

**DEVELOPING AN EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME FOR  
THE UNIVERSITY OF THE NORTH WEST:  
AN OCCUPATIONAL SOCIAL WORK STUDY**

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## ABSTRACT

The goal of this study was to develop a theoretical framework for an institutional EAP. The study aimed at firstly, assessing whether an EAP was needed at the University of the North West. Secondly, ascertaining the extend of knowledge of management, academic staff, support staff and general workers regarding EAPs. Thirdly, developing a theoretical framework, according to which an EAP for management, academic staff, support and general workers can be implemented. The study was conducted at the University of the North West. It comprised of nine members of the management team, twenty- five members of the academic staff, thirty-three support staff members and forty-one general workers. The research tool used with the general workers was the interview schedule. The research tool used with the other three staff constituencies was a self-administered questionnaire.

The findings revealed that all four staff constituencies felt that employees experience problems which are in general, a concern to most employees at a workplace. The four staff constituencies maintained that personal problems had a negative effect on the productivity of employees. All employees felt that an EAP should be implemented. The majority of employees stressed that confidentiality was the most important element of an EAP. Consultation with staff associations was considered to be necessary by the majority of employees. The general workers, in the main, felt that EAP practitioners should be members of the disciplinary committee. All four staff constituencies were of the opinion that employees would be willing to utilise EAP services.

The following is the hypothesis of this study:

**If employees are aware of social problems at the workplace; then they will be in favour of an EAP.**

**This hypothesis was confirmed.**

Recommendations made in relation to the findings suggested that an EAP with a “broad brush” approach should be developed; that an EAP Advisory Board be established; Location of an EAP should emphasise accessibility; Demotivation of staff and the low staff morale should be addressed. The resources that are already available on campus should be utilised. An alliance of supporters should be developed with related service providers. Appointed EAP personnel should be respectable people who are capable of upholding confidentiality. A need to investigate the perceptions of other South African universities regarding the development of EAPs was also suggested.

#### **List of Key Concepts**

- **Employee Assistance Programme**
- **Occupational Social Work**
- **Troubled Employee**
- **EAP Model**
- **External Model**
- **In-house Model**
- **Constructive Confrontation**
- **Productivity**
- **Referral System**
- **The University**

## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this research report entitled :

**DEVELOPING AN EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME FOR THE  
UNIVERSITY OF THE NORTH WEST : AN OCCUPATIONAL SOCIAL WORK  
STUDY**

Is my own unaided work, and that I have given full acknowledgement to the sources I have used.

Figures that appear in the text of this dissertation have been duly checked and are accurate.



.....  
**Eileen M Molebatsi**

**SEPTEMBER 1997**

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## **DEDICATION**

To my husband, Sam, without whom this research report could have been completed a lot earlier!

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

Local and overseas literature abounds with information regarding the important role that Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs) play in industry and in universities (Cahill, 1984; Murray-Bruce, 1990; du Plessis, 1992; Terblanche, 1992).

This seems to suggest that EAPs can be viewed as cornerstones of the world of work.

### **1.2 MOTIVATION FOR THE PRESENT STUDY**

The universities are similar to other large complex organisations in that they mirror much of the surrounding social order (Sullivan and Poverney, 1992:2).

The new South Africa is faced with the challenges and opportunities which are presented by its new policy, namely, the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP).

One of the objectives of the RDP is that essential services should be taken to the people (Reconstruction and Development Programme, 1994:144). The writer is of the opinion that a university EAP would be in keeping with this broad mission of the RDP.

The University of the North West is currently involving all the relevant stakeholders in initiatives aimed at the transformation of the

university. The researcher is of the opinion that the proposed study which is a needs assessment, could contribute towards initiatives to transform the university. A needs assessment is both a research and a planning activity (Balzer and Pargament, 1988:55).

### **1.3 THE GOAL OF THIS STUDY**

The goal of this study is to develop a theoretical framework for an institutional EAP.

### **1.4 SPECIFIC AIMS OF THE STUDY**

The study, which is a needs assessment, attempts to do the following:-

1. To assess whether an EAP is needed at the University of the North West.
2. To ascertain the extent of knowledge of management, academic staff, support staff and general workers/labourers regarding EAPs.
3. To develop a theoretical framework according to which an EAP for management, academic staff, support staff and general workers can be implemented.



## **Research Questions**

### **Main Question**

- Does the university's working community perceive an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) to be necessary in their workplace?

### **Subsidiary Questions**

- What type of problems do employees at the University of the North West experience?
- How often do they experience such problems?
- Do they perceive these problems as affecting their on-the-job productivity level?
- How do they currently deal with such problems?

## **1.5 NATURE OF SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

The study includes a theoretical background on EAPs in general and university EAPs in particular. The scope of this study also includes an analysis of the responses of the following constituencies of the university:-

- Management
- Academic Staff
- Support Staff
- General Workers/Labourers

## 1.6 HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

The following is a hypothesis of this study:

**If employees are aware of social problems at the workplace, then they will be in favour of an EAP.**

## 1.7 ANTICIPATED VALUE OF THE FINDINGS

The data could be of value to researchers who wish to initiate EAPs in South African tertiary institutions.

The findings could assist the universities in preparing for EAPs proactively by involving the potential users of the services in developing a suitable EAP.

The universities could be assisted in deciding on a policy to be adopted for Employee Assistance Programmes.

## 1.8 DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN

The study is a descriptive research design in that it seeks to describe the perceptions of employees around issues of an EAP.

One of the advantages of the descriptive design is that “... *it purports to be a reliable portrayal of what is perceived, to give a truthful image of the matter investigated*” (Hofmeyr, 1994:4).

The descriptive design is also concerned with conditions that exist, practices that prevail, beliefs and attitudes that are held, processes that are ongoing, trends that are developing as well as with investigating possible cause-and effect relationships by observing an existing condition (Behr, 1988:96).

## 1.9 DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is undertaken at the University of the North West and makes use of the following:-

### **Literature Study**

The relevant literature on university EAPs is studied so as to inform the researcher about what has been done in EAP at universities. This will help the researcher in gaining insight into the issues of the university as a workplace.

Literature study also assists the researcher in focusing on the relatedness of the review to the issue of developing an EAP for the University of the North West.

### **Empirical Study**

In this study, the empirical investigation is conducted as follows:-

### **Population**

The population of this study is the employees of the university. However, the researcher used the “study population” as postulated by Rubin and Babbie (1989:197), which allows the study to be confined to employees who are not on sabbatical, maternity or any type of leave.

The researcher requested the Computer Centre of the University of North West to access separate print-outs for academic staff, support staff and general workers.

### **Sample**

The sample consisted of the following categories of employees:-

- Management. Due to the smaller number of people in management, this category included the entire management which is a total of ten members.
- A random sample which is representative of the following constituencies was drawn:
  - Academic staff (10%), which is twenty-five (25) lecturers;
  - Administrative staff (10%), which is thirty-three (33) support staff members;
  - Labourers/general workers (10%), which is forty-one (41) general workers.

### **Questionnaires**

In this study, which is quantitative in nature, use was made of self-administered questionnaires as proposed by Grinnell, Jr. (1988:189).

Questionnaires were administered to management, academic staff, administrative staff and to general workers.

### **Pretest of Questionnaires**

The pretest was conducted on categories of employees who were likely to resemble employees of the University of the North West, namely, employees of the University of the North.

### 1.10 FOCUS OF THIS STUDY

This study will focus **mainly** on Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs) in tertiary institutions. The general theory or literature of EAPs in the industrial setting will not be dealt with in detail but will be alluded to when illustrating issues that are inherent in institutional EAPs.

### 1.11 UNIVERSITY EMPLOYEES AND INSTITUTIONAL GOALS

There is an inter-relatedness between achieving the goals of a university and the level of functioning of its employees.

Kriel (1982:18-20) discusses the goals of a university. A summary of this discussion points to three main goals of the university, namely, **teaching, research and community service.**

The researcher is of the opinion that the university can achieve its goals only if it takes cognisance of the important role that the employees play towards its goal attainment.

Dhlomo (1982:56) points out that “... *the administrative structure of a modern university is no different from that of a big corporation whose main motive is to maximise profits while also attending to the welfare and security of its employees*” (Dhlomo, 1982:56).

The above view is supported by Lynton (1984:12) who refers to the importance of the development as well as the maintenance of human resources. He also advocates what he refers to as the “investment in people”. (Lynton, 1984) : 12)

Jones (1985:7) is in support of the view that “investment in people” is an important aspect of EAPs. He states that people maintenance would increase the human potential and resources. People maintenance according to Jones, will improve work attendance and reduce medical expenses.

To the researcher, “investment in people” and “people maintenance” means that organisations (universities included) can only achieve high returns if they placed a high premium on the development and well being of their employees. The development of employees could be said to be one of the main objectives of an Employee Assistance Programme.

Uehling (1983:101) is of the opinion that the morale of the academic and support staff has everything to do with the quality of teaching which takes place at a university.

Uehling (1983:101) further points out that more recently, the universities are beginning to focus more on the morale of the support staff. She refers to the support staff as “.. *a much neglected group*” (Uehling, 1983:101).

To the researcher, the above notion seems to indicate that the support staff is not getting the attention it deserves from university management. This also seems to have implications for the need for an advocacy role which could be played by a university EAP.

## **1.12 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

### **1.12.1 Literature Survey**

The paucity of South African literature on EAPs in general and on South African university EAPs in particular, necessitated the study of American literature, which has limited applicability to the South African context.

### **1.12.2 Sampling**

The size of the sample was small and confined to one university. The results will have to be generalised with caution.

### **1.12.3 Data Collection Methods**

- The questionnaires could have a response bias of either management, academic staff or administrative staff wanting to be perceived either positively or negatively by the researcher.
- The general workers were unable to complete the questionnaires independently; this necessitated training assistants to assist them with questionnaire administration. This activity was time-consuming and it could also have a response bias of the general workers wanting to be perceived either positively or negatively by the research assistants.

### **1.12.4 Current Turmoil in South African Tertiary Institutions**

The South African tertiary institutions are currently in a state of turmoil and the problems are unique to this country.

In an article in the “*City Press*” of May 1996, the Education Minister, Sibusiso Bhengu, states that “... *current problems at institutes of higher learning had been caused by the fact that most institutions resisted change and that most institutions of learning needed speedy transformation to cope with the new order*”.

Louw and Kendal (1990:184) view the problems that are inherent in the South African tertiary institutions from a different perspective. They postulate that in South Africa, education has been a focal point of political unrest and boycotts because it is provided by the central government. These authors propose that decentralisation and deregulation would improve the quality and quantity of education and that in addition, decentralisation would also de-politicise education.

To the researcher, the above views on education illustrate that there are complex problems in the South African tertiary institutions and that these problems could probably have implications that are unique to the South African institutional EAPs.

### **1.13 OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS**

- The term “Employee Assistance Programme” (EAP), describes the various interventions at the workplace which are aimed at helping employees who are experiencing personal problems.
- The term “broad brush” denotes the EAP approach which encompasses a broad spectrum or range of problems that employees experience at the workplace.



- The term “Reconstruction and Development Programme” (RDP) refers to the government’s policy framework designed to redress the imbalances caused by apartheid. This policy framework is also aimed at the building of a democratic, non-racial and non-sexist South Africa.
- UNW is an acronym of the University of the North West. The two are used interchangeably.
- The term “management” in this study refers to the following:- Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellors, Deans of the various schools within the university, the university Registrar, and the Deputy Registrar (Staffing)
- The term “faculty staff” and “academic staff” in this study refer to staff members who are lecturers. The two are used interchangeably.
- The term “researcher” in this study, refers to the author of this research report.
- The term “tenure system” refers to a system of permanent appointment of lecturers at a university.

#### **1.14 USE OF REFERENCES**

All references in the text are numbered chronologically and are linked to a list appearing at the end of the dissertation which has been arranged alphabetically. Where authors have been directly quoted, page numbers are indicated after the reference number.

### 1.15 LAYOUT OF THIS REPORT

This research report is presented in the following manner:-

- Chapter One contains a general introduction to research with aspects such as motivation, goals, aims, hypothesis, anticipated value of the findings, description of the research design and methodology, scope and focus of the study.

The chapter also deals with limitations of the study, a brief overview of university employees and institutional goals; a brief discussion of current turmoil in South African tertiary institutions is also dealt with.

The chapter is concluded by a list of operational definition of concepts and an explanation of how references are utilised in the report.

- Chapter Two gives a theoretical perspective on **Employee Assistance Programmes**; components of an EAP such as goals and functions are discussed; the chapter also discusses professionals responsible for EAP.

The chapter also provides a theoretical background and literature review on emergence of EAPs at universities; the university as a workplace; problems that are common to universities and other workplaces as well as a discussion of problems that are unique to the University of the North West setting.

The chapter is concluded by providing a brief discussion of EAP policy.

- Chapter Three contains a discussion of the research methodology and design.

This chapter provides a classification of the research design.

The following components of the research methodology are discussed: Literature and Empirical Study, population, sample, the research tool, cover letter, pretest as well as obtaining organisational consent for the study.

- Chapter Four provides a detailed presentation and analysis of the research findings.

The chapter gives a brief demographic description of the employees of the University of the North West.

The chapter also provides a presentation of the employees' problem profile, problem perception and EAP policy issues.

The chapter is concluded by a presentation of employees' input regarding ideas which could contribute towards utilising EAP services on campus.

- Chapter Five consists of a summary of the entire study.  
The chapter also provides an identification of main findings and their implications.

The chapter is concluded by providing motivated recommendations.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW ON EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMMES FOCUSING ON EAPs IN A TERTIARY EDUCATION SETTING.

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

The term “Employee Assistance Programme” (EAP) describes the various interventions at the workplace which are aimed at helping employees who are experiencing personal problems. Lubin, Shanklin IV and Sailors (1992:47) define an EAP as follows

*“... policies and procedures adopted by employers in order to identify problem employees, including those with alcoholic involvement, as manifested by deteriorating job performance. Once identified, such employees are steered to a variety of agencies (both inside and outside the workplace) for the express purpose of receiving treatment or rehabilitation”*  
(Lubin et al., 1992:47)

To the researcher, the above definition seems to have the following shortcomings:

- If the EAP policies are not carefully thought out, an EAP could be perceived as intended for people who are not coping because they were identified as “problem employees”.

- An EAP could also be perceived as not being proactive because employees are not being educated about issues that may enhance their on-the-job functioning to ensure that they do not end up being “problem employees”.

## **2.2 GOALS OF AN EAP**

The researcher will not go into an in-depth discussion of the goals of an EAP because EAP literature abounds with information regarding EAP goals. However, a brief summary of the goals will be presented as per Tanner (1991:73).

Tanner (1991:73) states that the goals of individual EAPs may vary but that in general, EAPs hope to achieve the following:

- To contribute towards increased stability of the workforce.
- To increase productivity (or to restore the employee to maximum productivity).
- To enhance the general well-being of employees.
- To foster a positive relationship between employees, unions and employers.

The researcher is of the opinion that the above mentioned points form the main goals of EAPs.

## **2.3 FUNCTIONS OF AN EAP**

EAPs are set up with the aim of assisting employees whose personal problems are interfering with their job performance.

The functions of an Employee Assistance Programme are as follows:

### 2.3.1 Administration

Administration is one of the important and obvious functions of an EAP.

The administration function encompasses marketing, implementation, on-going maintenance, growth and evaluation, research, public relations, staffing and budgeting (Winkelpleck, 1984:174).

Winkelpleck contends that marketing EAPs is more difficult than the marketing of tangible products. She maintains that it is imperative for the administrator to understand the research services delivered by the EAP.

Park (1992:32) contends that EAPs in tertiary institutions need to continue marketing their services through the traditional channels. She maintains that the University Bulletin and the university grapevine have been very effective in educating university employees about the programme.

The researcher supports the view that marketing an EAP at a university setting can be effective if done through the regular issues of the University Bulletin.

The researcher maintains that this will be marketing as well as education because issues that are of interest to the potential users of EAP services could be briefly explained in such bulletins.

As stated earlier, public relations falls under the administrative function of an EAP.

To the researcher, public relations implies that the EAP practitioner is at the interface of the organisation and the employees and that although this is a challenging experience, if it is not carefully thought out, the EAP practitioner could be prone to burnout.

