulties distress preoccupy them to an extent that in their own or supervisor's judgement, their work is disrupted.

However the EAPA (2005:6) defines EAP as a worksite-based programme designed to assist in the identification and resolution of productivity problems

associated with employees impaired concerns, but not limited to health, family, financial, alcohol, drug, legal, emotional, stress or other concerns which may adversely affect employee job performance.

It was clear from the responses that supervisors understood the EAP differently. They all indicated that the programme was developed to assist employees with different problems but never related the problems to productivity. From the responses it was clear that only employees benefited and the rationale for developing the EAP was to mainly assist the employee and not the employer.

THEME 2:   REFERRAL

All respondents indicated that there were no referral procedures but few respondents highlighted that they would refer employees to the programme. It was clear from the responses that supervisors used both informal and formal referral procedures, despite the lack of referral procedures.

Winkelpleck and Smith (1988:47) assert that planning for the effective referral to the EAP really begins during the initial planning for the EAP. Therefore the researcher supports and further adds that if referral is not planned, supervisors will be confused and ultimately decide not to use the programme. The findings highlighted a close relationship between referral and the EAP success.

The following four sub themes were identified.

SUB-THEME 1:   Formal Referral

Winkelpleck and Smith (1988:49) highlighted that in this type of referral the supervisor formally responds to employee performance problems and assessed personal problems that may lie behind them. In this sense the referral is a management action and not the act of a lay-counsellor. This type of referral is

carefully supported by documentation and constrained by the limits of proper supervisory authority.

From the data gathered during the interviews, it was clear that there were supervisors who used the formal referral methods but were not aware that the method fell within the formal referral method. Although the procedure was not followed properly, it had elements of formal referral. The following were responses from the interview.

"I identify the problem, discuss with the employee if he is comfortable, refer him or her to the EWC and phone to make an appointment."

"*I talk to the employee, call the EWC in the presence of the employee and make an appointment."*

"I identify the problem, discuss with the employee, if he/she is comfortable with referral and then make an appointment and refer him or her to the EWC."

The findings supported the view of Cagney (2006:20) that without formal referral a supervisor is unable to play a role in the unique process that a supervisory referral to an EAP sets in motion.

It is also clear that the supervisors did not have documented information and still had to be trained on how the programme operates along with the procedures for referral as highlighted by Tiner (2006:25) who identified the components or process of formal referral. The author identified the following components: identification of the problem; documentation; expectations; timeline; and the consequences.

SUB THEME 2:   Informal Referral

From the data collected some of the respondents used informal referrals because it was simple and they never formed part of the problem solving. The following extracts were drawn from the interviews.

"Request employee to consult, I don't become part nor ask for progress."

"Direct employees to the program, not formal."

"I give the employee information about the program".

The respondents in this study encouraged employees to seek help and referred their employees informally as Winkelpleck and Smith (1988:48) identified that the supervisor's role in informal referral is to encourage troubled employees to seek help.   From the collected data it was clear that it was simple for the supervisors to informally refer because it did not become a burden for them.

The research findings agreed with Tiner (2006:26) that in an informal referral the supervisor may inform the employee of the benefits provided by the EAP and give the employee the EAP's telephone number. However in the research findings the respondents never made a follow up nor request progress reports.

SUB THEME 3:   Challenges in Referring

All respondents mentioned that there were no referral procedures; however some respondents indicated that they knew referral procedures from their previous employers. It was highlighted during data collection that there were no referral procedures in place within the Department of Foreign Affairs.

The research findings identified different challenges facing the supervisors in

referring employees to the programme. However it came out strongly that confidentiality and confrontation were some of the challenges. These are some of the aspects identified by O'Connell (1987:63) as sources of supervisory resistance. The following are some of the responses that came out during the interviews.

"Because *employees are not aware of the services rendered by the EWC."*

"Practitioners don't respect confidentiality."

"Confronting an employee."

"Confronting a person about his/her problems."

"Becoming involved in an employee's problem."

"Confronting troubled employees is very difficult."

Dugan (1992:48) asserts that interviewing a troubled employee can be awkward and intimidating, and many supervisors prefer to do nothing, hoping that the problem will go away.

Respondents had different concerns relating to addressing troubled employees. It was difficult and was referred to as a challenge to address troubled employees although the findings clearly identified that as supervisors they were in a better position to address troubled employees.

However it was clear from the data collected that the respondents were aware of most of the problems experienced by employees, as Watkins (2003:7) mentioned that supervisors are responsible for monitoring and evaluating job performance. This places them in an ideal position to do something about employees who can

be helped through an employee assistance programme.

