

THE VALUE OF EAP's

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Families In Action has been involved in providing Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) services to several companies throughout Trinidad and Tobago since 1991. Indeed, it is one of the activities undertaken to fund most of our charitable work, while providing a much needed and valuable service to client companies.

What exactly is an EAP?

An Employee Assistance Programme is a work-site based programme designed to assist in the identification and resolution of personal and other problems, which may adversely affect an employee's job performance.

These problems may be financial, marital, emotional, substance abuse, medical, job-related, to cite a few. The origin of the Employee Assistance Programme goes back to the 1940s when Alcoholics Anonymous groups mounted efforts in the workplace to assist affected workers. Since then, however, there has been quite a transformation, with EAPs now providing a wide range of services, which support both employees and employers.

Why an EAP?

More and more companies today are introducing EAPs and hopefully for the right reason. Companies need to realise that EAPs are not just a "band aid" for a troubled worker or a "nice to have" benefit. EAPs today are also about forging strategic partnerships with organisations as they work together to strengthen and develop healthy and productive workplaces. It is imperative that companies acquaint themselves with the organisational support, which can be provided by EAPs, such as:

Their role in identifying and bringing to the attention of management, trends, issues and needed services in the workplace, promoting wellness programmes, educating employees about lifestyle risks, assisting with behaviour risk management, dealing with critical incidents in the workplace and acting in a consultative capacity to management in situations such as retrenchment, voluntary separation, organisational restructuring, etc.

In addition to meeting the needs of the organisations, EAPs also service employees by providing more traditional/curative type activity, while addressing straightforward clinical situations through supportive and confidential framework.

This support is achieved through confidential counselling, referral and follow-up care both for the affected employee as well as immediate dependants. The result would be an employee whose problem has been resolved and who feels empowered, whose self-esteem and confidence have improved and who is now motivated to work and produce for a company that has demonstrated that it cares.

From this investment, the Company ultimately benefits. Bearing in mind that an employer's most valuable resource is its human resource, it is small wonder that companies are now investing in EAPs in order to maintain the mental, physical and emotional well being of employees.