### **2.3.2 Counselling**

Counselling is another crucial function of an EAP. The task of an EAP counsellor is to identify the problem and to provide counselling or referral to counselling.

Winkelpleck (1984:175) maintains that the two most important skills that are required by EAP counsellors are : the ability to relate to a wide variety of people and the ability to do quick, reasonably non-threatening assessments.

In illustrating the role of counselling in an EAP, Murray-Bruce (1990 : 335 - 336) states that any employee who is experiencing a personal problem should be free to contact an experienced counsellor who is not part of personnel management for purposes of stress counselling; the employee should be assured that no feedback will be given to the company.

The researcher supports the above view and maintains that the EAP policy should reflect that there is confidentiality and that no feedback will be given to the employer unless this is negotiated with the employee.

To the researcher, the counselling function is very crucial and it can either develop or destroy an EAP.

### **2.3.3 Identification of Problem Workers**

Early identification of problem workers is an important function of an EAP because valued employees can be reclaimed before serious deterioration of their workplace productivity occurs.

Terblanche (1988:86) contends that an EAP is valuable because it gives the employer a mechanism for identifying problem workers. Terblanche (1988:86) further points out that the advantage of early identification would be that at the early stages of the problem, prognosis is usually good and chances of successful intervention are greatly increased.

Santa-Barbara as cited in Klarreich et al. (1985:383) is also in support of the notion of early identification of problem workers because according to him, employers can reduce the costs when employees are assisted before they become seriously dysfunctional which in turn could result in their performance being adversely affected.

Googins and Godfrey (1987:133) are also in support of the notion that the workplace should have a mechanism of identifying the employee with a problem.

Googins and Godfrey (1987:133) maintain that an EAP practitioner can identify problem workers through monitoring job performance. They maintain that problems in job performances are manifested in signs such as absenteeism, sickness, tardiness and overall employee deterioration. They maintain that monthly absenteeism forms, employee appraisal sheets and accident reports are mechanisms through which alcoholic employees become known and linked to the EAP.



The researcher supports the function of early identification of problem workers and maintains that it can be fruitful if supervisors and first-line managers are sensitised and trained to identify such workers within a **containing and supportive environment**.

#### **2.3.4 Assessment**

The purpose of assessment is to help the EAP practitioner to understand the problems as well as the employee's perspective of the problem. This is important and will assist the EAP practitioner in planning for problem solution or for alleviating the problem.

Myers as well as Erfurt and Foote, all cited in Terblanche (1988:100) spell out the importance of the assessment function within an EAP. According to Myers, assessment involves determining the nature of the employee's problem, the relevant services for treating the problem as well as determining who is best qualified to provide such a service. Myers maintains that the most important step is arranging an appointment for the employee with the service provider.

The importance of assessment is supported by Shank (1985:82) who goes on to spell out the important steps in assessment, namely: collecting and analysing information, developing contracts and preparing an assessment statement.

Assessment is also acknowledged by George (1983:72) when she states that it refers to provision of preliminary assessment and referral services to employees referred through a company EAP.

Terblanche (1988:100) points out that assessment requires that there should be a knowledge of available community resources. Terblanche (1988:100-101) points out further that a deficit in knowledge of what is available in the community could lead to poor judgement.

The researcher agrees with the above view and is also of the opinion that assessment is crucial for a problem-solving process. Through an incorrect assessment an EAP practitioner could, so to speak, “short change” the problem worker; this, in the opinion of the researcher, could result in a negative perception of an EAP.

### **2.3.5 Referral**

Within an EAP, there is the referral task that is carried out by the EAP practitioner as well as the referral role that is played by supervisors.

Terblanche (1988:101) contends that referral of problem workers is an important function of an EAP. He also points out that referral is usually a role of the supervisor and that it is of importance that supervisors should have a full understanding of their role as referral agents.

Kurtz as cited in Terblanche (1988:101) cautions against what he refers to as “rush into treatment” which is likely to take place if referral is not properly handled.

Frisch and Leepson (1983:190 - 193) support the importance of referral for troubled employees. They have drawn a set of referral guidelines which link the troubled employees with resources outside the organisation.

Frisch and Leepson (1983:191) further state that the line manager's task in the referral process, is to successfully assess the situation and to prescribe the help that is needed so that performance at the workplace should improve.

In the researcher's opinion, the role that is supposed to be played by supervisors implies that they have to be adequately trained if they are to be effective in facilitating the referral process.

### **2.3.6 Broker.**

The function of a broker within an EAP context is of benefit to the employee.

Wenzel (1983:47) contends that the EAP counsellor can be seen as a broker. He explains the task of a broker as that of bringing together two parties who need each other. Wenzel maintains that to be effective, the brokers would have to thoroughly understand the needs and resources of each party and to know a sufficient number of options so as to make the best referrals.

Wenzel (1983:47) maintains that employee assistance brokers provide services to the following :-

- employees
- family members
- the employer
- treatment centres
- counsellors and other community resources
- providers of employee benefits

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The researcher is of the opinion that if the EAP practitioner is to function as an effective broker, he will have to be knowledgeable about the organisation, the available community resources and have the skill of linking the employees to the relevant resources.

### **2.3.7 Advocacy**

The advocacy function could be explained as the function of taking up issues on behalf of the employee particularly in cases where the system appears not to be sympathetic or interested in the employee's problem.

Hollis and Woods (1981:104) define this term succinctly by stating the following:

*“The term ‘advocacy’ describes activities through which the worker strives to secure for clients, services to which they are entitled, but which they are unjustly denied or unable to secure by their own efforts”*

(Hollis and Woods, 1981:104).

Winkelpleck (1984:175) points out that in terms of the power that the EAP staff has, the advocacy issue may force an administration to listen to the employee and to critically evaluate the situation.

She further explains that certain types of employees seem to get caught in the situation where members of the bureaucracy have become accustomed to not listening to them. Examples of such employees are: non-English speaking, physically handicapped, very talkative people and gay people.

Winkelpleck (1984:175) maintains that for such people, an EAP legitimately serves the advocacy function.

The researcher is of the opinion that with the new government dispensation in place, EAP practitioners will be called upon to ensure that the workplace does not discriminate against any category of employees. This however, to the researcher, implies that problem ownership should still be vested with the employee.

### **2.3.8 Management Consulting**

The function of management consulting seems to be very relevant in the university EAP setting.

Promotion to the university's management positions is usually based on academic merit and not necessarily on the ability to manage.

(Dugan, 1989:48).

Winkelpleck (1984:175) contends that if the department head is not "really" a manager, then he does not really manage the people at the next lower level. She also states that supervisors are not always eager to consult other supervisors on the same level because this may be perceived as incompetency if they frequently consult; in such cases, the EAP practitioners can be impartial as outsiders and are therefore, best for such consultations.

Winkelpleck (1984:175) is also of the opinion that non-management staff also need someone impartial that they can talk to about work-related issues. She maintains that non-management staff may feel that they need help with managing work relationships without feeling that their performance appraisal will be negatively affected.

### 2.3.9 Education

The role of education within an EAP cannot be overemphasised.

Winkelpleck (1984:175) points out the importance of education which is preventative in nature. She also maintains that the focus of education could be on work-related as well as on non-work-related issues. Such education could be achieved through mounting workshops on managerial leadership, managing stress or conflict resolution.

Winkelpleck (1984:175) also points out that the educational function is achieved through written communication.

This could be providing general information on an issue, clarifying a problem or informing the employees about the assistance that EAP can offer them.

The researcher is of the view that the education function is inevitable in the university setting and that in addition to educating, this function is also a means of advertising EAP services.

### 2.3.10 Organisational Development

In the case of organisational development, the “client” is not the employee but it is the organisation. Focus is, therefore, on the organisation as a client.

According to Winkelpleck (1984:176), “... *the organisational development function involves an assessment of how the organisation creates and nourishes problems for employees and how the organisation could be “treated” to heal itself*” (Winkelpleck, 1984:176).

Winkelpleck (1984:176) maintains that EAP practitioners are in a unique position of helping the organisation to look at itself objectively because they interact with the widest variety of employees; and their interactions are the least authoritarian in nature compared with anyone in the entire organisation. She also points out that EAP practitioners, particularly the in-house staff, speak to all levels of employees and are, therefore, able to develop a view of the organisation as a social system.

The researcher supports the above view and maintains that the above mentioned function makes it imperative that EAP practitioners should not be part of management.

#### **2.4 PROFESSIONALS RESPONSIBLE FOR EAP**

Occupational Social Workers do not have the exclusive rights to practice EAP; there are other people from other professions who are employed as professionals responsible for EAP. Personnel Officers, Human Resources Managers and Industrial Relations Officers are but a few professionals practising as EAP practitioners.

The above-mentioned view is maintained by Terblanche (1988:26) who states the following:

*“Uit die voorgaande omskrywing blyk dit dus duidelik dat die veld van hulpverlening nie die domein van enige spesifieke professie is nie en dat hulpverlening as ‘n multiprofessionele saak beskou moet word”* (Terblanche, 1988:26).

The above view is also expressed by Masi (1983:163). However, Masi (1983:163) maintains that social work should take the lead and be responsible for the education and training of EAP practitioners.

The researcher supports the view that social workers should take an active lead and become responsible for the education and training of EAP practitioners because their training has adequately prepared them for a task of that nature.

Tanner (1991:79 - 91) elaborates on the above viewpoints by noting that social work is a profession well-suited for EAP work because of its person-in-environment focus; the fact that social workers are well trained in areas of assessment, referral and follow-up. He also points out that social work values are important to the social worker in the EAP setting.

## **2.5 WORK AND THE MEANING OF WORK**

Work defines who we are. The significant part that is played by work can be illustrated by the fact that human beings often introduce themselves in terms of their professions.

Akabas and Kurzman (1982:35) support the importance of work by stating the following: *“On the other hand, society acknowledges full social membership for those who work, and, on the other hand, it imposes social stigma on those who do not work: this is part of the incentive package”*. (Akabas and Kurzman, 1982:35).

Christie (1988:178) contends that work is a central human activity and that it affects everything that humans do.



Akabas and Kurzman (1982:41) give an apt description of the meaning of work for individuals by referring to it as "...a cornerstone of life".

To endorse the importance of work, Masi and Maiden (1985:83) state that work reinforces one's ego, and that through job performance, one can identify employees with personal problems.

In support of the above, Gustavson and Balgopal (1991:79) state that social workers can do the following for the employer and the employee: They can help employers increase productivity and also help to humanise the workplace.

Perlman as cited in du Plessis (1992: 201 - 202) maintains that social workers (this in the opinion of the researcher, could be extended to include EAP practitioners) should understand the work environment of clients and use this knowledge in the helping process.

The researcher supports this view and maintains that this is a proactive stance because problems could be prevented by teaching employees ways of transferring positive work experience to their other relationships and vice-versa.

## **2.6 EMERGENCE OF EAPs AT OVERSEAS UNIVERSITIES**

In comparison to industry, the universities could be said to have embraced the concept of an EAP at a relatively late stage. In this sense, the universities could be regarded as late-comers to the EAP scene.

As stated in Chapter I, the universities mirror much of the surrounding social order (Sullivan and Poverney, 1992:2).

To the researcher, this seems to imply that the universities are not immune from

employee related problems.

Balgopal and Stollak (1992:90) point that the universities, like other work settings, face problems of work stress and absenteeism on the job as well as external pressures such as alcoholism, substance abuse and family problems.

Balzer and Pargament (1988:56) maintain that the problem is not simply knowing that employees need assistance, but that it involves learning what kinds of assistance are necessary, appropriate and effective. They maintain further that such information will ensure that unnecessary or unused services are eliminated before an organisation incurs any costs.

In the researcher's opinion, learning what kinds of assistance are necessary, appropriate and effective, will also have a direct impact on the use of relevant services by employees.

## **2.7 THE UNIVERSITY AS A WORKPLACE**

Although the university as a workplace is similar to other organisations, it has certain unique characteristics. These characteristics are as follows:

### **2.7.1 The University as a Highly Professionalised, Client Serving System**

Unlike industries which are mainly product orientated, the universities are fundamentally, people-processing organisations.

Balbridge as cited in Thoreson and Hosokawa (1984:56) maintains that in order for the universities to handle that complex and delicate task of being a "people-processing" organisation, they usually have a large staff of highly trained professionals. Balbridge also points out that these professionals' expertise is necessary to deal with clients' needs in a holistic manner.

Balbridge (1984:56) postulates that the first characteristic of universities is that they are highly professionalised, client-serving systems.

The researcher acknowledges the above view but is also of the opinion that working with professionals may pose unique challenges for the EAP practitioner.

### 2.7.2 Tenure System

As stated in Chapter 1, “tenure system” refers to a system of appointing lecturers to permanent positions at a university.

Thoreson and Madsen as cited in Balgopal and Stollak (1992:110) maintain that the tenure system makes it difficult to use job loss as a potential motivator for change.

The above view is also noted by Thoreson in Thoreson and Hosokawa (1984:130) when he states that tenure seriously diminishes the threat of job loss as a motivator.

Gottlieb in Thoreson and Hosokawa (1984:78) notes the problems that can be caused by the “tenure system”. He states that untenured staff feel marginalised and may also fear the idea of sharing their problems with tenured staff because they may worry that their intentions may be misconstrued by the tenured staff.

Gottlieb summarises the effects of tenure on untenured staff as follows :  
*“...the politics of tenure conspire to isolate and alienate junior faculty”*  
 (Thoreson and Hosokawa, 1984:78).

In the researcher’s opinion, the tenure system could be perceived by some

academic staff as a permanent guarantee of their jobs, regardless of a deterioration in their performance. However, the researcher is also of the opinion that to the motivated academician, being in a tenured position could be perceived as a challenge for increased academic excellence which could be interpreted as a higher level need.

### **2.7.3 Lack of Management Skills**

As previously stated, there is a tendency to assume that if a lecturer who is exceptional in his field of study is promoted to a managerial position, that he will automatically excel as a manager.

The managerial positions at the university are attainable by promotion which is based on academic merit and not necessarily on managerial skills (Dugan, 1989:48).

To the researcher, this seems to imply that a good academician does not necessarily make a good manager.

The above could also imply that the EAP practitioner at a university setting is faced with a daunting task of recommending that people who are promoted to management positions should be exposed to relevant in-service training programmes.

### **2.7.4 The Differences in the Work Environment of Academic Staff and that of the Administrative Staff**

There is a clear distinction between the work environment of the academic staff and that of the administrative staff.

Sullivan and Poverney (1992:2) point out that the bureaucratic structure is

prevalent in the administrative side of staff and that the academician's work environment is more collegial in nature. According to Sullivan and Poverney, this difference illustrates a specific example of what they refer to as structured disadvantage in the workplace; they maintain further that this is a source of work related stress.

In the researcher's opinion, the above situation is likely to create tensions that may require intervention by an EAP practitioner.

#### **2.7.5 An Apparent Lack of Clear-Cut Job Performance Standards**

Unlike in industry, the job performance standards in a university setting are usually not clearly defined.

Bean (1993:34) contends that universities have no clear-cut production quotas or goals. In support of this view, Bean (1993:34) states further that a student's failure to graduate is viewed as a failure of the student, not the academician.

The researcher is of the opinion that the lack of clear-cut job performance standards would make performance appraisal very difficult because the criteria for appraisal would not be objective.

#### **2.7.6 Lack of Clear Guidelines for Supervision**

At universities, supervision of staff is a difficult task.

Bean (1993:34) points that universities have a vague supervisory structure and that the academic professional's work is unsupervised and performed in isolation.

In support of this, Ward (1989:38) maintains that professional staff tend to

work “... *in relative isolation from supervision*”.

Dugan (1989:47) points out that evaluation of academic and administrative staff is conducted by peers rather than supervisors: that, in many cases, there are no clear standards or guidelines for supervision, and that where available, such standards vary from one department to the other.

The researcher is of the opinion that if there are no guidelines for supervision, it might be difficult to set up a mechanism for early identification of problems at a university.

#### **2.7.7. A Tendency Towards an Ambiguity of Goals**

In a university setting, goals are usually not clearly stipulated.

Balgopal and Stollak (1992:105) point out the difference between goals at a university setting and in industry. They state that in industry, goals are stipulated in measurable terms whereas at universities, there is an ambiguity of goals.

