



**VHEMBE DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY**

**EMPLOYEE WELLNESS PROGRAMME (EWP) DRAFT POLICY**

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## 1. PREAMBLE/ BACKGROUND

Vhembe District Municipality is committed to the creation of a working environment, supportive of effective and efficient service delivery while, as far as possible, taking employees and their families' personal circumstances and the health conditions into account.

## 2. DEFINITION AND TERMS

**EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME (EAP):** is a work organization's intervention programme designed to enhance employee and workplace effectiveness through prevention, early identification and/or resolution of both work and personal problems that may adversely affect employees' job performance and their families social functioning. These problems include, but not limited to health, family, marital relationships, financial, substance abuse, emotional, absenteeism or poor interpersonal relationships

**WELLNESS:** is defined as state of being in good health. The programmes designed are proactive for optimal quality of working life for employees resulting from enhanced physical, social and mental well being in the municipality.

**EMPLOYEE:** Any person who is employed by or works for an employer and who receives or is entitled to receive any remuneration or who works under the direction or supervision of an employer.

**SUPERVISOR:** Any person in a position of authority and who oversee the performance of subordinate staff.

**IMMEDIATE FAMILY MEMBER:** A spouse, life partner (including same sex), parents, siblings and children inclusive of adopted and foster children.

## 3. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for all employees (including management) in the improvement of their quality of life, for them to realize their fullest potential in delivery of a quality service to the service consumers.

#### **4. SCOPE OF APPLICABILITY**

The EWP caters for all employees of Vhembe District Municipality irrespective of rank, race, gender, age or religion as well as their immediate family members. It's approach is broad-brush in that it covers all problems affecting job performance.

#### **5. OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY**

- To ensure prevention, early identification, and resolution of organizational and personal challenges affecting job performance and social functioning.
- To refer employees with challenges that cannot be addressed by EWP, to other specialists.
- To determine well-being trends affecting employees' morale and channel them accordingly for redress.
- To support challenged employees and their families.
- To design, implement and maintain life-skills programmes aimed at improving productivity and employees' life styles.
- To assist managers and supervisors in managing behavioral problems.
- To provide information and training so as to keep with developing standards of work.
- To create a healthy working environment for both the employer and the employee.

#### **6. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK**

The legislative framework from which EWP derives its mandate includes the following:

6.1 The South African Constitution, 1996 (Chapter 2 Section 23 (1)) states that everyone has a right to fair labour practices.

6.2 The Labour Relations Act, No. 66 of 1995 which requires the employer to take remedial actions before terminating employment.

6.3 The Occupational Health and Safety Act, No. 29 of 1996 which requires all employers to ensure that, as far as is reasonably

practicable, the working environment is safe and healthy for employees.

6.4 The Promotion of Equality and the Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act, No. 4 of 2000 which sets out measures to promote equality and prevent unfair discrimination based on HIV status.

6.5 Employee Assistance Professional Association Board (EAPA-SA) Standards provide guidelines on the implementation of the EWP which includes drawing of a policy statement to define the programme's relationship to the organization it serves.

## **7. POLICY CONTENT AND GUIDELINES**

### **7.1 GENERAL POLICY PRINCIPLES**

The implementation of the EWP in the Municipality will be underpinned by the following principles:

#### **7.1.1. Confidentiality**

The Employee Assistance Programme Professional shall maintain Confidentiality of the information shared during consultations with any employee. The personal information shall not be disclosed to anyone (management included) without the employee's written consent except when disclosure is required in terms of law.

All the clients'/employees' recorded information shall be kept strictly confidential to the extent provided by the statute and/or regulation. It will not be noted in any employee's personnel file.

Any breach of confidentiality by the EWP Professional will be a violation of the Municipality's Code of Conduct as well as Employee Assistance Professional Association of South Africa (EAPA-SA) to which the EAP Professionals belong.

#### **7.1.2 Impartiality**

Participation in the EWP shall not jeopardize an employee's job security, chances of promotion or other related benefits nor

shall the information shared during consultation be used for disciplinary process.

### **7.1.3 Equal treatment**

Employees who use EWP services shall receive the same consideration as those with medical problems. No employee/client shall receive preferential treatment or adverse treatment due to her/his participation in the EW Programme.

### **7.1.4 Voluntarism**

Participation in the programme shall be voluntary. However management may arrange for mandatory referral where necessary (i.e. a management Prerogative to assist a challenged employee by referring him/her for specialized treatment)

If a challenged employee has been identified, but refuses specialized treatment, and continues with job performance problems, such an employee exposes him/herself to possible disciplinary action(s).

### **7.1.5 Timeous intervention**

Efforts shall be made to ensure early identification and resolution of problems with active participation of all relevant stakeholders namely, employees, supervisors, managers and union representatives.

### **7.1.6 Neutrality**

The EWP shall not be involved in labour disputes and collective bargaining issues pursued by management and the workforce.

## **7.2 ROLES / FUNCTIONS**

### **7.2.1 Manager/supervisor**

7.2.1.1 Early identification and referral of troubled employees to EAP is essential in order to enhance an excellent service delivery and prevent lowered job performance.

7.2.1.2 Provide performance counseling to discuss deteriorating work performance with concerned employees and if no improvement, complete necessary documentation for formal referral of such employees to EAP.