However Dugan (1992:48) asserts that supervisors are in a unique position to influence troubled employees to seek help. He further mentioned that if properly executed, the supervisory referral to the EAP could be a powerful tool in helping employees improve job performance and obtain the help they need. From the research findings it was clear that the supervisory position within the EAP was not properly executed.

The research findings supported Osborn and Wiechetek (1991:43) who said that although confrontation is not an easy task, if done properly, can be accomplished with a minimum of discomfort. However Schwartz (1987:72) asserts that the most difficult, anxiety-provoking step for the supervisor attempting to get an employee to change is the "face to face" meeting that entails confronting the employee. The respondents didn't have enough courage to execute confrontation.

SUB THEMES 4: Reasons for Referral

Variety of responses came out during the interview. The following responses were uttered during the interview.

"Personal problems that they cannot discuss with the supervisor."

"Vetting."

"…*Low productivity, prolonged change in behaviour over a long period of time."*

"… *Alcohol, economic and personal.*"

"… *Problems in general.*"

"… *Personal and work-related*".

The research findings clearly indicated that supervisors referred employees for all types of problems. This is an indication that supervisors were in a good position to be able to observe and make referrals and the findings supported Cagney (2006:18) view that the basis for supervisory referrals was the argument that the supervisor is in a good position to identify employee problems through deterioration in work performance and to confront the employee, break through the denial, and leverage the contract to encourage the employee to take action.

THEME 3:   EXPECTATIONS OF PRACTITIONERS

The following three sub-themes were identified

SUB-THEME 1:   Competence

Competency was one of the issues raised during data collection. The respondent perceived the practitioners as incompetent hence the lack of referrals. EAPA SA (1999:05) stipulates that practitioners need to be proficient in the knowledge of work organisation, EAP policy, administration and direct services. The following responses were drawn from the interviews.

"Practitioners lack the capacity and the skills to handle the case".

The respondent further indicated that the programme was making more of an effort on an awareness campaign than focusing on individual employees.

"*Practitioners don't address the underlying issues and I don't think they are competent."*

SUB-THEME 2:   Confidentiality

It was clear from the data collected that supervisors did not trust the services rendered by the EAP within the Department. They wanted assurance in terms of confidentiality hence they never referred as much as they would have liked to. The following responses were received during the interviews.

"*Practitioners don't respect confidentiality.*"

"*Employees don't consult because they fear that their problems won't be treated with confidentiality.*"

They need to assure employees that confidentiality will be respected."

The research findings supported Dickman, Challenger and Hutchison (1988:12) that confidentiality is the cornerstone of an effective EAP. The research findings indicated that there is a close correlation between confidentiality and referral. However it came out clearly in the research findings that one of the reasons for the low referral rate was the issue of confidentiality. The respondents feared that confidentiality was not respected hence they did not trust the programme and the service it rendered. EAPA SA (2005:14) emphasises that the EAP's credibility depends on the maintenance of confidentiality. EAPA SA (1999:4) further stipulated the exceptional circumstances when personal information would be conveyed

SUB-THEME 3:   Trust

From the responses and the data collected it was clear that respondents were not sure of confidentiality and ultimately did not trust the services rendered by the EAP. The respondents needed assurance from the practitioners hence they felt that the practitioners did not put more effort in gaining the employees' trust. The

following responses were derived from the interviews.

"*I don't trust the practitioner.*"
"*Practitioners need to make extra affords in gaining employees trust.*"

It became clear from the results of the interviews that trust and confidentiality goes hand in hand and are essential components of referral and the success of the EAP.

From the data collected, respondents perceived practitioners as lacking skills and knowledge, thereby not trusting them with the employees' problems.

However one respondent indicated that the practitioners offer good service and know what they are doing. The respondent still doubted confidentiality but trusted the practitioner's capability to assist employees.

THEME 4:   TRAINING

The respondents strongly identified the need for training. They indicated that training would increase referrals and the utilisation rate. From the responses it was clear that the respondents felt that training should be ongoing and reach all levels of employees. The respondents indicated that they wanted to know what the programme offered. It was clear from the responses that the respondents do not utilise this service because they do not know the procedures nor the product. However all the respondents' indicated the need for training and the following responses came out during the interviews

"*There is no training available on how to utilise the Employee Assistance Programme.*"

"*I'm not aware of any training available on how to utilise the programme.*"

"Training is a necessity and procedure manuals should be developed and also reach the employees."