Balbridge in Thoreson and Hosokawa (1984:55) is of the opinion that there is a goal diffuseness about the university organisation. He further points out that managing a large organisation is tough enough when one knows what one is doing, but that when goals are unclear, the level of difficulty increases significantly.

According to Balgopal and Stollak (1992:105), output goals at a university tend to be vague. They state that it is difficult to objectively measure the output of a professor and the quality of his work. To illustrate their point further, they explain that at a university, the number of publications a year

often serve as proof of productivity but that the quality of such publications is difficult to gauge.

The researcher is of the opinion that the above criticism is not objective because publications in particular, have to satisfy the criteria as set out by the relevant disciplines.

### **2.7.8 The Academician's Apparent Resistance to Counselling**

The academicians tend to shun counselling.

Educators are typically neither encouraged nor traditionally trained to seek outside sources for help with personal problems (Ward, 1989:38).

The above view is also supported by Harlacher and Goodman who assert that “...*possessing a high-level corporate title or doctorate does not vaccinate a person against life's challenges*” (Harlacher and Goodman, 1991:35).

Stoer-Scaggs (1991:67 - 73) discusses the Ohio State University Faculty and Staff Assistance Programme (UFSAP), which uses a “Faculty Model”. According to her, this model is successful in effecting a level of sensitivity and change among faculty. Stoer-Scaggs points out that a faculty model was developed to create awareness and to stimulate the use of an EAP among faculty. Stoer-Scaggs (1991:73) contends that since the integration of the Faculty Model, there has been an increase in the number of faculty members who have utilised an EAP.

The researcher is of the opinion that an EAP at a university setting has to constantly work on strategies to encourage use of services by the academicians.

### **2.7.9 Professional Versus Institutional Identification**

Academicians could be said to have a dual allegiance.

Thoreson in Thoreson and Hosakawa (1984:126), points out that academics are members of both a particular faculty and a specific discipline. He further points out that this “dual identity” has led to a major commitment by academics to off-campus activities that take up a lot of time and energy.

The researcher is of the opinion that the above state of affairs could contribute to a decline in job performance of some academics and that this could result in the need for EAP intervention.

## **2.8 BRIEF HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF EAPs IN SOUTH AFRICA**

Employee Assistance Programmes could be described as a relatively new field in South Africa.

Terblanche (1992:19) points out the following regarding EAPs in South Africa:

- EAPs emerged in the beginning of the eighties
- EAPs were initiated by the Chamber of Mines
- The concept of an “EAP” in its traditional structured format is quite new in industry.

To the researcher, the above implies that the onus lies with the EAP practitioners in South Africa to be involved in research which will enhance and inform relevant policies for EAPs.



## 2.9 EAPs IN SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES

There is research on EAPs in South Africa. In contrast, no research has focused on the effect of or perceptions of EAPs by university employees in this country.

To the researcher, the apparent “slowness” of local universities in developing and adopting EAPs seems to be comparable to the manner in which overseas university EAPs emerged.

## 2.10 PROBLEMS THAT ARE COMMON TO THE UNIVERSITIES AND OTHER WORKPLACES

The universities are to a great extent, a reflection of the broader society; therefore, the problems of society, and by implication, the workplace, exist in the university as a workplace. Briefly, these are as follows:-

### 2.10.1 Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is one of the problems that are prevalent at a university as a workplace.

The researcher acknowledges that sexual harassment could also affect the students; however, for purposes of this study, the discussion of sexual harassment will be confined to the employed population of the university.

The American Psychological Association as cited in Kadushin (1985:75) defines sexual harassment as “*deliberate or repeated comments, gestures, or physical contact of a sexual nature that are unwanted by the recipient*” (Kadushin, 1985:75).

A report of the Equal Opportunity Research Project (EORP) on “*Challenging Sexual Harassment : A Conference on Strategies within Tertiary Education*” stated that sexual violence on campuses exist as a central social problem; that the problem is difficult to deal with if there is no policy on sexual harassment in place.

The researcher is of the opinion that policy alone is not enough for resolving problems of those who are victimised but that the EAP practitioner should play a major role in creating a climate that is sensitive to issues that constitute sexual harassment.

#### **2.10.2 Anxiety Regarding Possible Job Loss**

There is stress, not previously encountered in the history of the North West Province in general, associated with the possibility of losing one’s job and not being able to find a comparable position.<sup>1</sup>

The above state of affairs is bound to be a source of added stress and anxiety in the workplace.

The researcher is of the opinion that the above situation also holds for employees at universities because the university is part of the broader society.

The researcher is also of the opinion that employees at universities are also insecure and anxious about the possibility of retrenchment. The EAP practitioner’s task in this regard would be to prepare employees for this

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<sup>1</sup> *The premier of the North West Province, in a television interview during the third week of February 1996, stated that all parastatals will have to undergo budget cuts, reduction in staff and merging of certain services and functions.*

eventuality as well as to ensure that employers appreciate the problems that are brought forward by retrenchment.

### 2.10.3 Affirmative Action and Job Advancement

Affirmative action refers to the policies which are set up in place to redress the activities in the workplace which favoured certain groups and discriminated against others. Examples of groups who were discriminated against are women, the physically disabled people, gays and lesbians.

The Draft **White Paper on Reconstruction and Development** as cited in the **Race Relations Survey** (1994/5:p.484) points out that the Government of National Unity (GNU) would establish a “proactive” affirmative action programme.

The Minister of Public Service and Administration, as cited in the **Race Relations Survey** (1994/5: p.485), stated that the public service would be monitored to ensure that it became “racially representative”.

The researcher commends the above initiative but proposes further that the issues of women empowerment should also be treated with the seriousness it deserves.

Wilkinson (1994:9) elaborates by noting the following regarding affirmative action and women at the workplace:

*“As there is increasing pressure on companies to support the ideals of the RDP which are more conducive to transformational leadership, it makes sense for organisations to change their attitude toward women and toward management styles and structures”* (Wilkinson, 1994:9).

The researcher observes that initially, affirmative action will benefit those with an education but that with time, and with the doors of learning being open to all, the younger generation will benefit.

The researcher is also of the opinion that some kind of policy should be in place to ensure that affirmative action takes place at the workplace. However, the policy should have room enough to allow for negotiations between the employer and the employee to take place.

## **2.11 PROBLEMS THAT ARE UNIQUE TO THE UNIVERSITY OF THE NORTH WEST SETTING**

The following are problems which are unique to the university of the North West:

### **2.11.1 The “Class” Difference between the Academic Staff and Students**

Mood as cited in Balgopal and Stollak (1992:103) states that the original function of higher education in the Middle Ages was to make gentlemen of the upper crust of the society. According to Mood “*higher education was supported by the elite, managed by the elite and expected to serve the elite*” (Balgopal and Stollak, 1992:103).

The researcher is of the opinion that the above does not hold for the University of the North West because the majority of the student population is characterised by serious deprivation resultant from parents being either pensioners or domestic workers. This has implications for the quality of teaching because deprived students are from disadvantaged educational backgrounds and attempts at addressing the problem are exacerbated by the fact that most

students cannot afford to buy books and that suitable accommodation is also not affordable.

The researcher is of the opinion that the existence of the difference in the class structure between academics and students can be a source of stress for academics because it impacts on the quality of their teaching.

### **2.11.2 The Existing Trend of Senior Positions at this University**

The senior positions at the University of the North West are in general, occupied by males.

At the **Governance and Transformation Committee (GTC)** meeting which was held on Friday 16 February 1996 the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student Affairs) and the Academic Planner/Transformation Officer reported that the **Portfolio Committee on Education** (National Assembly) was positive about the **University of the North West (Private) Bill** but that it was stressed that policy statements and mechanisms which will ensure that women and historically disadvantaged groups are considered for affirmative action, should be included in the statutes.

The researcher commends the above stance, because in her opinion, if the situation is not corrected, it could generate conflict that is gender based because the situation is not in keeping with the principles of a non-sexist, democratic university.

The researcher is also of the opinion that this has implications for an EAP practitioner playing an advocacy role for the disadvantaged groups.

### **2.11.3 The Size of the University of the North West and the Nature of Resources Available in the Community**

The University of the North West is a relatively small university with EAP related resources. The community around the university is also relatively small and is characterised by fragmented relevant services.

The researcher is of the opinion that this state of affairs requires that services and EAP related resources should be well co-ordinated so that they should be of benefit to the clients.

### **2.11.4 The University of the North West as a University in Transition**

The researcher acknowledges that all universities and the country as a whole are undergoing a process of transformation and transition to a democratic South Africa and that this process involves pain that is inherent in change.

The researcher is of the opinion that for this university, the impact of transformation and transition is perhaps even much greater than in other universities because the university was so to speak, “overtaken” by events which resulted in the abrupt change from the erstwhile Bophuthatswana regime and therefore, did not experience the transition period like other universities.

The prevailing insecurity and concern regarding the governance (or lack thereof) of the North West Province, could also be an added source of stress.

The researcher is of the opinion that the abovementioned issues may be said to indicate an even greater need for an EAP at the University of the North West.

## **2.12 THE NATURE OF SERVICES TO BE OFFERED BY AN EAP AT A UNIVERSITY SETTING**

The literature review seems to suggest that the employees at a university, like those in industry, experience a wide range of personal problems. This implies that an ideal approach would have to be “broad brush”.

Balgopal and Stollak cite a study which was conducted by Thoreson et al (1992:115) on the University of Missouri-Columbia EAP.

The University of Missouri-Columbia employed the industry EAP model which was adapted to meet the needs of both academic and administrative staff. The EAP at that university operates primarily as an information and referral agency.

Constructive confrontation is also used creatively within the Missouri EAP because it is done via supervisory documentation of deteriorating job performance and subsequent referral. A way of avoiding problems associated with constructive confrontation is by tailoring training to a particular department’s needs. Focus is more on what is referred to as “natural” means of intervention (that is, family response rather than supervisor-employee confrontation. An orientation is provided on the available services to academic staff and their families.

The above “model” seems appropriate for a university setting. The researcher is of the opinion that this model could be adapted and extended to suit the University of the North West setting due to the fact that the “information giving” and “referral” nature of this EAP will protect client confidentiality.

### **2.13 EAP POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

Policy declaration is very crucial because it can contribute towards the success of an EAP. Policy declaration should be carefully thought out and be given a lot of time for broad consultation.

Sonnestuhl and Trice (1986:9) maintain that *“policy is the cornerstone of an effective EAP because it articulates the balance between the role of supervisors and others in the workplace and the role of practitioners in the counselling component of the program”* (Sonnestuhl and Trice, 1986:9).

The above statements, by implication, stress the importance of a written EAP policy. Presnall as cited in Sonnestuhl and Trice (1986:9) states that companies without written EAP policies have unwritten procedures for handling troubled employees and that this invariably result in confusion.

The situation of the policy statement that the EAP practitioner at the University of the North West might have to adhere to may be as follows (as adapted from Dickman, Challenger, Emener and Hutchinson, 1988:14).



### **2.13.1 Policy Statement**

This service is primarily designed to assist employees and or members of their immediate families (spouses or dependent children) who are experiencing personal problems and who choose to seek out the assistance of the EAP counsellor on a voluntary basis. The approach for the EAP at the university will be “broad brush”, that is, dealing with any personal problems that may affect the employee’s productivity and/or social functioning.

The policy statement should also reflect or emphasise the fact that the EAP practitioner should not be involved in the disciplinary procedures on campus.

The researcher is of the opinion that it should also be indicated that involvement of EAP practitioners in disciplinary procedures will jeopardise the programme.

### **2.13.2 Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is very crucial in an EAP. Employees want the assurance that what they discuss with the practitioner will remain private.

As stated previously, research conducted by Terblanche indicates that a small majority (55%) of organisations with EAPs stressed the importance of confidential handling of information in the policy statement.

No personal information that is given to the counsellor in the process of assisting the client will be shared with any other source either within the university or with the outside community without the written consent of the employee in question.

The writer maintains that the issue of confidential counselling cannot be overemphasised in the policy.

### **2.13.3 Procedures for Referrals**

It is important to specify the procedures for voluntary and mandatory referrals. For the university, these could be explained as follows:-

- A **voluntary** referral is the referral which is initiated by the employee because of a problem that he may be experiencing.
  
- A **mandatory** or **formal** referral is an option that is available to the employer to use on employees during the latter stages of the disciplinary procedure; typically, there has to be a documented case for termination (Wright in Klarreich et al, 1985:19).

The researcher is of the opinion that EAP practitioners should ensure that they are not perceived as people who are doing management's "policing" or assisting with dismissing employees.

### **2.13.4 Position of EAP Practitioners within the University**

The position of EAP practitioners is very crucial because it can contribute to the support (or lack thereof) that an EAP can enjoy from potential consumers of the service.

The researcher would like to borrow the following ideas as put forward by Terblanche: Ideally, EAP practitioners should not be part of management but should be situated high enough to be able to report to the Managing Director or second in charge.<sup>2</sup>

The researcher is of the opinion that this stance need to be supported by the University of the North West particularly because of the nature of tensions that exist between the staff associations and the management of the university.

#### **2.13.5 Location of an EAP on Campus**

If the planned EAP is to focus on health maintenance and the well-being of employees as well as on the prevention model, the most logical home for it seems to be at the university's Health Centre.

The researcher is of the opinion that this location is suitable because it is not stigmatised on campus. People who are perceived as "coping" use facilities such as the gym and the clinic which are part of the Health Centre.

#### **2.13.6 Record Keeping System**

The EAP at the university needs to introduce a proper recording system so as to ensure effective management, monitoring and evaluation.

#### **2.13.7 EAP Versus Medical and Disability Benefit Plans**

There is a need for the existence of a system of covering costs which are incurred by employees for treatment recommended through an EAP.

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<sup>2</sup> *This is the idea put forward by Terblanche in an EAP class seminar for MSW students*

Terblanche (1992:23) elaborates by noting that financial difficulties very often go hand-in-hand with the existence of social problems.

The researcher supports the above view and is of the opinion that by initial agreement, provision needs to be made for treatment. This in the opinion of the researcher, could relieve the troubled employee from the burden of worrying about treatment costs.

#### **2.13.8 Malpractice/Liability Insurance**

The EAP therapeutic staff needs to be protected (through insurance) against possible claims of malpractice.

#### **2.13.9 Qualifications of EAP Staff**

The success of an EAP is determined, to a large extent, by the qualifications as well as limitation of its staff (Birkland, 1984:46).

Allen in Thoreson and Hosokawa (1984:254) supports the abovementioned view and elaborates by noting that in a university setting, it is advantageous to have an EAP staff member with faculty status because the academicians are more inclined to disclose personal problems to their peers.

To the researcher, this seems to suggest that ideally, in a university setting, the EAP practitioner should possess a masters degree because this is the recommended entry level for the academic staff.

A study conducted by Birkland (1994:45) revealed that in addition to professional qualifications, the following areas were rated as very important:

- Ability to conduct short-term counselling
- Consultative counselling skills
- Financial counselling skills
- Knowledge of professional ethics and legal liabilities
- Familiarity with the legal process and court systems
- Writing Skills

#### **2.13.10 Marketing, Education, Training and Evaluation**

An EAP should be marketed to employees and to their families, to management and to the unions.

- **Education** : The EAP education can be effective if the organisation is committed to it.
- **Training** : Supervisory training should make supervisors **sensitive** to problems of employees
- **Evaluation** : Evaluation should be done on an on-going basis

#### **2.13.11 Treatment Resources**

The EAP practitioner should identify and evaluate the resources that are available to the consumers. A valuable source of evaluation is the feedback that is provided by the employees. A register of all available services should be developed.

### **2.14 SUMMARY**

An EAP in the South African tertiary setting seems to be a field not yet explored. Occupational Social Workers should take the lead in developing EAPs because of the skills, knowledge base and values that are embedded in their profession.

In the words of Tanner (1991:83), social workers should enter the workplace with enthusiasm and confidence because by doing so, they demonstrate that they have “*a positive influence on social and environmental policy*”.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

The goal of this particular study is to develop a theoretical framework for an institutional EAP.

In keeping with the motivation and literature discussions developed in the previous chapters, the specific aims of the present study are the following:

Firstly, to assess whether an EAP is needed at the University of the North West.

Secondly, to ascertain the extend of knowledge of management, academic staff, support staff and general workers/labourers regarding EAPs.

