

## Employee Assistance Program

### What is an Employee Assistance Program (EAP)?

This program provides confidential, professional assistance to help employees and their families resolve problems that affect their personal lives or job performance. The program is voluntary and confidential – it is designed to allow the employee or members of their immediate family to seek help on their own. Early identification and referral for assessment of the problem before it becomes a major obstacle are extremely important.

### Why do we need an EAP?

The school district provides this program because it cares about the well being of staff and it is good business. Each of us, regardless of our position in the district, faces a variety of problems in our daily lives. Usually, we can work them out. Sometimes our problems become too much for us to handle and they affect our personal happiness, family relationships, performance at work and our health.

When this occurs, we often need professional help in resolving them. Without proper attention, these problems usually become worse and the consequences are often unpleasant and expensive.

### How does the EAP work?

It is a district-sponsored program. The district has retained the services of NuVantage Employee Resource to provide comprehensive EAP services for all Bemidji Area Schools employees and their household family members.

NuVantage Employee Resource can be accessed at any time of the day or year by calling **800-577-4727**. Additional information and resources are also available through the NuVantage website which can be found at [www.nuvantage.org](http://www.nuvantage.org).

Two ways it may work:

1. The request for help may be initiated by you or a member of your household. Simply call **800-577-4727**. Identify yourself as an employee of Bemidji Area Schools, or a family member of a Bemidji Area Schools employee, to assure prompt attention. **Confidentiality is assured**. The discussion of the problem is strictly between you and the counselor. Neither your employer nor your co-workers will have any knowledge of your request for help. If the need is indicated, the counselor may encourage other members of your family to participate in the program. In EAP cases, employees **may use** sick leave for appointments that cannot be scheduled outside of working hours. In order to ensure confidentiality, you are encouraged to check "sick leave" on the request for leave form and write "illness" as the reason.
2. Your supervisor may encourage the use of the Employee Assistance Program when a performance problem occurs in order to determine if personal problems may be interfering with the job. The supervisor will not attempt to diagnose or counsel employees on personal issues. The program is voluntary; however, if the offer to help is refused and job performance or attendance problems continue, regular corrective procedures may apply.

Again it should be noted that this request is only to have a qualified individual conduct an initial assessment to determine if there is a problem.

**What kinds of problems will the EAP deal with?**

The program deals with human problems – the kinds that affect an employee’s personal well-being and his/her ability to perform on the job. These problems may include marital difficulties, financial or legal problems, emotional difficulties or problems caused by alcohol or other drug abuse.

**Aren’t my private problems my business?**

Certainly these are personal problems, until they begin to have an effect on the employee’s performance on the job. Many times these problems begin to affect the morale of fellow workers and the overall effectiveness of the organization. The intent of the EAP is to prevent that from happening. It’s an offer of a helping hand – not an attempt to pry or punish.

**Cost:**

There is no cost for use of NuVantage Employee Resource. The Employee Assistance Program is being provided by Bemidji Area Schools as a resource for employees.

**REMEMBER, a school district is a lot of people working together to make up “the team”. Whether it is a bus driver, cook, teacher or principal who is experiencing difficulties, the whole team suffers.**

If you have questions, please contact Human Resources at 333-3100 ext. 113 or ext.111.