"Training should focus on referral procedures, what the programme entails and how it works."

"*Training should also teach supervisors to deal with difficult people and also people with chronic diseases."*

"Training should include how supervisors should deal with HIV/AIDS, how to support the victims."

"Training should include procedures to address employees and also how to make referral."

"Training should include issue like HIV, how to motivate, counsel and morale training"."

Watkins (2003:7) mentions that a lack of training and practice concerning the supervisor's proper role has led to confusion and increased stress among the ranks of supervisors. The job performance model upon which EAP's are based is complex and many supervisors experience great difficulty in implementing the steps necessary to identify, confront and refer employees to the EAP. However the findings of this study further associated a lack of referral to inadequate training within the Department.

The findings therefore align with the view Thome (1990:49) mentions that if supervisors are expected to make referrals, they must understand when and how referrals should be made. It was clear from the findings that supervisors were confused and did not know procedures in accessing the EAP services. The research findings further supported the statement of Cooper (1988:29) that

although supervisory training lays the groundwork for a referral, a good referral heavily depends on the relationship between the EAP practitioner and supervisor.

The respondents stressed a need for ongoing training. It was therefore the researcher's view that ongoing training would improve the practitioner's relationship with the supervisors and enhance a good working relationship. The researcher further supported the statement by Watkins (2003:7) that good training is crucial for supervisors given their primary duty to maintain production goals. The findings highlighted the fact that supervisors were not aware of their role within the referral process hence respondents felt a strong need for training that should be ongoing.

THEME 5: MANAGEMENT SUPPORT

Most of the respondents indicated that the program lacked support from Management. It clearly came out that one of the reasons for under-utilisation and a lack of referrals are due to the fact that the programme did not receive enough support from top management. However Dickman *et al* (1998:10) indicated that it is an absolute necessity that Management, at its highest level, endorses and actively supports their EAP. Watkins (2004:7) further highlights that a successful and effective EAP has the understanding and support of Management and labour at all levels.

The following excerpts were drawn from the interviews during data collection.

"*Management doesn't support the programme.*"

"*Management took measures to create the structure but they don't take interest in the programme.*"

"Management must do more to support the programme. Management neglect the programme."

"Management style interferes with the independence of the programme. However the programme doesn't receive enough support from management."

However, two respondents indicated that Management supports the programme.

Although few mentioned that Management supported the programme, most of the respondents highlighted their concerns and indicated that Management does not support the programme.

THEME 6: MARKETING

It was clearly stated during the interviews that the EAP was not properly marketed. The programme was not visible and employees were not aware of the services rendered by the practitioners. However Oher (1999:91) indicated that with any marketing campaign an EAP promotional effort must have clear and distinct goals and objectives.

The findings revealed that lack of marketing affected referral negatively and the following excerpts were drawn from the responses.

"The programme is not well marketed because people are not aware of the services rendered by the programme."

"Marketing strategy is wrong because marketing should be ongoing and awareness campaigns be conducted periodically."

"The programme should be marketed and be brought to the attention of employees."

"*The programme should be marketed with a clear mandate.*"

"*There is lack of marketing and promotion.*"

During data collection it came out strongly that most of the supervisors felt the programme was not marketed effectively. They were also not sure of their role within the programme. It also came out strongly that they did not use the programme due to lack of proper referral procedures. More importantly they highlighted that they want to be trained about everything pertaining to the programme.

Francek, cited in Dickman *et al.* (1988: 25), defines internal marketing as a systematic promotion of an EAP to a specified employee population. The promotion is carefully tailored to meet the unique needs of the workforce. It was then clear from the responses received that the supervisors wanted training to be specifically tailored-made for them. They wanted to be trained on everything and further requested marketing to be an ongoing process.

Hence Oher (1991:91) indicated that whether promoting the assessment and referral service of the programme, announcing a training activity or advancing a new service component, the marketing of those efforts is as important as the activity or service being promoted. The findings further highlighted that the importance of marketing is as important as the programme itself. EAPA SA (2005:21) reiterated that marketing will ensure that the EAP is highly visible and presented in a positive light to encourage members of the organisation to appropriately utilise the programme.

THEME 7: EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EAP

From the data collected, some of the respondents highlighted the importance of

receiving feedback. The respondents wanted to be kept up to date about the progress made. They further highlighted that they were not comfortable with the fact that they never had a chance to get feedback after referrals were made. The following excerpts were quoted from the interviews during the data collection.

"…feedback given to me after referral was wrong and they didn't even address the issues."