#### **3.2 CLASSIFICATION OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN**

The research design refers to the planning of scientific inquiry (Babbie, 1989:79).

Grinnell and Williams (1990:111) describe the research design as the entire process of the study from problem formulation through dissemination of findings (Grinnell and Williams, 1990:111).

Royse (1992:43) contends that a research design should be considered to be something that resembles a blueprint. He goes on to state that the design outlines

the approach to be used to collect data and that it also describes the conditions under which data will be collected. In short, the research design spells out the who, what, when, where and how of the research project.

Heppner, Kiviighan and Wampold (1992:44) succinctly define the research design by stating the following :-

*“...a research design is a set of plans and procedures that reduce error and simultaneously help the researcher obtain empirical evidence (data) about isolated variables of interest”* (Heppner, Kivlighan and Wampold, 1992:44).

Simply stated, the research design refers to a logical strategy that is to be followed in a study.

Miller (1986:51) defines descriptive research as follows:

*“Descriptive research involves collecting data in order to test hypothesis or answer questions concerning the current status of the subject of the study. A descriptive study determines and reports the way things are”* (Miller, 1986:51).

The descriptive research design can also be described as a study that seeks to use measuring devices to measure and describe relationships between variables.

The researcher is also of the opinion that in the descriptive research design, the variables are not stringently controlled as is the case in the experimental design.

This particular study is a descriptive research design in that it seeks to describe the perceptions of employees around issues of an EAP.

Hofmeyr (1994:4) argues that one of the advantages of the descriptive design is

that “*it purports to be a reliable portrayal of what is being investigated*” (Hofmeyr, 1994:4)

Hofmeyr (1994:5) further states that the most important objective of the descriptive research design is that it highlights the potential relationship between variables.

### **3.3 DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Leedy (1985:91) defines a research methodology as follows:

*“Methodology is merely an operational framework within which the facts are placed so that their meaning may be seen more clearly”* (Leedy, 1985:91)

As indicated in the previous chapters, the study is undertaken at the University of the North West and makes use of the following:

#### **3.3.1 Literature Study**

Relevant literature on university EAPs which is studied so as to inform the researcher about the state of affairs in university EAPs.

Literature study is also used to assist the researcher in focusing on the relatedness of the review to the issue of developing an EAP for the University of the North West.

#### **3.3.2 Empirical Study**

In this study, the empirical investigation is conducted as follows:

##### **Population**



The population of this study consisted of the employees of the University of the North West. The researcher used “study population” as postulated by Babbie (1989:170) which, in a nutshell helps a researcher to redefine a universe and a population. The study population in this case enabled the researcher to confine the study to employees who were not on sabbatical, maternity or any type of leave.

### **Sample and Sampling Procedure**

The sample of this study consisted of the following categories of employees:

- **Management:**  
Ten members of management who were relevant to this particular study, (The deputy registrars, Administration and Student Affairs as well as the University’s Accountant were excluded).

A random sample which is representative of the following constituencies was drawn:

- Academic staff (ten percent) which was twenty-five lecturers, of these lecturers, fifteen were males and ten were females.
- Support staff (ten percent) which was thirty-three. Of the thirty-three, sixteen were males and seventeen were females.
- General workers (ten percent) which was forty-one. Of the forty-one twenty-two were males and nineteen were females.

The initial plan was to send questionnaires to the above mentioned four constituencies of the university. However, when the study was conducted, the general workers were not capable of completing the questionnaires

without assistance. This necessitated the use of research assistants who were inducted by using ideas from Bailey (1987:855 - 191), which could be summarised as follows : explaining details in the cover letter such as the aims and potential usefulness of the study and following the same sequence when asking questions. The respondents were interviewed separately. Each interview lasted about 25 minutes.

### **3.3.3 The Research Tool**

A questionnaire was chosen as the research tool for management, academic and support staff. This particular research tool was used for the following reasons:

Firstly, it enabled the respondents to complete it at a time that was convenient for them. The researcher is of the opinion that this was important because the respondents did not have to interrupt their work schedules.

Secondly, the questionnaire ensured the respondents of their anonymity in responding to sensitive topics.

A structured interview schedule was used as a research tool for the general workers. This particular research tool was used for the following reasons:-

- It was easy to administer because the sample was relatively small. (The forty-one general workers were shared by the three research assistants).
- The research tool gave a valid description of the situation; and
- Due to the nature of the descriptive design, the research assistants were able to obtain and record additional information from comments made by respondents.

This research tool had the following limitations:

- The interaction between the respondent and the interviewer (research assistant) could have affected the responses. (Walker, 1985:48).
- Even though the sample was small, this method of investigation was time consuming.
- The fact that the schedule was structured could have limited the responses.

#### **3.3.4 Obtaining Organisational Consent to Conduct the Study**

Franz (1991:25) maintains that if a study is to be taken seriously in later phases, it must be considered legitimate from the start and that this can be achieved by seeking official sanction from a source that is sufficiently influential so that later planning efforts should not be discontinued.

The researcher sought permission to conduct this study from the office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic).

Grinnell, jr (1988:284 - 285) points out that this is important as a method of protecting people who are asked to participate in the research study.

The researcher approached the Head of the Department of Social Work of the University of Pretoria to ask permission on her behalf. This was done for the following reasons:

- The letter would carry more weight if written by the head of the

department than by the researcher

- Secondly, the knowledge that the research is conducted with the approval of the Department of Social Work (University of Pretoria) as well as with the permission of the Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) University of the North West could induce a response from the respondents.

### **3.3.5 The Cover Letter**

The researcher constructed a cover letter which described the potential usefulness of the study. Leedy (1985:138-140) argues that the cover letter is all important and that it should stress the concerns of the person receiving the letter.

The researcher is of the opinion that by stressing the importance of the co-operation of the respondents, she was using what Bailey (1987:156) considers to be the best way of inducing a reply from participants.

Baker (1988:75) sheds light on the importance of confidentiality by stating that it is a promise to keep identities of the subject known only to the researcher and his selected research assistants.

The cover letter that was sent to members of the management team was personalised.

The researcher opted for personalised letters because management comprised of a relatively small sample and also because this enabled her to appeal for a response from specific individuals.

### 3.3.6 Pre-Test

A pre-test was administered to respondents who were likely to resemble the employees of the University of the North West, namely, the employees of the University of the North. The purpose of the pre-test was to check whether respondents would encounter any difficulties answering the questions, whether questions were clear and unambiguous and whether they would understand what they were being asked (Grinnell, 1988:314).

As it was not possible to have a discussion with the people used for a pretest, the researcher asked them to write any comments they had about the questionnaire. They were also encouraged to write comments about any aspects which were cumbersome.

The pre-test results reflected that respondents did not encounter difficulties in answering the questions, and that the questions were clear and unambiguous.

## 3.4 HYPOTHESIS OF THIS STUDY

According to Bailey (1987:41) a hypothesis may be defined as follows:

*“...a proposition that is stated in testable form and predicts a particular relationship between two (or more variables)”* (Bailey, 1987:41).

It is hypothesised that a significant relationship will be found between the employees' awareness of personal problems that affect them at the workplace and their being in favour of an EAP.

The following is the hypothesis of this study:

**If employees are aware of social problems at the workplace, then they will be in favour of an EAP.**

### 3.5 SUMMARY

In chapter three, the plan or strategy for the research is unfolded. A summary of the discussion is as follows:

The research design that is utilised in this study is the descriptive research because in terms of this design, what is being investigated can be portrayed in a reliable manner. This design was used to enable the researcher to describe perceptions of employees around issues of an EAP.

The methodology is another key aspect in this chapter. Methodology refers to the operational framework within which the facts and their meanings may be perceived.

Use was made of relevant literature study which facilitated the construction of the questionnaire. The empirical investigation covered aspects such as, population, sample and sampling procedures, the research tool, obtaining organisational consent, the cover letter, pretest as well as the hypothesis of the study.

This chapter provided the framework as well as all the details relevant to the execution of the entire study.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This section of the research report is concerned with the analysis and interpretation of data obtained from the questionnaires administered to a representative sample of management, academic staff, support staff and general workers of the University of the North West.

The management questionnaires were utilised mainly to get their views on staff problems and to do a correlation of their views with that of the other three staff constituencies.

#### **4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION <sup>1</sup>**

While the purpose of the study was not to gather descriptive information about employees, it was necessary to collect such data so as to form a profile of the potential users of EAP services at the University of the North West.

The following employee characteristics were collected: age, gender, marital status, number of dependants and their ages as well as the length of time that they have been employed at the university. These characteristics were covered by question 1 - 5 of the three staff constituencies' questionnaires.

A total of twenty-five members of the academic staff members participated in the study.

A distribution of their ages was twenty-five to sixty plus, reflecting a mode <sup>2</sup> of the thirty-five to thirty-nine age group.

- 1 This aspect of the study concerned itself with the demographic details of three staff constituencies, namely, the academic, support and general workers/labourers*
- 2 According to Van Lill and Grieve (1991:42) the mode of a sample of scores is... "the score value which occurs frequently"*

Forty-eight percent of the academic staff members were married; twenty-eight percent were single but in a relationship; twenty percent were divorced and four percent were single and not in a relationship.

Eighty percent of staff members had dependants and twenty percent had no dependants.

A total of thirty-three members of the support staff participated in the study.

A distribution of their ages was thirty to fifty-nine, and, like the academics, they reflected a mode of the thirty-five to thirty-nine group.

Fifty-eight percent the support staff members were married; fifteen percent were single, but in a relationship. Three percent of the support staff were widowed.

Ten percent were single but not in a relationship; fourteen percent were divorced.

Seventy-nine percent of the support staff members had dependants and twenty-one percent had no dependants.

Sixty-one per of general workers were married; seven percent were single, but in a relationship. Five percent were divorced and three percent we re-married. Twelve percent were single and without a relationship. Another twelve percent were widowed.

Ninety-five percent of the general workers/labourers had dependants and five percent had no dependants



#### 4.2.1 The number of years that various staff constituencies have been employed at University of the North West

Question 6 of the three staff constituencies' questionnaires requested the respondents to indicate the number of years that they have been employed at the university. Their responses were as follows:-

**TABLE 1 : NUMBER OF YEARS THAT VARIOUS STAFF CONSTITUENCIES HAVE BEEN EMPLOYED AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE NORTH WEST**

NUMBER OF YEARS EMPLOYED AT UNIVERSITY	VARIOUS STAFF CONSTITUENCIES					
	ACADEMIC		SUPPORT		LABOURERS	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Under 1 year	-	-	-	-	-	-
1 - 5	12	48	10	30	5	12
6 - 10	11	44	19	58	10	25
11 - 15	2	8	4	12	25	61
16+	-	-	-	-	1	2

#### Discussion

The above table could be interpreted as an indication that the university has a more stable workforce in the support staff (58% employed for 6 - 10 years) and the general workers (61% employed for 11 - 15 years as well as 2% who have been in the university employment for 16 years and above).

The researcher is of the opinion that the figures for the academic staff could have been affected by the fact in this institution, the academics moved to the government positions which were created by the new dispensation. <sup>5</sup>

To the researcher, this seems to suggest that if an **Employee Assistance Programme** is implemented at this university, one of its briefs would be to ensure that the university becomes a competitive employer and does not easily lose its valued academics.

#### 4.3 PROBLEM PROFILE

Employees were requested to respond to questions which gave an indication of a problem profile.

Question 7,8 and 9 of the three staff constituencies as well as question 1, 2 and 3 of management requested respondents to give an indication of a problem profile.

The following tables and figures are a presentation of a profile of problems as perceived by employees:

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<sup>5</sup> *Research could be undertaken to establish the brain drain at the university which is directly caused by a move from the university setting to governmental departments*

**TABLE 2 : A PERCEPTION THAT PERSONAL PROBLEMS HAVE A  
NEGATIVE EFFECT ON THE PRODUCTIVITY OF EMPLOYEES.**

RESPONDENTS	YES		NO	
	N	%	N	%
Management	8	89	1	11
Academic Staff	24	96	1	4
Support Staff	32	97	1	3
Labourers	36	88	5	12

### Discussion

This table shows that a relatively high percentage of all employees (all in the upper eighty and upper ninety percentile) are of the opinion that personal problems have a negative effect on the productivity of employees.

Myers (1984:1) points out that with a few exceptions, all organisations do have employees who are sufficiently troubled to an extent that their performance gets affected.

The researcher supports the above view and is of the opinion that it makes **economic** and **humanistic** sense for organisations to adopt strategies that are aimed at addressing personal problems of employees because these problems have a negative effect on workplace productivity.

One such strategy is the implementation of an EAP at the workplace.

Roman in Thoreson and Hosokawa (1985:35) refers to EAP as “... *A performance enhancing device*”.

Scanlon (1984:53) supports the above idea by pointing out that it appears to be a logical conclusion that helping a troubled employee would improve productivity and minimise the cost of re-hiring and training.

The researcher is of the opinion that Scanlon's rationale for helping the troubled employee is valid and that it can be effectively utilised to sell the EAP concept to management.

**TABLE 3 : PERSONAL PROBLEMS THAT MAY BE EXPERIENCED BY EMPLOYEES**

<b>LEVEL OF AGREEMENT / DISAGREEMENT</b>																
<b>PERSONAL PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED BY PEOPLE AT A WORKPLACE</b>	<b>MANAGEMENT</b>		<b>ACADEMIC STAFF</b>		<b>SUPPORT STAFF</b>		<b>LABOURERS</b>									
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>								
	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>						
Personal grief and loss	4	44	5	56	15	60	10	40	12	36	21	64	30	73	11	27
Ill-health	3	33	6	67	5	20	20	80	15	45	18	55	7	17	34	83
Job insecurity due to changes at the workplace	9	100	-	-	25	100	-	-	30	91	3	9	28	68	13	32
Absenteeism	2	22	7	78	4	16	21	84	7	21	26	79	19	46	22	54
Marital or family conflict	4	44	5	56	10	40	15	60	16	48	17	52	14	34	27	66
Alcohol abuse and alcohol abuse related problems	3	33	6	67	4	16	21	84	3	9	30	91	30	73	11	27
Demotivation	7	78	2	22	25	100	-	-	25	76	8	24	25	61	16	39
Legal crises	-	-	9	100	1	4	24	96	3	9	30	91	2	5	39	95
Financial crisis	4	44	5	56	16	64	9	36	29	88	4	12	41	100	-	-
Divorce	1	11	8	89	8	32	17	68	12	36	21	64	-	-	41	100
Drug abuse and drug abuse related problems	-	-	9	100	2	8	23	92	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

## Discussion

Table 3 indicates that a relatively high percentage of all four staff constituencies is of the opinion that the following problems are indeed prevalent at the university. Job security, demotivation, financial crises and marital conflict.

To the researcher, the fact that **few** respondents indicated that absenteeism, alcohol abuse, legal crises and drug abuse were prevalent could be interpreted as reflecting that the university as an employer is more tolerant of such problems than other employers. However, the researcher is of opinion that through an EAP, the university staff need to be educated regarding the effects of these problems on colleagues as well as on workplace productivity.

### 4.4 PROBLEM PERCEPTION

The three staff constituencies, namely, academic staff, support staff and the general workers were requested to give their views regarding what they believed to be problems that may be of concern to employees at the workplace.

In question 9 of the 3 staff constituencies as well as question 3 of the management questionnaire, respondents were requested to order the problems that may be experienced by employees in terms of frequency.

This question was misunderstood by the majority of respondents who ranked **all** the problems into two categories, namely 1 and 11.

The researcher cannot provide a logical explanation for this error because the pretest's response did not indicate that this question had the possibility of being misunderstood by the respondents.

A similar problem was encountered with the employee's response to question 20 of the 3 staff constituencies as well as question 11 of the management questionnaires

The respondents were expected to rank the programmes that may be offered by a university EAP in terms of priority. One was to represent top priority and 12 was to represent least pressing.

This question was misunderstood by the majority of respondents who ranked **all** the programmes into two categories, namely 1 and 12.

The researcher is unable to explain this error because the pretest's response did not indicate that this question could lend itself to misinterpretation by the respondents.