7.2.1.3 Bring the availability of EWP to the attention of employees before problems affect productivity.

7.2.1.4 Support the programme by being part of the Wellness Committees addressing EWP and HIV related issues.

7.2.1.5 Provide support to departmental preventive and awareness programmes.

7.2.1.6 Liaise with union representatives to ensure early intervention.

7.2.1.7 Maintain and encourage adherence of all EWP principles, especially that of confidentiality.

7.2.1.7 Assist with the assessment of organizational needs and those of the employees.

7.2.1.8 Consult with EWP regarding identified productivity problems and intervention of the unit.

7.2.1.9 Evaluate progress or decline through follow-up.

## **7.2.2 Employees**

7.2.2.1 Early identification and self-referral to EWP before problems affect job performance and social functioning.

7.2.2.2 Active participation in the programme and its activities.

7.2.2.3 Refer fellow employees in need of the EWP service.

7.2.2.4 Support and encourage colleagues making use of the programme and give them the respect they deserve.

## **7.2.3 Union representatives**

7.2.3.1 Ensure that all members are aware of the EWP and its benefits.

7.2.3.2 Observe unbecoming behavior of their members and refer them timeously for assistance.

7.2.3.3 Encourage members to use the service and attend all EWP and HIV & AIDS related activities.

## **7.2.4 Immediate family members**

7.2.4.1 Encourage their employed family member to seek assistance in case of challenges

7.2.4.2 Support the employee during the counseling sessions including rehabilitation process.

7.2.4.3 Monitor employee compliance with the treatment or action plan

## **7.2.4 EMPLOYEE WELLNESS COMMITTEE**

7.2.4.1 The Employee Wellness Committees should be representative of all relevant stakeholders in the Municipality. Representatives from the following sections shall form part of the committee:

- Human Resource Management
- Human Resource Development and Training



- Labour Relations
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Financial Services
- PHC
- HIV/AIDS Coordinator
- One Representative from all local municipalities

7.2.4.2 The Committee shall assist the EWP Professional with the identification of trends which impact on productivity for redress.

7.2.4.3 The committee may recommend specific strategies and procedures for implementing the EWP and HIV & AIDS programmes as well as criteria for evaluating utilization.

### **7.3 REFERRAL PROCEDURE, CONSULTATION WITH EWP PROFESSIONAL AND REFERRAL TO INTERNAL OR EXTERNAL SERVICE PROVIDERS**

#### **7.3.1. Referral to the programme can be done in two ways:**

**7.3.1.1 Self-referral:** The employee as the person, who is in a best position to identify problems experienced, consults the EWP Professional voluntarily.

**7.3.1.2 Formal referral:** The supervisor/manager refers the challenged employee in writing to the EWP for assistance due to lowering job performance (Confidential Referral Form available from EWP). Such referral should be done if the problem cannot be resolved internally and if the employee gives consent to such referral. The supervisor/manager or the employee may arrange an appointment with the EWP Professional.

If the employee refuses to be referred or does not co-operate with the programme, yet the performance remains poor, such an employee exposes himself or herself to disciplinary measures.

7.3.1.3 During initial consultation, the EWP Professional will be responsible for intake and assessment of employee's problem as well as determination of appropriate action plan.

7.3.1.4 When there is a need for an intensive therapy, an alternative action plan might include referral to an external service provider with necessary expertise to handle that problem.

7.3.1.5 When the employee is referred to another resource, it is the responsibility of both the employee and the EWP Professional to inform the supervisor without compromising confidentiality of the consultation process. The employee in question shall give the dual consent to enable the EWP Professional to render follow-up services effectively.

7.3.1.6 Record keeping is essential; as a result the EWP Professional shall keep reports and progress reports of all consultation with the clients or other role players strictly confidential.

7.3.1.7 Should appointments for EWP consultation and/or institutionalization be scheduled during working hours, employees are expected to make necessary prior arrangements with their supervisors. They will also need to submit confirmation of attendance of such consultations.

## **7.4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The EWP offers a cost-free service with regard to consultations and training.

Employees who require further specialized services / treatment will be referred to External service provider or government agencies at Municipal costs.

Transportation for consultations and Outreach Programmes shall also be covered by the municipality.

Those who require treatment at private institutions will pay for the expenses.

## **8. ADMINISTRATION OF THE POLICY**

8.1 The Office of the General Manager (Corporate Services) and Senior Manager HRM will be assigned to administer and enforce the policy. The EWP section will be responsible to monitor the implementation of the policy

8.2 All Heads of Departments will be delegated to administer the policy in their own section or local areas,

**9. DESIGNATED STRUCTURE/ AUTHORITATIVE BODY**

9.1 The Executive council through the office of the municipal manager shall have the authority to approve the policy

**10. EFFECTIVE DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION**

The effective date of the policy will be the day after the approval by the council.

**11. POLICY REVIEW**

This policy will be reviewed after every twelve (12) months

**12. APPROVAL OF THE POLICY**

The policy will be approved by the council

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**LOCAL LABOUR FORUM**

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**DATE**

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**MUNICIPALI MANAGER**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**DATE**

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**COUNCIL**

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**DATE**