"After consulting, the outcome was not satisfactory."

"I'm not comfortable with the fact that you don't get feedback as a supervisor because of confidentiality."

Respondents felt that the programme is not effective hence they ultimately did not take an interest in the programme itself. The following responses came out during the interviews:

"It is difficult to judge because I never heard of success or failure of this EAP."

"The outcome of my counselling session was negative."

Most of the respondents indicated that the programme was not effective, further referring to the fact that there were no statistics available to support their responses. However few respondents indicated that the programme was effective although they also did not have statistics available to support their statements.

Carnot and Emener (2003:37) indicate that central to the initiatives, mission, goals and objectives of EAP's is the uniquely defined and targeted constituency group, troubled employees in the organisation. Fittingly, employee assistance programme professionals, in order to be effective and efficient in their efforts of

assisting troubled employees, must understand work organisations (Harlow, 2003:19-20).

Hence it was strongly highlighted during data collection and analyses that most of the respondent perceived the programme as ineffective. One respondent further indicated that he never heard of any success meaning that statistics on utilisation is not communicated to both the employee and the supervisor.

3.4   CONCLUSION

In summarising this chapter, it became clear during data collection that the perception of supervisors about EAP was negative. The respondents indicated strongly that the programme was not marketed effectively and the supervisors were not aware of their role within the EAP. The findings further indicated that the supervisors did not use the programme due to lack of referral procedures. Training and marketing strategies were identified as a necessity for the programme success. From the findings it was clear that if the programme did not receive enough support from Management, it would definitely receive less attention from other levels of employee within the Department.

In chapter four the researcher is going to summarise the findings, conclude the research and finally give recommendations to the Department of Foreign Affairs based on the research findings.

CHAPTER 4   CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1   INTRODUCTION

The study focussed on the perception of supervisors towards EAP referrals within the Department of Foreign Affairs. The main purpose of the study was exploratory since the researcher wanted to understand rather than define or explaining the problem. The researcher utilised a qualitative research approach. The respondents were Deputy Directors holding supervisory positions within the Department of Foreign Affairs. A semi structured interview schedule was used to collect data. The respondents were interviewed and given a chance to comment on widely define issues. A one-on-one interview was conducted using a semi structured interview schedule where the respondents were free to expand on the topic.

The researcher went through literature on supervisory referrals, supervisory training and supervisory resistance. She further went through literature on marketing and the need and importance of research within the field of EAP referrals before collecting empirical data. However this chapter aims at concluding the findings and making recommendations. The researcher will therefore summarise the findings and gives a final report of the research.

4.2   FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher will summarise the findings focussing on the seven themes identified during empirical data collection. The following conclusions and recommendations were made.

THEME 1:   UNDERSTANDING EAP

- The respondents failed to understand and connect the importance of the EAP

with productivity; and

- Their understanding of EAP and its importance were vague. They perceived the EAP as a service designed to assisting the troubled employee and not the employer.

Recommendations

- The Department should review their EAP policy on an ongoing basis. Goals, objectives, procedures, role-players, target group and types of referrals should be clearly stated; and
- The policy should reach all levels of employees within the Department and employees should be involved in the tailoring and revision of the programme to create a spirit of self-tailored policy and a sense of ownership.

THEME 2: REFERRAL

- Confronting the troubled employees was a challenge to the respondents;
- The respondents are not aware of different types of referrals and referral procedures thereof;
- The two types of referral methods, informal and formal referrals were used by the respondents but they dint know the difference between them, how and when they are suppose to be used; and
- The respondents didn't document issues that lead to referrals and they also had problems confronting the troubled employees.

Recommendations

- Referral procedures should be developed be accessible and visible to all levels of employees within the Department of Foreign Affairs;
- Intensive training should be conducted on how and when to use different types of referrals; and
- The importance of documenting meetings, sessions and patterns of negative behaviour, and confrontation should be stressed during training.

THEME 3:   EXPECTATIONS OF PRACTITIONERS

- The respondents did not trust the practitioners and doubted their skills, competencies and professionalism;
- The respondents doubted that confidentiality will be maintained and respected; and
- They didn't have confidence in the services rendered by the EAP within the department.

Recommendations

- Practitioners should engage in road shows whereby they promote and market themselves as professionals; and
- Practitioners should and hold components meeting within different directorates. They must hold small group meetings that will enable employees to ask questions and receive clarification on how the programmes work and the roles of the practitioners within the EAP.