**TABLE 4 : PROBLEMS THAT MAY BE OF CONCERN TO  
EMPLOYEES (Question 10 of staff questionnaires)**

<b>LEVEL OF AGREEMENT / DISAGREEMENT</b>												
<b>PERSONAL PROBLEMS THAT MAY BE OF CONCERN TO PEOPLE AT A WORKPLACE</b>	<b>ACADEMIC STAFF</b>				<b>SUPPORT STAFF</b>				<b>LABOURERS</b>			
	<b>Yes</b>		<b>No</b>		<b>Yes</b>		<b>No</b>		<b>Yes</b>		<b>No</b>	
	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Retrenchment	11	44	13	52	23	70	10	30	36	88	5	12
Job loss due to own behaviour	5	20	19	76	8	24	25	76	2	5	39	95
Job insecurity due to workplace changes	18	72	6	24	30	91	3	9	26	63	15	37
Possible transfer to another department	9	36	14	56	27	82	6	18	31	76	10	24
Financial crises	16	64	9	36	29	88	4	12	41	100	-	-
Other*												

### **Other Problems**

The following is a list of additional problems which were pointed out by the academic and support staff members:



- Interpersonal conflicts at the workplace
- The future of the institution in a changing South Africa
- Lack of mentors (due to resignation of senior staff)
- Lack of decisive leadership
- Low public image of the institution
- Guns on campus
- Lack of an academic culture of learning
- Ineffective management
- Offices that are not well-ventilated

### **Discussion**

Table 4 shows that the majority of the support staff and general workers (70% and 88% respectively) are concerned about the possibility of retrenchment.

The researcher is of the opinion that retrenchment, although common, is not something most employees budget for because it is not as inevitable as retirement. However, in the researcher's opinion, retrenchment is more devastating than retirement.

Hardy (1989:6) asserts that if retrenchment is not carefully addressed, the company is likely to be faced with an exodus of employees as soon as the economic conditions change.

The researcher is of the opinion that employees who are preoccupied with the possibility of retrenchment would be characterised by a heightened anxiety level which will negatively affect workplace productivity

Few employees were concerned with job loss due to own behaviour.

To the researcher, this seems to suggest that the university has a positive workforce and that the EAP practitioners' role would be to ensure that employees remain positive and motivated at all times. However, for those few employees who may end up losing their jobs, EAP practitioners could educate the employer to handle termination as suggested by Skidmore (1990:201), "*...with maturity and sensitivity, for the benefit of both the individual and for the agency*"

The majority of employees were concerned about job insecurity due to changes at the workplace, the possibility of being transferred to other departments as well as with financial crises.

The researcher is of the opinion that the above state of affairs would result in demotivation and less productivity.

EAP practitioners in such instances, would play the following roles: advocacy, broker and teacher/trainer.

**TABLE 5 : PERCEPTIONS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT THE  
UNIVERSITY OF THE NORTH WEST**

<b>LEVEL OF AGREEMENT / DISAGREEMENT</b>																
<b>STATEMENTS RELATING TO SEXUAL HARASSMENT</b>	<b>MANAGEMENT</b>		<b>ACADEMIC STAFF</b>		<b>SUPPORT STAFF</b>		<b>LABOURERS</b>									
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>								
	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>						
Sexual harassment may cause emotional distress	9	100	-	-	25	100	-	-	33	100	39	95	2	5		
Sexual harassment may result in disturbances in interpersonal relations	9	100	-	-	25	100	-	-	32	97	1	3	39	95	2	5
Sexual harassment cause a decrease in workplace productivity	7	78	2	22	25	100	-	-	30	90	3	10	34	82	7	18
Sexual harassment may cause damage to family relations	6	67	3	33	25	100	-	-	21	63	12	37	25	60	16	40
Sexual harassment may cause a decrease in motivation	8	89	1	11	25	100	-	-	31	93	2	7	35	85	6	15
<b>* RELATIVE FREQUENCY IS CALCULATED</b>																

\*Table 5 is the result of a response to question 5 of the management questionnaire and question 12 of the three staff constituencies

## Discussion 6

The employees' responses to all the statements indicate the fact that all agree that sexual harassment is precisely what Lauer (1989:315) refers to as a form of humiliation which many women are subjected to at the workplace.

However, the researcher would like to point out that men are also subjected to sexual harassment.

### **4.4.1 The relationship between perceptions regarding prevalence of sexual harassment and the awareness of an existence of a sexual harassment prohibition policy at the University of the North West**

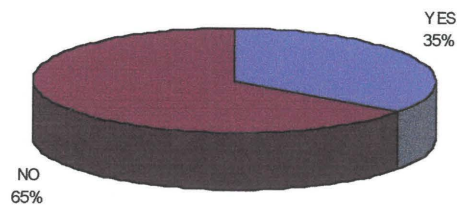
In question 11 of the 3 staff constituencies, employees were requested to indicate whether sexual harassment was prevalent at their university. Their response is reflected in figure 1 (a).

Question 13 of the 3 staff constituencies requested employees to indicate their awareness of the existence of a sexual harassment prohibition policy on campus. Their response is reflected in figure 1 (b)

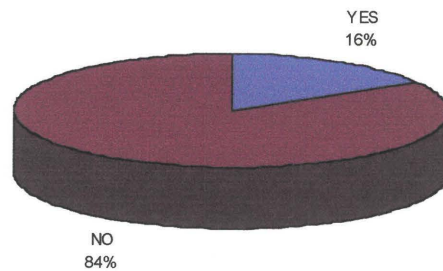
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6 *The researcher deliberately omitted a detailed discussion of sexual harassment because the issue will be adequately addressed in the discussion of Figure 1.*

**Figure 1(a) : EMPLOYEES' PERCEPTIONS OF THE PREVALENCE OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT**



**Figure 1(b) : EMPLOYEES' AWARENESS OF A SEXUAL HARASSMENT PROHIBITION POLICY**



### **Discussion**

Lauer (1989:315) describes sexual harassment as a form of humiliation to which women have been subjected to.

Figures 1(a) and 1(b), seem to point out that there is a relationship between a sensitivity about sexual harassment and an awareness of the existence of a policy

aimed at dealing with issues that constitute sexual harassment, for example, a small percentage (35%) of the employees felt that sexual harassment was prevalent on campus. An even smaller percentage (16%) had knowledge regarding the existence of a sexual harassment policy on campus.

Lauer (1989:331) sheds light on the importance of a policy prohibiting sexual harassment at the workplace by pointing out that such a policy is designed to correct ignorance about the problematic nature and the consequence of harassment and of the recourse available to victims.

The researcher is of the opinion that if the existence of a sexual harassment policy was publicised, more employees would have been more knowledgeable about what constitutes sexual harassment.

This seems to suggest that if EAP is to be initiated at the University of the North West, the EAP practitioners would have to educate employees about issues of sexual harassment so as to help the university community in developing sensitivity about such matters.

#### **4.5 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEPTIONS OF A NEED TO IMPLEMENT AN EAP AND EMPLOYEES' WILLINGNESS TO UTILIZE EAP**

Question 6 of management and 14 of the 3 staff constituencies requested employees to indicate whether there was a need for the university to implement an EAP. Their responses are reflected in table 6(a).

Question 7 of management and 16 of the 3 staff constituencies requested employees to indicate whether they would be willing to utilise EAP services. Their responses are reflected in table 6(b).

**TABLE 6(a) : A PERCEPTION OF A NEED TO IMPLEMENT AN EAP  
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE NORTH WEST**

LEVEL OF AGREEMENT / DISAGREEMENT				
RESPONDENTS	YES		NO	
	N	%	N	%
Management	8	89	1	11
Academic Staff	23	92	2	8
Support Staff	32	97	1	3
Labourers	40	98	1	2

**TABLE 6(b) : A PERCEPTION OF EMPLOYEES' WILLINGNESS TO  
USE EAP SERVICES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE  
NORTH WEST**

LEVEL OF AGREEMENT / DISAGREEMENT				
RESPONDENTS	YES		NO	
	N	%	N	%
Management	9	100	-	-
Academic Staff	24	96	1	4
Support Staff	30	90	3	10
Labourers	40	98	2	-

### **Discussion**

There seems to be a significant relationship between perceptions of a need to implement an EAP on campus and the employees' willingness to utilise EAP services.

Generally speaking, **all** employees could be said to be in agreement that employee problems need to be addressed because even those who were against implementing an EAP, put forward reasons such as the existence of a Counselling Centre on campus as well as the existence of Ipelegeng Child and Family Centre.<sup>7</sup>

The researcher is also of the opinion that it can be stated that **all** employees are willing to use EAP services on campus because even those who were in disagreement, stated that employee problems could be addressed through the Counselling Centre as well as through the Ipelegeng Child and Family Centre.

#### **4.6 EAP POLICY ISSUES**

In this section, employees were requested to give their views regarding components of an EAP policy.

In question 10 of the management questionnaire and 15 of the 3 staff constituencies, respondents were asked to indicate their opinions regarding the importance of confidentiality in a university EAP.

Their responses were as follows:

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<sup>7</sup> *Ipelegeng Child and Family Centre is the service wing of the departments of Psychology and Social Work at the University of the North West*



**TABLE 7 : PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF  
CONFIDENTIALITY IN HANDLING OF CLINICAL DATA  
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE NORTH WEST**

LEVEL OF AGREEMENT / DISAGREEMENT				
RESPONDENTS	IMPORTANCE OF CONFIDENTIALITY			
	YES		NO	
	N	%	N	%
Management	9	100	-	-
Academic Staff	24	96	1	4
Support Staff	32	97	1	3
Labourers	39	96	2	4

### Discussion

Confidentiality is the cornerstone of an EAP.

Sikyta and Hagan in Thoreson and Hosokawa (1984:238) shed light on the importance of confidentiality in a university EAP by stating the following:

*“The university is like a small town; privacy is a valued precious commodity”*  
(Thoreson and Hosokawa, 1984:238).

Bruce (1990:133) contends that for EAP to be accepted by employees, it has to be perceived as a legitimate and confidential source of help.

In this study, confidentiality was considered to be important in a university EAP. This was demonstrated by the high percentage (nineties by the academic staff, support and the general workers and a hundred percent by management) agreement by the different constituencies.

The researcher is of the opinion that the issue of maintaining confidentiality, at all times when handling clinical data, cannot be overemphasised.

#### 4.6.1 Employees' opinions on EAP practitioners with whom they would feel more comfortable to discuss their problems

In question 18 of the 3 staff constituencies as well as question 8 of the management one, respondents were asked to indicate the EAP practitioner they would feel more comfortable discussing their problems with.

**TABLE 8 : PERCEPTIONS OF A SUITABLE EAP PRACTITIONER FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF THE NORTH WEST**

PREFERRED EAP PRACTITIONER	MANAGEMENT		ACADEMIC STAFF		SUPPORT STAFF		WORKERS	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
University's full-time EAP counsellor	4	44	9	36	23	70	41	100
An external consultant	4	44	15	60	-	-	-	-
Other *	1	12	1	4	10	30	-	-

#### Other preferences:

Twelve percent of management indicated that staff would prefer to discuss problems with a neutral person who is not caught up in university affairs.

Four percent of the academic staff indicated that they would prefer to use both options, that is, the full-time EAP practitioner and the external consultant.

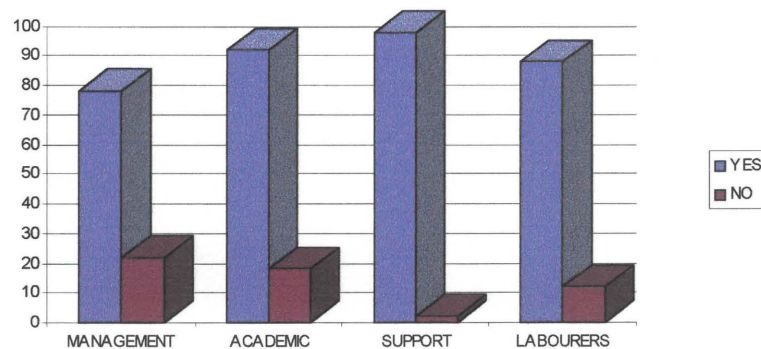
#### Discussion

This table seems to suggest that there is a need for university EAP to consider the In-house model as well as the External model.

The researcher is of the opinion that the nature of the employee's problem will determine whether it should be dealt with by the full-time EAP practitioner or whether there should be a referral to an off-campus resource.

The researcher is also of the opinion that both models should be seen to be utilised by all staff constituencies so as to avoid the possibility of stigmatising any resource.

**FIGURE 2 : PERCEPTIONS OF THE NEED FOR CONSULTATION WITH STAFF ASSOCIATIONS REGARDING EAP ON CAMPUS**



### Discussion

Figure 2 which is a response to question 24 of the 3 staff constituencies and 15 of management, demonstrates that the majority of employees are in favour of consultation with staff associations on campus.

The researcher would like to point out that the unions/staff associations wield a lot of influence on the employees and that if this influence is properly harnessed, it can be of benefit to both the employee and the employer.

Bruce (1990:133) is in favour of consultation with staff associations and states the following:

*“if union members are involved in initial planning for the establishment of utilisation of EAP services, they are likely to support it”.*

Roman and Blum as cited by Terblanche (1988:183) have this to say about successful EAPs.

*“EAPs which survive and flourish are those which become integral parts of work organisations”.*

The researcher supports the above view and maintains that by consulting staff associations, EAP will survive and flourish because the staff associations may encourage their troubled members to utilise the services of an EAP. Staff associations could also help to utilise EAP services by publicising this service to its members.

**TABLE 9 : PERCEPTIONS OF THE EFFECTS OF THE UTILISATION  
OF EAP SERVICES ON EMPLOYEE'S JOBS**

LEVEL OF AGREEMENT / DISAGREEMENT																
STATEMENTS RELATING TO EFFECTS OF EAP UTILISATION	MANAGEMENT		ACADEMIC STAFF		SUPPORT STAFF		LABOURERS									
	YES N	NO %	YES N	NO %	YES N	NO %	YES N	NO %								
Use of an EAP service may have an adverse effect on job security	3	33	6	67	11	44	14	56	14	42	19	58	5	12	36	88
Use of an EAP service may have an adverse effect on job advancement	2	22	7	78	6	24	19	76	1	3	32	97	5	12	36	88

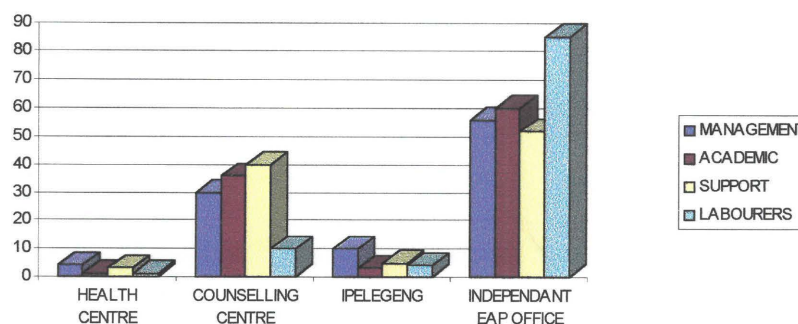
\* In questions 12 and 13 of management as well as questions 21 and 22 of the 3 staff constituencies, employees were requested to indicate their opinions regarding the use of EAP services by employees

### Discussion

Table 9 reflects that a relatively high percentage of employees (67%, 56%, 58% and 88%) are of the opinion that the use of EAP services should not have a negative effect on job security as well as on job advancement.

The researcher is of the opinion that the university's EAP would have to state in its policy statement that use of EAP services will be treated with the confidentiality it deserves and that the use of services will not have a negative effect on job security and job advancement.

**FIGURE 3 : PERCEPTIONS OF A SUITABLE EAP LOCATION ON CAMPUS**



### Discussion

Figure 3 is based on question 14 of management's questionnaire as well as on question 23 of 3 staff constituencies.

Bryant as cited in Snyman and associates ( 1987:85) suggest that a helping service should be available on site or within easy access of the workplace, and that the site should be available within working hours. He also stresses the importance of workers should not have to wait a long time for an appointment, because motivation to resolve a problem is usually at its highest during a time of crises.

Terblanche (1988:132) sheds light on the issue of an EAP location by stating that EAP offices should be **visible** and **accessible** to potential users but that **confidentiality** should never be compromised as this could have a negative effect on the programme.

In this study, a large percentage (56%, 60%, 52% and 85% respectively) in all four employee constituencies felt that the ideal location for an EAP would be at an independent office.

The researcher is of the opinion that the major factor in this choice could have been the perception that an “independent EAP office” would afford the employees confidentiality.

The second choice for an EAP location in this study was the Counselling Centre. Schooling in Hosokawa and Thoreson (1984:98) points out that identifying available space and resources on campus may be more acceptable to the administrator than coming up with a request for new offices.

The researcher is of the opinion that in view of budgetary constraints facing the university, the Counselling Centre may be the option open to an EAP but that this would have to be negotiated with all the relevant stakeholders.

The above view seems to be in line with Hosokawa’s idea in Thoreson and Hosokawa (1984:355) that when considering an EAP implementation, one should be sensitive to the current emotional climate of the campus as well as the needs of various interest groups.

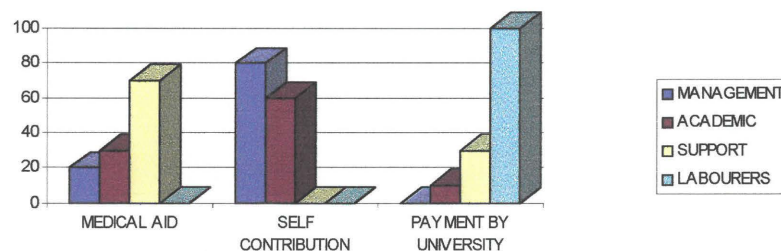
Hosokawa in Thoreson and Hosokawa (1984:355) also points out an important consideration when deciding on a suitable location for an EAP by maintaining that the location should be in a multi-purpose building where a client would not be stigmatised by being seen there.

In support of the above, Bryant as cited in Snyman and associates (1987:85) contends that the helping service should be available to all workers, irrespective of rank, race or sex. The key issue according to Bryant is that the service should be aimed at encouraging entry into the assistance programme at an early age in the development of the programme.

Finally, the researcher maintains that accessibility plays an important role in the utilisation of the service and should be taken into consideration when deciding on the ideal location for an EAP.

*“Die fisiese lokasering bepaal grootliks die graad van sigbaar - en toeganklikheid vir die gebruikers”.* (Terblanche, 1988:160).

**FIGURE 4 : EMPLOYEES’ SUGGESTIONS REGARDING PAYMENT FOR EAP SERVICES**



## Discussion

Figure 4 is based on the employees’ responses to question 10 of the 3 staff constituencies as well as question 9 of the management questionnaire.

Payment for EAP services is one of the most important considerations by a troubled employee..

Terblanche (1992:23) points out that health insurance coverage for treatment of problems can contribute significantly to the troubled employee’s motivation when in the process of deciding on treatment for his problem.



In this study, management, academic staff and the support staff were in favour of payment for EAP services being administered through medical aid coverage.

The researcher is of the opinion that the general workers/labourers were not in favour of medical aid coverage being utilised for EAP services because not all of them are covered by medical aid.

Only two staff constituencies were in favour of self-contribution by members who use the service. This seems to be in agreement with Terblanche's (1992:23) view that financial difficulties very often go hand-in-hand with the existence of social problems. It may therefore, not be a wise decision to expect the troubled employee to contribute towards the EAP services.

The general workers/labourers, were all (100%) in favour of payment for EAP services being shouldered by the university.

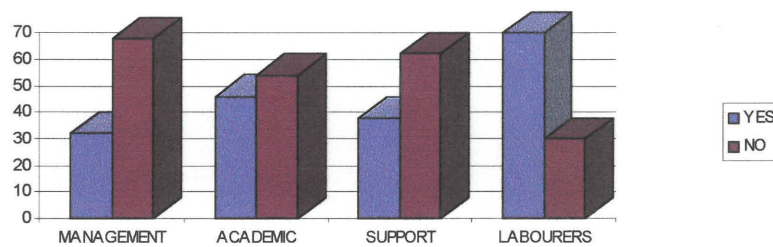
The researcher supports the above view and maintains that the idea of the university paying for EAP services is very noble and could be perceived as a demonstration of **caring** for the employees.

However, in these times of budgetary constraints, this may not be practical. Perhaps seeking external funding as was suggested by some respondents is more realistic or appropriate.

The other suggestion for EAP funding was that the employee's unique circumstances should be taken into consideration when deciding on payment for EAP services.

The researcher supports the above view and is of the opinion that as a matter of policy, it should be spelt out that each troubled employee would be treated according to his unique circumstances when deciding on payment for EAP services.

**FIGURE 5 : PERCEPTIONS OF THE NEED FOR EAP PRACTITIONERS BECOMING MEMBERS OF THE DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE ON CAMPUS**



## Discussion

Figure 5 which is based on question 25 of staff and 16 of management, reflects how employees perceive the involvement of EAP practitioners in a disciplinary committee.

The first three staff constituencies felt that EAP practitioners should not be part of the disciplinary committee.

The researcher supports the above-mentioned stance and maintains further that the counselling role of the EAP practitioners should be different from the judgement role of the disciplinary committee; the researcher is of the opinion that it would be

unethical for the EAP practitioner to counsel employees if she is part of the system that passes judgement.

However, the researcher is of the opinion that the EAP practitioner should be in a position of educating the disciplinary committee about the implications of their action/actions on the employee.

The general workers/labourers, on the other hand, felt that EAP practitioners **should** be involved as members of the disciplinary committee.

The researcher is of the opinion that there are two possible ways of perceiving the labourers' response.

Firstly, it could be a genuine appeal for empathy within the disciplinary committee from the constituency which is more likely to be a candidate for disciplinary hearing. Secondly, this could be an attempt to manipulate the EAP practitioners if they are in the disciplinary committee.

The researcher maintains that the disciplinary issues are usually sensitive matters and should be handled with great care and maturity by the committee.

#### 4.7 EMPLOYEES' INPUT REGARDING IDEAS WHICH COULD CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS UTILISING SERVICES ON CAMPUS <sup>8</sup>

In question 26 of the 3 staff constituencies and 17 of management, the respondents were requested to come up with suggestions which could contribute towards EAP being utilised by all employees on campus. Their suggestions are reflected as follows:

- **Publicise it**
- **Broad consultation**
- **Educate staff regarding the service**
- **All employees should have the right to be allowed to attend EAP sessions during working hours**
- **EAP to be accessible to all employees**
- Confidentiality to be guaranteed within EAP
- Staff EAP should be suitably qualified
- Staff in EAP should be respectable role models
- Staff EAP should be mature and sensitive
- EAP to focus more on preventive than curative services
- A referral system to be developed
- Have effective follow-up services
- Have a built-in evaluation service
- Supervisors and association leaders to be given the necessary training
- The university's appointment letter to have an additional clause indicating EAP services
- Staff induction should include information regarding EAP services

The researcher commends the employees of the University of the North West for their valuable suggestions regarding EAP services.

The researcher proposes that the employees' suggestions should act as a check list for EAP service implementation at the university.

The researcher also proposes that some of the employees' suggestions be dealt with in the chapter that discusses recommendations (that is, Chapter 5).

#### **4.8 SUMMARY**

This chapter entails a presentation as well as the analysis of the research findings.

The first section dealt with the demographic data of the employees of the University of the North West. Management was excluded in this section. The following employee characteristics were collected: age, gender, marital status, number of dependants as well as length of time that employees have been working at the university.

The second section dealt with the problem profile. All employees felt that personal problems had a negative effect on their on-the-job productivity. Employees were affected by everyday living problems such as, a preoccupation with the possibility of retrenchment, marital problems, possible job loss due to changes at the workplace and possible job loss due to own behaviour. Different staff constituencies were affected differently by problems. To a great extent, all employees were negatively affected by financial crises and demotivation.

The third section dealt with how employees perceived problems as well as their perception of an EAP. The majority of employees were in favour of an EAP and stated that they would be willing to use EAP services.

Employees also discussed issues relevant to EAP policy such as payment of services, location of EAP offices on campus and the need for consultation with staff associations. In general, there was agreement regarding policy issues.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY OF THE STUDY, MAJOR FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 5 consists of a summary of the entire study, conclusions and recommendations.

The researcher will attempt to use the following structure for the discussion of this chapter.

- A summary of the entire study will be provided.
- This will be followed by identification of major findings with particular reference to the research aims of this study.
- The researcher will utilise data in the study to support major findings
- Meanings or implications of major findings will be discussed.
- The chapter will be concluded by providing motivated recommendations based on the findings for two purposes:-  
Firstly, for action  
Secondly, for further research.

## 5.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The discussion of the results obtained in this study will be presented within the framework of issues that are inherent in a university setting. These issues are discussed in detail in Chapter 2, but will be sketched very briefly so as to facilitate the discussion of the results.

When compared to industry, the university could be said to have embraced the concept of an EAP at a relatively late stage.

Universities, like other work settings, face problems of work stress and absenteeism on the job as well as external pressures such as alcoholism, substance abuse and family problems.

Problems that are unique to the university setting may be summarised as follows:

**Tenure system.** This refers to a system of appointing lecturers to permanent positions. Being in a tenured position may be perceived by some lecturers as a permanent guarantee of their jobs regardless of a deterioration in their job performance. This implies that in a university setting, tenure seriously diminishes the threat of job loss as a potential motivator for change.

**Managerial positions are obtainable by promotion which is usually based on academic merit and not necessarily on good managerial skills.** This implies that good academicians may not necessarily make good managers. This could be a potential source of problems that may require an EAP intervention.



**The difference in the work environment of academic staff and that of the support staff.**

Academicians operate within a flexible collegial environment which is completely different from the bureaucratic structure which is prevalent in the administrative side of staff. This inherent difference can be a source of work-related stress.

**An apparent lack of clear-cut job performance standards.** In a university setting, job performance standards are usually not clearly defined and this makes performance appraisal very difficult because the criteria for appraisal might not be objective.

**Lack of clear guidelines for supervision.** The universities have vague supervisory structures and the academician's work is usually unsupervised. A lack of supervisory guidelines implies that it might be difficult to set up a mechanism for early identification of problems.

**A tendency towards an ambiguity of goals.** In a university setting, goals are usually not clearly stipulated. This implies that it may be difficult to assess whether productivity is at optimum level.

**The academician's apparent resistance to counselling.** Academicians tend to shun counselling. This tendency might make acceptance of an EAP concept difficult to sell to the academic professional.

**Professional versus Institutional identification.** The academician could be said to have a dual identity which requires him to be committed to off-campus activities that take up a lot of time and energy. This could contribute towards a decline in job performance of some academics and this could result in the need for an EAP intervention.

**Sexual harassment is one of the problems that are prevalent at a university as a workplace.** The sexual harassment prohibition policy alone is not enough for resolving problems of those who are victimised; the EAP practitioner may have to play a major role in creating a climate that is sensitive to issues that constitute sexual harassment.

**Anxiety regarding possible job loss.** Universities, like other work settings, are faced with limited financial resources which may result in cut-backs. This situation causes stress which is associated with the possibility of losing one's job and not being able to find a comparable position.

**Affirmative action and job advancement.** There is an increasing pressure on the universities to support the ideals of affirmative action. If the criteria for affirmative action are not clearly worked out, this can be an added source of stress for employees at the university.

**The 'class' difference between the academic staff and students.** The researcher is of the opinion that the 'class' difference between the academic staff and students could be prevalent in most South African universities because of the political history of this country. The researcher is also of the opinion that this 'class' difference could be a cause for concern which may have implications for an EAP intervention.

**The trend for senior positions to be held by males.** There is a tendency, within the South African tertiary institutions, for senior positions, to be occupied by males. In the researcher's opinion, this tendency needs to be reviewed because if it is not addressed, it could be a source of stress.

**The academician's 'inability' or resistance to perceive themselves as employees.** If this perception is not adequately addressed by an EAP practitioner, the academics may not use EAP services if they perceive such a service as meant for 'employees'.

**The university as a highly professionalised, client serving system.** The university has to rely on the services of professionals so as to carry out its main task of teaching. The researcher is of the opinion that working with highly professionalised staff can pose challenges for the EAP practitioners.

**The perceived need for transformation at South African universities.** The current problems at tertiary institutions had been caused by the fact that institutions had to be transformed and in some institutions, there was resistance against such transformation. The researcher is of the opinion that this situation could also be a cause for concern that could require an EAP intervention.

**The 'brain drain' in some South African universities.** This could be which is caused by academicians leaving the university to take up government positions as a result of the new dispensation. The researcher is of the opinion that this state of affairs could negatively affect the morale of the remaining employees who may have to contend with the increased workload. This situation could require the intervention of an EAP practitioner.

### **5.3 MAJOR FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM FINDINGS**

On the basis of the literature study and the empirical investigations, the following conclusions are formulated:

- There exists a relationship between the personal problems of employees and a decrease in their productivity level.

This conclusion is based on the literature study as well as the empirical study of this particular research.

- Employees at the University of the North West experience problems which are in general a concern to most employees at a workplace. However, there are more employees experiencing 'financial crises' and 'job insecurity' due to 'workplace changes' than 'retrenchment' problems and 'job loss due to own behaviour'.

This conclusion is based in the main, on the result of the empirical investigation which was conducted by the researcher.

- Sexual harassment is perceived as not being as prevalent at the University of the North West as it is usually the case in other workplaces.

The majority of employees (65%), were of the opinion that sexual harassment was not prevalent at the workplace. This view seems to be different from that espoused in the literature review. The researcher is of the opinion that the difference could be a result of the fact that sexual harassment was considered only in relation to employees and not students.

- The majority of employees (84%) was not aware of the fact that the university had a sexual prohibition policy.

Literature study indicates that most employees in the workplace are usually aware of the existence of a sexual prohibition policy.

The researcher is of the opinion that the situation which is reflected in this particular study implies that EAP practitioners would have to educate the employees about what constitutes sexual harassment so as to help employees in developing a sensitivity regarding the issue.

- There exists a need for an EAP to be implemented at the workplace.

This view seems to be similar to the views of employees in the literature study. To the researcher, this seems to imply that initiatives aimed at reclaiming valued employees are welcomed by both management and the employees.

- There is an apparent willingness by employees to utilise EAP services.

The finding supports the literature study which indicates that employees are, in general, willing to utilise services that are aimed at helping them resolve their problems. The researcher is of the opinion that EAP practitioners would have to market their services effectively at the workplace.

- Confidentiality is considered to be the most important element within a university EAP. All four staff constituencies rated confidentiality in the ninety percentile and upwards.

The importance of confidentiality is also emphasised in the literature study. This implies that an EAP policy would have to emphasise that confidentiality will be maintained at all times.

- Consultation with staff associations was considered to be necessary by the majority of employees.

The need for broad consultation with all the relevant stakeholders has been emphasised in the literature study and in the empirical investigation of this particular study. The advantage of involving staff associations is that their members could be encouraged to use the services if the staff associations perceive themselves as part of the decision-making process that led to the implementation of an EAP.

- Location of an EAP location has been extensively handled in the literature study; and this suggest that employees prefer the type of location that guarantees them privacy.

Payment for EAP services has to be carefully considered because an employee who is experiencing a problem should not have to worry about payment for services as this might reduce the motivation to seek help. Literature study reflects that payment for services has to be carefully negotiated with all the stakeholders and be incorporated within the EAP policy.

- EAP practitioners should not be members of the disciplinary committee at the workplace.

The above view is supported by the literature study as well as by the empirical investigation conducted by the researcher. However, one staff constituency, namely, the general workers, was of the opinion that EAP practitioners should be members of the disciplinary committee.

The researcher is of the opinion that this implies that EAP practitioners would have to educate the employees regarding their role within the organisation.

### **5.3.1 Conclusion Drawn in Terms of the Formulated Hypothesis**

The following is the hypothesis study:

**If employees are aware of social problems at the workplace, then they will be in favour of an EAP.**

On the basis of the findings of this particular study, this hypothesis can be considered to be **TRUE**.

## 5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following approach will be followed in this section of the research report:

- Part one will deal with the recommendations which do not require any further research, namely, the recommendations for action.
- Part two will deal with the recommendations/issues which need to be researched further..

### 5.4.1 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, limited though its scope was, the researcher would like to make the following recommendations in relation to attempts at developing an EAP for the University of the North West:

- The location of an EAP should emphasise easy accessibility. This implies that the EAP offices should be conveniently and centrally located on campus and **all** employees should be able to utilise the services during working hours.
- The 'broad-brush' approach to be emphasised as this will help in removing the stigma that is usually attached to EAPs that focus only on problems such as alcoholism or mental problems.