THEME 4:   TRAINING

- They did not realise the importance of their positions and the role they are supposed to play within the EAP;
- There is a correlation between the lack of using the programme and a lack of training; and
- There is a need for intensive training that focuses on the entire functions of the EAP, including referral procedures , how and when they are used.

Recommendations

- The EAP should develop a training program for supervisors focussing an all aspects of the programme including both skills and knowledge;
- Referral manuals should be developed and circulated within the Department;

- Training manuals should be available for those who do not have time to attend ongoing training; and

- Information sessions should form part of the induction for newly appointed employees within the Department.

THEME 5:   MANAGEMENT SUPPORT

- Management do not support the programme as much as the respondent expected (pg 77); and

- The programme is under utilised with minimal referrals, due to the fact that it receive minimal support from Top Management (pg 78) .

Recommendations

- Top Management should support and take an active role in promoting the program; and

- Practitioners should have regular sessions with top management to update them on changes and problems they encounter on a regular basis.

THEME 6:   MARKETING

- The EAP was not properly marketed (pg 78); and

- The respondents expect marketing to be ongoing within the DFA (pg 78).

Recommendations

- Marketing should be ongoing and marketing materials should also reach all levels of employees within the Department.

THEME 7:   EFFECTIVESS OF THE EAP

- The respondents distanced themselves from the programme and the majority had a negative perception about the programme (pg 80);

- There was a close relationship between a lack of training and a lack of referrals, which ultimately affects the programme effectiveness as well as utilisation; and

- The respondent perceived the programme as ineffective.

Recommendations

- Ongoing survey on the utilisation rate should be conducted in order to have statistics on utilisation; and

- Employees should be given feedback on the successes and challenges of the EAP services and requesting their inputs of how the programme can be improved to serve their interest better and effectively.

4.3. CONCLUSION

The researcher therefore summarises the research study by indicating that the perception of supervisors on EAP referrals are negative. Factors contributing to the negative perception include lack of knowledge and skills of supervisors, lack of trust between the supervisors and the practitioners; confidentiality is proven to be one of the important factors. Referral procedures are not in place hence referral agents were not aware of their role within the programme, however the researcher is of the opinion that the topic needs to be further researched as reasons for supervisory resistance may differ from one Department to another.

The objective of the study was to give theoretical information on referral and referral services through an in-depth literature review. To collect data through an empirical study on the perception of supervisors within the DFA towards EAP referrals, analysing the findings and comparing the findings to the existing literature. The findings clearly indicated that the perceptions were negative. However lack of training and marketing was also identified as contributing factors towards the negative perception of EAP referrals. From the collected and analysed data, the researcher concluded her study and made recommendations

to the Department of Foreign Affairs.

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TOPIC: PERCEPTIONS OF SUPERVISORS ABOUT EAP REFERRALS WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

<u>SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE</u>

<u>SECTION A:</u> DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1.   Position?

2.   Length of time in the position?

3.   Language?

4.   Gender?

5.   Race?

<u>SECTION B:</u> EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME

6.   What is your understanding of an employee assistance programme?

7.   Is there training available for the supervisors on how to utilise the EAP programme?

8.   What is / are the content(S) of the training?

9.   How effective and intensive is the training?

10   What would you like the training to cover that is not currently in the training manual?

SECTION C: REFERRALS

11. Are you aware of the referral procedures at the DFA?

12 What are the referral procedures at DFA?

13. Are supervisors aware of the referral procedures and why?

14. How often do you refer employees to this programme?

15 How do you usually refer employees to the programme?

17 What are your reasons for referring?

18 What are the reasons for not referring?

19 In your opinion, what are the challenges of referring employees to the programme?

20 Will you utilise the programme yourself, if you were to be referred? Motivate your answer.

SECTION D: EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EAP

21 In your opinion, how effective is the programme? Motivate your answer.

22 How does management support the programme?

23 What are the challenges facing the EAP within the Department?

Thank you for participating in the project.

Ref: Ms M.R Mthimunye
Tel: 012-351 1179
Cell; 0824435712
Fax no: 012 351 1962
E mail: mthimunyemr@foreign.gov.za

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

THE PERCEPTIONS OF SUPERVISORS ABOUT EAP REFERRALS WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The purpose of this study is to explore the perceptions of supervisors about the Employee Assistance Programme within the Department of Foreign Affairs.

For the purpose of this research interviews will be conducted to collect data. A semi-structured interview schedule will be used and the interviews will be taped to assist the researcher to recap the interviews in detail. Ten interviews will be conducted, with each interview lasting a minimum of twenty minutes. The researcher will collect data, analyse the collected data, conduct a thorough literature review and compile a detailed research report in December 2006.