- An EAP should address the demotivation and the low staff morale by developing programmes which will enhance recognition of staff by peers as well as by students. Staff should be encouraged to serve in worthwhile community projects.
- A university EAP should utilise the resources that are already available on campus. For example, an alliance of supporters should be developed with related service providers such as the Counselling Centre, Ipelegeng Child and Family Centre and the university's legal Clinic. Professionals in these centres should be encouraged to assist with the implementation and publicity of the programme.
- An EAP should address financial problems of employees by setting up lifestyle counselling programmes which will educate employees about issues such as living within their means as well as consultations regarding tax issues and saving/investments.
- Over and above the need for relevant professional qualifications, EAP practitioners who are appointed should be people with credibility and those capable of upholding confidentiality at all times. The same requirements should apply to the administrative personnel of an EAP. The secretary/receptionist should be a respectable person who can be trusted to uphold confidentiality.
- EAP practitioners should suggest ways of improving the physical environment of employees as a way of boosting their morale. For example, the staff canteen could be upgraded.

- On-going evaluative research for the university EAP would be set in place so as to assess whether EAP is meeting its objectives.
- The following suggestions which were made by employees should be incorporated in the objectives of the university EAP.

**Publicise it 9**

**Broad consultation**

**Educate staff regarding the service**

**All employees should have the right to be allowed to attend**

**EAP sessions to be available during working hours**

**EAP to be accessible to all employees**

Confidentiality to be guaranteed within EAP

Staff in EAP should be suitably qualified

Staff in EAP should be respectable role models

Staff in EAP should be mature and sensitive

EAP to focus more on preventive than curative services

A referral system to be developed

Have effective follow-up services

Have a built-in evaluation service

Supervisors and association leaders to be given the necessary training

The university's appointment letter to have an additional clause indicating EAP services

Staff induction should include information regarding EAP services

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9 *These employees' suggestions are also listed in Chapter Four of this research report.  
The suggestions in bold were obtained from all four staff constituencies*

#### 5.4.2 Recommendations for Future Research

- It is recommended that future research be undertaken to help the university in focusing on profiles of different staff constituencies so as to tailor EAP services to the needs as perceived and felt by the different constituencies.
- Future research should also be undertaken to determine the type of EAP model that is suitable for the University of the North West.
- Finally, there exists a need to investigate the perceptions of other South African universities regarding the development of **Employee Assistance Programmes**.

**APPENDIX A : ORGANISATIONAL CONSENT TO  
CONDUCT THE STUDY**



University of Pretoria

Pretoria 0002 Republic of South Africa Tel (012) 4209111  
Fax (012) 437431 / 3422712 / 432185

Faculty of Arts

The Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)  
University of the North-West  
Private Bag X2046  
**MMABATHO**  
8681

Department of Social Work

1996-03-18

Our ref : M.A. (S.W.) Supervision  
Mrs E Molebatsi  
Dr L S Terrblanche  
Tel (012 420 2328

Dear Professor Gouws

## **REQUEST FOR PERMISSION FOR MRS E MOLEBATSI TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT YOUR UNIVERSITY**

Mrs Molebatsi is a masters student at the University of Pretoria, registered for M.A. (Social Work) Supervision. Her research topic is **“Developing an Employee Assistance Programme for the University of the North-West : An Occupational Social Work study”**. To this end, she is undertaking a research study to assess whether an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is needed at the University of the North-West. An Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) refers to **“A programme which has the explicit aim of improving the quality of life of all its employees by providing greater support and helping to alleviate the impact of everyday work and personal problems. This**

**programme offers new and exciting prospects to assist employees' well-being whilst at the same time increase organisational effectiveness and profitability".** Briefly explained, Employee Assistance Programmes describe the various interventions at the workplace which are aimed at helping employees who are experiencing personal problems.

I therefore request your permission to allow Mrs Molebatsi to conduct research which will enable her to assess the views of the following constituencies of your university:-

- Management
- Academic Staff
- Support Staff
- General Workers / Labourers

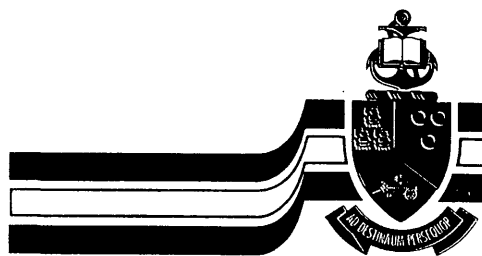
The copies of questionnaires to be administered are herein enclosed.

Anticipating your positive response.

Yours sincerely

**PROF E A K HUGO**  
**HEAD : DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK**

**APPENDIX B : COVER LETTER AND MANAGEMENT  
QUESTIONNAIRE**



University of Pretoria

Pretoria 0002 Republic of South Africa Tel (012) 4209111  
Fax (012) 437431 / 3422712 / 432185

Faculty of Arts

The Dean  
School of Health and Social Sciences  
University of The North West  
Private bag X2046  
**MMABATHO**  
8681

1996.03-18

Our ref : M.A. (S.W.) Supervision  
Mrs E Molebatsi  
Dr L S Terblanche  
Tel : (012) 420 2328

Dear Professor Mabetoa

**REQUEST FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION (THROUGH A QUESTIONNAIRE) IN A RESEARCH STUDY CONDUCTED BY MRS E MOLEBATSI**

Mrs E Molebatsi is a masters student at the University of Pretoria registered for M.A. (Social Work) Supervision. Her research topic is **“Developing an Employee Assistance Programme for the University of the North West : An Occupational Social Work Study”**. To this end, she is undertaking a research study to assess whether an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is needed at the University of the North-West. An Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) refers to **“A programme which has the explicit aim of improving the quality of life of all its employees by providing greater support and helping to alleviate the impact of everyday work and personal problems. This programme offers new and exciting prospects to assist employees’ well-being whilst at the same time increase organisational effectiveness and profitability”**. Briefly



explained, Employee Assistance Programmes describe the various interventions at the workplace which are aimed at helping employees who are experiencing personal problems.

The goal of this study is to develop a theoretical framework for an institutional EAP.

The scope of this study includes an analysis of the responses of the following constituencies of the university.

- Management
- Academic Staff
- Support Staff
- General Workers / Labourers

Your response will be kept confidential. After completing the questionnaire, please remove the cover letter and place the questionnaire in the “EAP questionnaire collection box” which is situated at the entrance of your building.

I thank you sincerely for your anticipated co-operation.

Yours sincerely



**PROF E A K HUGO**  
**HEAD : DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK**

**DEVELOPING AN EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME FOR  
THE UNIVERSITY OF THE NORTH-WEST :  
AN OCCUPATIONAL SOCIAL WORK STUDY.**

Briefly explained, **Employee Assistance Programmes** (EAPs) describe the various interventions at the workplace which are aimed at helping employees who are experiencing problems.

1. Please read and answer each question carefully.
2. Each question should be answered by putting a cross, X or answer in the appropriate box.

**PROBLEM PROFILE**

1. Are you of the opinion that personal problems have a negative effect on the productivity of employees?

YES	NO

2. Do you think that employees at this university may experience the following problems? Please indicate your response(s) with a cross X in the appropriate box.

PROBLEMS	RESPONSE	
	YES	NO
Personal grief and loss		
Ill-health		
Job insecurity		
Absenteeism		
Marital or family conflict		
Alcohol and related problems		
Demotivation		
Legal crises		
Financial crises		
Divorce		

3. The following are some of the problems which may be experienced by employees at the workplace. Please order them in terms of frequency in each column. 1 represents most frequent and 11 represents less frequent.

<b>PROBLEMS</b>	<b>RANK</b>
Personal grief and loss	
Ill- health	
Job insecurity due to changes in the workplace	
Absenteeism	
Marital or family conflict	
Alcohol abuse and alcohol abuse related problems	
Demotivation	
Legal crises	
Financial crises	
Divorce	
Drug abuse and drug abuse and drug abuse related problems	

#### **PROBLEM PERCEPTION**

4. Do you think that sexual harassment is prevalent in this University as a workplace?

<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>

5. Beside each of the following statements presented below, please indicate your response with “Yes”, “No” or “Unsure”. (Please use “Unsure” only in exceptional cases).

STATEMENT	RESPONSE		
	YES	NO	UNSURE
Sexual harassment may cause emotional distress			
Sexual harassment may result in disturbances in interpersonal relations			
Sexual harassment may cause a decrease in workplace productivity			
Sexual harassment may cause a decrease in motivation			

6. Do you think that the University should implement an **Employee Assistance Programme?** (Please refer to definition on page 1)

YES	NO

6.1 Briefly, motivate your answer

.....  
 .....  
 .....

7. If the University was to implement an EAP, do you think that employees will use this service?

YES	NO

8. If you answered “Yes” to question 7, with whom do you think the employees discuss their problems?

The University’s full time EAP Counsellor	
An external consultant (such as a social worker, psychologist based outside the university)	
Other, please specify ..... ..... .....	

9. If you answered “Yes” to question 7, how do you think payments for EAP services should be made?

<b>PAYMENT FOR EAP SERVICES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Payment should be through medical aid coverage		
Self contribution by employees who use the service		
The university should pay for EAP services		
Other, please specify. ..... ..... .....		

10. Do you think that confidentiality in handling of clinical data is important in a university Employee Assistance Programme?

<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>

- 10.1 Please motivate your answer to question 10.

.....

.....

.....

.....

11. The following are some of the services which may be offered by a university EAP. Please rank them in terms of priority (1 to represent top priority and 12 to represent least pressing).

<b>PROGRAMMES</b>	<b>RANK</b>
<b>Personal Counselling</b>	
Individual counselling	
Group counselling	
<b>Life Skills Programmes</b>	
Health and wellness programmes	
Pre-retirement counselling	
Elderly care services	
Aids education	
Financial counselling	
Affirmative action programmes	
Rape awareness programmes	
Gender equity programmes	
Sexual harassment programmes	
Pre-retirement counselling	

12. Do you think that use of EAP service may have an adverse effect on job security?

<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>

13. Do you think that use of an EAP service may have an adverse effect on job advancement?

YES	NO

14. Where do you think EAP staff should be located on campus? Please mark only one.

Health Centre	
Counselling Centre	
Ipelegeng Child and Family Centre	
An independent EAP Office	
Other, please specify .....	
.....	
.....	

15. Do you think that the staff associations on campus should be consulted when developing and Employee Assistance Programme for the university?

YES	NO

16. Do you think EAP practitioner should be members of the disciplinary committee?

YES	NO

17. If the University was to initiate and EAP, what suggestions do you have which could contribute towards ensuring that staff utilizes such a service?

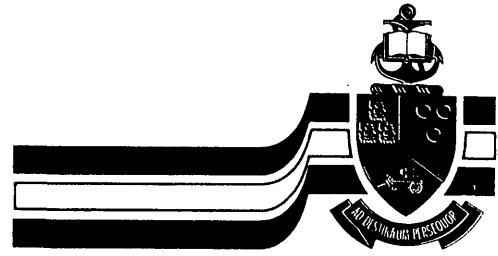
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**THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND YOUR COOPERATION**

**APPENDIX C : COVER LETTER AND ACADEMIC  
STAFF QUESTIONNAIRE**





University of Pretoria

Pretoria 0002 Republic of South Africa Tel (012) 4209111  
Fax (012) 437431 / 3422712 / 432185

Faculty of Arts March 1996

Dear Colleague

**DEVELOPING AN EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF THE NORTH WEST.**

**Request for your participation (through a questionnaire) in a research study.**

I am a masters student at the University of Pretoria, Registered for M A (Social Work) Supervision. One of my electives is Occupational Social Work. My research topic is **“Developing an Employee Assistance Programme for the University of the North West: An Occupational Social Work study”** To this end, I am undertaking a research study to assess whether an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is needed at the University of the North West. This research is being conducted with the approval of the Department of Social Work (University of Pretoria) as well as with the permission of the Acting Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic), University of the North-West). Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) refers to **“A programme which has the explicit aim of improving the quality of life of all its employees by providing greater support and helping to alleviate the impact of everyday work and personal problems. This programme offers new and exciting prospects to assist employees’ well-being whilst at the same time increasing organisational effectiveness and profitability.”** Briefly explained, Employee Assistance Programmes describe the various interventions at the workplace which are aimed at helping employees who are experiencing personal problems.

The goal of this study is to develop a theoretical framework for an institutional EAP.

The scope of this study includes an analysis of the responses of the following constituencies of the university:-

- Management
- Academic Staff
- Support Staff
- General Workers/labourers

Your responses will be kept confidential. You will also remain anonymous. After completing the questionnaire, please remove the cover letter and place the questionnaire in the "EAP questionnaire collection box" which is situated at the entrance of your building.

I thank you sincerely for your anticipated co-operation.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'EM Molebatsi', with a horizontal line underneath it.

**EILEEN MOLEBATSI**

**DEVELOPING AN EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME FOR  
THE UNIVERSITY OF THE NORTH-WEST :  
AN OCCUPATIONAL SOCIAL WORK STUDY.**

Briefly explained, **Employee Assistance Programmes** (EAPs) describe the various interventions at the workplace which are aimed at helping employees who are experiencing problems.

1. Please read and answer each question carefully.
2. Each question should be answered by putting a cross, X or answer in the appropriate box.

**DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS**

1. In which age group do you fall?

20-24	
25-29	
30-34	
35-39	
40-44	
45-49	
50-54	
55-59	
60+	

2. Gender

Male	Female

3. Marital Status

Married	
Widowed	
Re-married	
Single with relationship	
Single without relationship	

4. Do you have dependants?

YES	NO

5. If you answered "Yes" to question 4, please indicate the following

- 5.1 Number of your dependants

- 5.2 Ages of your dependants

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6. How long have you been employed at this University?

Under 1 year	1 - 5	6 - 10	11 - 15	16+

### **PROBLEM PROFILE**

7. Are you of the opinion that personal problems have a negative effect on the productivity of employees?

YES	NO

8. The following is a list of personal problems which people in a workplace may experience. Please indicate the problems that you personally experienced, as well as those experienced by your colleagues or subordinates (if you do not have subordinates please write N/A in that column).

PROBLEMS	SELF		COLLEAGUES		SUBORDINATES	
	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
Personal grief and loss						
Ill-health						
Job insecurity due to changes in the workplace						
Absenteeism						
Marital or family conflict						
Alcohol abuse and alcohol abuse related problems						
Demotivation						
Legal crises						
Financial crises						
Divorce						
Drug abuse and drug abuse related problems						

**PROBLEM PERCEPTION**

10. The following is a list of problems that may be of concern to people in a workplace. Indicate your concern by means of “Yes” or “No”.

PROBLEM	CONCERN	
	YES	NO
Retrenchment		
Job loss due to own behaviour		
Job insecurity due to changes at the workplace		
Possible transfer to another department		
Financial crises		
Other, please specify : .....		
.....		
.....		

11. Do you think that sexual harassment is relevant in your workplace?

YES	NO

9. The following are some of the problems which may be experienced by employees in the workplace. Please order them in terms of frequency in each column (if you do not have subordinates please write N/A in that column). 1 represents most frequent and 11 represents less frequent

<b>PROBLEMS</b>	<b>RANK SELF</b>	<b>RANK COLLEAGUES</b>	<b>RANK SUBORDINATE</b>
Personal grief and loss			
Ill-health			
Job insecurity due to changes in the workplace			
Absenteeism			
Marital or family conflict			
Alcohol abuse and alcohol abuse related problems			
Demotivation			
Legal crises			
Financial crises			
Divorce			
Drug abuse and drug abuse related problems			

12. Beside each of the following statements presented below please indicate your response with “Yes” or “No” or “Unsure”  
 (Please use “Unsure”: only in exceptional cases)

STATEMENT	RESPONSE		
	YES	NO	UNSURE
Sexual harassment may cause emotional distress			
Sexual harassment may result in disturbances in interpersonal relations			
Sexual harassment may cause a decrease in workplace productivity			
Sexual harassment may cause damage to family relations			
Sexual harassment may cause a decrease in motivation			

13. Do you know that this University has a policy relating to sexual harassment?

YES	NO

14. Do you think that the University should implement an **Employee Assistance Programme?** (Please refer to definition on page 1)

YES	NO

- 14.1 Briefly, motivate your answer

.....  
 .....