There are no risks as well as financial implications involved, however the results will assist the Department of Foreign Affairs in understanding the reason for EAP underutilisation and also contribute towards the reviewing of the referral manual. It is also anticipated that the findings will serve as a guide during the development of a supervisory training manual.

The respondents in the study are assured that data will be treated with strict confidentiality and anonymity – no names will be made available at any stage during or after the study. Should a respondent decide to withdraw from participating, the collected data will be destroyed. The raw data will only be accessible to Ms Mthimunye while the final report will be made available to the Department of Foreign Affairs and the University of Pretoria. The results will also be published in an academic journal.

Your corporation will be highly appreciated.

I………………………………… understand and made an informed decision that I will participate in this research project.

Signed at ………………………….. on ………………………………….. day of ……………………….2006.

Signature of participant   ……………………………………

Signature of the researcher   ……………………………………

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

CORPORATE SERVICES

File	File No. here
Date	07 August 2006
Type	Submission / Letter
Status	For Attention

335/

3136

Subject: Research on the perception of supervisors towards EAP referrals within the Department of Foreign Affairs

1.   PURPOSE

To request the Director-General's permission to conduct an empirical study within the Department of Foreign Affairs on the perception of supervisors towards EAP referral in partial fulfilment of EAP Masters degree with the University of Pretoria.

2.   SUMMARY

2.1. Ms Mthimunye an Assistant Director within the Department of Foreign Affairs (Security Vetting) is a Masters degree in Social Development (EAP) student at the University of Pretoria and has successfully passed five modules. She has to conduct a mini dissertation as a requirement for her degree. She has compiled a research proposal and the University departmental research committee approved it. The research topic is : "The empirical study on the perception of supervisors towards the EAP referral within the department of Foreign Affairs".

2.2. The purpose of the study is to assist the Employee Wellness Centre (EWC) to understand what supervisors know about the EAP and to identify problems contributing towards lack of referral. The main goal is to explore the perception of supervisors towards (EWC) referral within the Department of Foreign Affairs.

3.   RECOMMENDATION(s)

It is recommended that the Director-General grant permission to Ms Mthimunye to conduct an empirical study on the perceptions of supervisors towards EAP with the department of Foreign Affairs.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1 The official is hereby applying for a permission to conduct an empirical study within the department as soon as possible. The research proposal was submitted to the University and has been approved by the University research committee (See the attached annexure A).

4.2. The official is a Master's in Social Development student at the University of Pretoria and has successfully passed five modules. She has to conduct a mini dissertation as a requirement. The research topic is : the empirical study on the perception of supervisors towards the EAP referral within the department of Foreign Affairs.

4.3. The objective of the study is as follows:

- To collect data through empirical study on perception of supervisor about the EAP within DFA
- To offer theoretical information on supervisory referral through an in-depth literature review
- To formulate conclusions and recommendations to management.

4.4. The respondents will be Deputy Directors within the department and they will be requested to give consent prior to the interview.

4.5. The research findings will benefit the Department of Foreign Affairs, as it will contribute towards the review of the existing referral procedures and the development of supervisory training manual. It is anticipated that the findings of the study will assist in increasing the referral and utilisation rate.

4.6. The officer will submit a copy of the research findings including her recommendations and conclusions.

5. FINANCIAL/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.2. Financial: None

5.3. Legal: None

CLASSIFICATION

(signature) 14-8 / 2006

| Approved | Not Approved | Approved as amended |

Director-General   Date

> DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
> OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL
> Office of
> The 1 4 AUG 2006
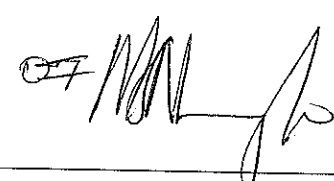> REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

3351

(signature) 11 /08 / 2006

DDG   Date

Granting of permission to conduct a research supported.

> DDG: CORPORATE SERVICES
> Office of the DDG
> 1 0 AUG 2006
> REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA
> DEPT. OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

3736

OFFICIAL	DATE / STAMP	SIGNATURE
CHIEF DIRECTOR Ms M Nompozolo, User haz000, Ext 1020	C.DIR: HUMAN RESOURCES 6310 2006 -08- 07 REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS	_(signature)_
DIRECTOR Given Mashigo , User haa110, Ext1193	2006.08.08	pp H Petzer

| Drafter: M.R.Mthimunye | User: hze203   Ext.:   1179 |

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