15. Do you think that confidentiality in handling of clinical data is important in a university Employee Assistance Programme?

<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>

16. If the University was to implement an Employee Assistance Programme, would you use this service to solve your own personal problems?

<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>

17. If your answered “No” to question 16 indicate your reason(s) here. (Mark with a cross X as many as applicable to your).

<b>REASON</b>	<b>RESPONSES</b>
The supervisor may find out that I have problem	
Co-workers may find out that I have a problem	
Subordinates may find out that I have a problem	
Chances of promotion may be jeopardized	
I may be perceived as “not coping”	
Other, please specify, .....	
.....	
.....	

18. If you answered “Yes” to question 16, with whom would you be more comfortable to discuss your problem(s)?

The University’s full time EAP Counsellor	
An external consultant (such as a social worker, psychologist based outside the university)	
Other, please specify .....	
.....	
.....	

19. If you answered “Yes” to question 16, how do you think payment for EAP services should be made?

<b>PAYMENT FOR EAP SERVICES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Payment should be through medical aid coverage		
Self contribution by employees who use the service		
The university should pay for EAP services		
Other, please specify .....		
.....		
.....		

20. The following are some of the services which may be offered by a University EAP. Please rank them in terms of priority (1 to represent top priority and 12 represent least pressing)

PROGRAMMES	RANK
<b>Personal Counselling</b>	
Individual counselling	
Group counselling	
<b>Life skills programmes</b>	
Health and wellness programmes	
Pre-retirement counselling	
Elderly care services	
Aids education	
Financial counselling	
Affirmative action programmes	
Gender equity programmes	
Rape awareness programmes	
Sexual harassment programmes	
Pre-retrenchment counselling	

21. If you were to personally make use of EAP services, would you be concerned of the effect it may have on the security of your job?

YES	NO

22. In your opinion, should use of an EAP service have an adverse effect on job advancement?

YES	NO

23. Where do you think EAP staff should be located on campus?  
Please mark only one.

Health Centre	
Counselling Centre	
Ipelegeng Child and family centre	
An independent EAP Office	
Other, please specify.....	
.....	
.....	

24. Do you think that the staff associations on campus should be consulted when developing and Employee Assistance Programme for the University?

<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>

25. Do you think that EAP practitioners should be members of the disciplinary committee?

<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>

26. If the University was to initiate an EAP, what suggestions do you have which could contribute towards ensuring that staff utilizes such a service.

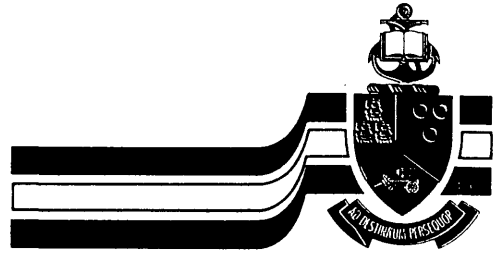
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**THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND YOUR COOPERATION**

**APPENDIX D : COVER LETTER AND SUPPORT  
STAFF QUESTIONNAIRE**



University of Pretoria

Pretoria 0002 Republic of South Africa Tel (012) 4209111  
Fax (012) 437431 / 3422712 / 432185

Faculty of Arts

18 March 1996

Dear Colleague

**DEVELOPING AN EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF THE NORTH WEST.**

**Request for your participation (through a questionnaire) in a research study.**

I am a masters student at the University of Pretoria, Registered for M A (Social Work) Supervision. One of my electives is Occupational Social Work. My research topic is “**Developing an Employee Assistance Programme for the University of the North West: An Occupational Social Work study**” To this end, I am undertaking a research study to assess whether an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is needed at the University of the North West. This research is being conducted with the approval of the Department of Social Work (University of Pretoria) as well as with the permission of the Acting Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic), (University of the North West).

Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) refers to “**A programme which has the explicit aim of improving the quality of life of all its employees by providing greater support and helping to alleviate the impact of everyday work and personal problems. This programme offers new and exciting prospects to assist employees’ well-being whilst at the same time increasing organisational effectiveness and profitability.**” Briefly explained, Employee Assistance Programmes describe the various interventions at the workplace which are aimed at helping employees who are experiencing personal problems.

The goal of this study is to develop a theoretical framework for an institutional EAP.

The scope of this study includes an analysis of the responses of the following constituencies of the university:-

- Management
- Academic Staff

- Support Staff
- General Workers/labourers

Your responses will be kept confidential. You will also remain anonymous. After completing the questionnaire, please remove the cover letter and place the questionnaire in the "EAP questionnaire collection box" which is situated at the entrance of your building.

I thank you sincerely for your anticipated co-operation.

  
**EILEEN MOLEBATS**

**DEVELOPING AN EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME FOR  
THE UNIVERSITY OF THE NORTH-WEST :  
AN OCCUPATIONAL SOCIAL WORK STUDY.**

Briefly explained, Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs) describe the various interventions at the workplace which are aimed at helping employees who are experiencing problems.

1. Please read and answer each question carefully.
2. Each question should be answered by putting a cross, X or answer in the appropriate box.

**DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS**

1. In which age group do you fall?

20-24	
25-29	
30-34	
35-39	
40-44	
45-49	
50-54	
55-59	
60+	

2. Gender

Male	Female

3. Marital Status

Married	
Widowed	
Re-married	
Single with relationship	
Single without relationship	



4. Do you have dependants?

<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>

5. If you answered "Yes" to question 4, please indicate the following

- 5.1 Number of your dependants

- 5.2 Ages of your dependants

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6. How long have you been employed at this University?

<b>Under 1 year</b>	<b>1 - 5</b>	<b>6 - 10</b>	<b>11 - 15</b>	<b>16+</b>

### **PROBLEM PROFILE**

7. Are you of the opinion that personal problems have a negative effect on the productivity of employees?

<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>

8. The following is a list of personal problems which people in a workplace may experience. Please indicate the problems that you personally experienced, as well as those experienced by your colleagues or subordinates (if you do not have subordinates please write N/A in that column).

PROBLEMS	SELF		COLLEAGUES		SUBORDINATES	
	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
Personal grief and loss						
Ill-health						
Job insecurity due to changes in the workplace						
Absenteeism						
Marital or family conflict						
Alcohol abuse and alcohol abuse related problems						
Demotivation						
Legal crises						
Financial crises						
Divorce						
Drug abuse and drug abuse related problems						

9. The following are some of the problems which may be experienced by employees in the workplace. Please order them in terms of frequency in each column (if you do not have subordinates please write N/A in that column). 1 represents most frequent and 11 represents less frequent

<b>PROBLEMS</b>	<b>RANK SELF</b>	<b>RANK COLLEAGUES</b>	<b>RANK SUBORDINATE</b>
Personal grief and loss			
Ill-health			
Job insecurity due to changes in the workplace			
Absenteeism			
Marital or family conflict			
Alcohol abuse and alcohol abuse related problems			
Demotivation			
Legal crises			
Financial crises			
Divorce			
Drug abuse and drug abuse related problems			

**PROBLEM PERCEPTION**

10. The following is a list of problems that may be of concern to people in a workplace. Indicate your concern by means of “Yes” or “No”.

PROBLEM	CONCERN	
	YES	NO
Retrenchment		
Job loss due to own behaviour		
Job insecurity due to changes at the workplace		
Possible transfer to another department		
Financial crises		
Other, please specify :.....		
.....		
.....		

11. Do you think that sexual harassment is relevant in your workplace?

YES	NO

12. Beside each of the following statements presented below please indicate your response with “Yes” or “No” or “Unsure”  
(Please use “Unsure”: only in exceptional cases)

STATEMENT	RESPONSE		
	YES	NO	UNSURE
Sexual harassment may cause emotional distress			
Sexual harassment may result in disturbances in interpersonal relations			
Sexual harassment may cause a decrease in workplace productivity			
Sexual harassment may cause damage to family relations			
Sexual harassment may cause a decrease in motivation			

13. Do you know that this University has a policy relating to sexual harassment?

YES	NO

14. Do you think that the University should implement an **Employee Assistance Programme?** (Please refer to definition on page 1)

YES	NO

- 14.1 Briefly, motivate your answer

.....

.....

15. Do you think that confidentiality in handling of clinical data is important in a university Employee Assistance Programme?

<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>

16. If the University was to implement an Employee Assistance Programme, would you use this service to solve your own personal problems?

<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>

17. If your answered “No” to question 16 indicate your reason(s) here. (Mark with a cross X as many as applicable to your).

<b>REASON</b>	<b>RESPONSES</b>
The supervisor may find out that I have problem	
Co-workers may find out that I have a problem	
Subordinates may find out that I have a problem	
Chances of promotion may be jeopardized	
I may be perceived as “not coping”	
Other, please specify, .....	
.....	
.....	

18. If you answered “Yes” to question 16, with whom would you be more comfortable to discuss your problem(s).

The University’s full time EAP Counsellor	
An external consultant (such as a social worker, psychologist based outside the university)	
Other, please specify ..... ..... .....	

19. If you answered “Yes” to question 16, how do you think payment for EAP services should be made?

<b>PAYMENT FOR EAP SERVICES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Payment should be through medical aid coverage		
Self contribution by employees who use the service		
The university should pay for EAP services		
Other, please specify ..... ..... .....		

20. The following are some of the services which may be offered by a University EAP. Please rank them in terms of priority (1 to represent top priority and 12 represent least pressing)

<b>PROGRAMMES</b>	<b>RANK</b>
<b>Personal Counselling</b>	
Individual counselling	
Group counselling	
<b>Life skills programmes</b>	
Health and wellness programmes	
Pre-retirement counselling	
Elderly care services	
Aids education	
Financial counselling	
Affirmative action programmes	
Gender equity programmes	
Rape awareness programmes	
Sexual harassment programmes	
Pre-retrenchment counselling	

21. If you were to personally make use of EAP services, would you be concerned of the effect it may have on the security of your job?

<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>

22. In your opinion, should use of an EAP service have and adverse effect on job advancement?

<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>



23. Where do you think EAP staff should be located on campus?  
Please mark only one.

Health Centre	
Counselling Centre	
Ipelegeng Child and family centre	
An independent EAP Office	
Other, please specify.....	
.....	
.....	

24. Do you think that the staff associations on campus should be consulted when developing and Employee Assistance Programme for the University?

<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>

25. Do you think that EAP practitioners should be members of the disciplinary committee?

<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>

26. If the University was to initiate an EAP, what suggestions do you have which could contribute towards ensuring that staff utilizes such a service.

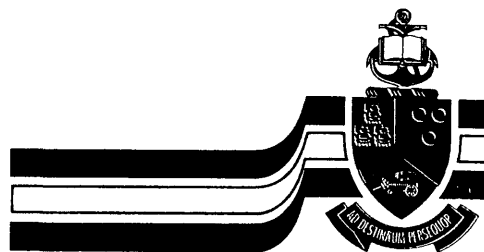
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**THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND YOUR COOPERATION**

**APPENDIX E : COVER LETTER AND LABOURERS'  
QUESTIONNAIRE**



University of Pretoria

18 March 1996

Pretoria 0002 Republic of South Africa Tel (012) 4209111  
Fax (012) 437431 / 3422712 / 432185

Faculty of Arts

Dear Co -worker

**DEVELOPING AN EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF THE NORTH WEST.**

**Request for your participation (through a questionnaire) in a research study.**

I am a masters student at the University of Pretoria, Registered for M A (Social Work) Supervision. One of my electives is Occupational Social Work. My research topic is **“Developing an Employee Assistance Programme for the University of the North West: An Occupational Social Work study”** To this end, I am undertaking a research study to assess whether an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is needed at the University of the North West.

This research is being conducted with the approval of the Department of Social work (University of Pretoria) as well as with the permission of the Acting Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) (University of the North West).

Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) refers to **“A programme which has the explicit aim of improving the quality of life of all its employees by providing greater support and helping to alleviate the impact of everyday work and personal problems. This programme offers new and exciting prospects to assist employees’ well-being whilst at the same time increasing organisational effectiveness and profitability.”** Briefly explained, Employee Assistance Programmes describe the various interventions at the workplace which are aimed at helping employees who are experiencing personal problems.

The goal of this study is to develop a theoretical framework for an institutional EAP.

The scope of this study includes an analysis of the responses of the following constituencies of the university:-

- Management
- Academic Staff
- Support Staff
- General Workers/labourers

Although many employees are given this questionnaire, your participation is critical to the success of this study.

Your responses will be kept confidential. Your responses are completely anonymous. Therefore, in the interest of contributing to the knowledge base of institutional EAPs, would you kindly take about 30minutes from your already busy schedule to complete the questionnaire. After completing the questionnaire, please remove the cover letter and place the questionnaire in the "EAP questionnaire collection box" which is situated at the entrance of your building.

I thank you sincerely for your anticipated co-operation.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E.M. Molebatsi', with a horizontal line underneath.

**EILEEN MOLEBATSI**

**DEVELOPING AN EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME FOR  
THE UNIVERSITY OF THE NORTH-WEST :  
AN OCCUPATIONAL SOCIAL WORK STUDY.**

Briefly explained, **Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs)** describe the various interventions at the workplace which are aimed at helping employees who are experiencing problems.

1. Please read and answer each question carefully.
2. Each question should be answered by putting a cross, X or answer in the appropriate box.

**DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS**

1. In which age group do you fall?

20-24	
25-29	
30-34	
35-39	
40-44	
45-49	
50-54	
55-59	
60+	

2. Gender

Male	Female

3. Marital Status

Married	
Widowed	
Re-married	
Single with relationship	
Single without relationship	

4. Do you have dependants?

YES	NO

5. If you answered "Yes" to question 4, please indicate the following

- 5.1 Number of your dependants

- 5.2 Ages of your dependants

--	--	--	--	--	--

6. How long have you been employed at this University?

Under 1 year	1 - 5	6 - 10	11 - 15	16+

### **PROBLEM PROFILE**

7. Are you of the opinion that personal problems have a negative effect on the productivity of employee?

YES	NO

8. The following is a list of personal problems which people in a workplace may experience. Please indicate the problems that you personally experienced, as well as those experienced by your colleagues or subordinates (if you do not have subordinates please write N/A in that column).

PROBLEMS	SELF		COLLEAGUES		SUBORDINATES	
	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
Personal grief and loss						
Ill-health						
Job insecurity due to changes in the workplace						
Absenteeism						
Marital or family conflict						
Alcohol abuse and alcohol abuse related problems						
Demotivation						
Legal crises						
Financial crises						
Divorce						
Drug abuse and drug abuse related problems						

9. The following are some of the problems which may be experienced by employees in the workplace. Please order them in terms of frequency in each column (if you do not have subordinates please write N/A in that column). 1 represents most frequent and 11 represents less frequent

<b>PROBLEMS</b>	<b>RANK SELF</b>	<b>RANK COLLEAGUES</b>	<b>RANK SUBORDINATE</b>
Personal grief and loss			
Ill-health			
Job insecurity due to changes in the workplace			
Absenteeism			
Marital or family conflict			
Alcohol abuse and alcohol abuse related problems			
Demotivation			
Legal crises			
Financial crises			
Divorce			
Drug abuse and drug abuse related problems			



**PROBLEM PERCEPTION**

10. The following is a list of problems that may be of concern to people in a workplace. Indicate your concern by means of “Yes” or “No”.

PROBLEM	CONCERN	
	YES	NO
Retrenchment		
Job loss due to own behaviour		
Job insecurity due to changes at the workplace		
Possible transfer to another department		
Financial crises		
Other, please specify : .....		
.....		
.....		

11. Do you think that sexual harassment is relevant in your workplace?

YES	NO

12. Beside each of the following statements presented below please indicate your response with “Yes” or “No” or “Unsure”  
(Please use “Unsure”: only in exceptional cases)

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- 14.1 Briefly, motivate your answer

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Please mark only one.

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Ipelegeng Child and family centre	
An independent EAP Office	
Other, please specify.....	
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24. Do you think that the staff associations on campus should be consulted when developing and Employee Assistance Programme for the University?

<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>

25. Do you think that EAP practitioners should be members of the disciplinary committee?

<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>

26. If the University was to initiate an EAP, what suggestions do you have which could contribute towards ensuring that staff utilizes such a service.

.....

.....

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND YOUR COOPERATION**

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