Faculty and Staff Assistance Program

For: All Faculty and Staff

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Purpose

Cornell University recognizes the range of human health problems of a medical or emotional nature which may affect a staff member's personal job performance. These difficulties may arise from marital or family crises, financial problems, the job, and other personal issues. Alcohol or drug abuse and misuse may also be involved. The Faculty and Staff Assistance Program (FSAP) is a counseling and referral service available to aid staff in dealing with the range of concerns that may have an impact upon their work as well as their personal lives.

Eligibility

FSAP services are available to all benefits-eligible employees (and their partners). Staff members on university layoff status are eligible to use FSAP services during the layoff period (per Policy 6.12, Separations).

Scope

The FSAP provides short-term assessment and counseling free of charge. Staff members can make use of FSAP in two ways: 1) the resolution of a problem within the basic service framework provided by the FSAP counselor or, 2) for more complex concerns, the identification of other professional programs considered useful in assisting the staff member.

Program Elements

FSAP services are designed to help individuals manage the struggles that come with life and work. Whether these are concerns about balancing the complex demands of daily living, making the most of an opportunity, working through an acute problem or stressor, or dealing with a
complex health concern, FSAP staff can help individuals get information, consider options, and obtain the services or care needed.

Service Locations

Services in Ithaca will be provided at the FSAP office at 409 College Avenue, Suite 201. Services are also provided bi-weekly in Geneva. To make an appointment or to get additional information, call (607) 255-2673.

Employee Self-Referral

Employees who elect to use the service should contact FSAP directly. An FSAP counselor will work with the staff member confidentially to assist in identifying the cause of the problem, resolving the problem, or when appropriate, securing other treatment or counseling. The FSAP counselor may refer the staff member to community resources for the management of problems which are beyond the scope of the FSAP. Information given to the counselor and any diagnosis is completely confidential.

Supervisory Referral

A staff member's supervisor can also become involved in the FSAP referral. Supervisors may detect a change in a staff member's on-the-job behavior which seems to suggest that the staff member is experiencing difficulty. Patterned absences and unusual mood swings may be symptomatic of some influences in the staff member's life which might benefit from the kind of attention available through FSAP. Since it is clearly not the supervisor's job to attempt to diagnose any such problems, a reasonable course of action might include a reminder to the staff member of the availability of FSAP and the accompanying suggestion of the value of participating in the program.

Condition of Employment Referral

A mandatory supervisory referral to FSAP requires a staff member to participate in FSAP as a condition of continued employment at Cornell. This type of referral is made only in extreme cases of deteriorating job performance, where the individual's continued employment is brought into question.

In addition, a condition-of-employment referral should not be made unless the process of progressive, corrective discipline has been used and has thus far proven unsuccessful, unless the presenting problem is of an emergency nature. All condition-of-employment referrals must be approved in advance by the local HR representative or designee or the Personnel Office at the Geneva Experiment Station, whichever is appropriate. That a mandatory referral has been made (and that fact only) should be noted in the staff member's official personnel file.

Progressive Discipline

The FSAP is a resource for resolving the underlying factors which may result in some on-the-job problems. Referral to FSAP can be a matter of supervisory discretion or the result of a self-
referral. However, referral to or participation in the FSAP constitutes neither a formal step in the disciplinary procedure nor a condition precedent to commencement of disciplinary action.

In the event that a staff member's job performance continues to decline and the staff member is making no apparent effort to address the problem, the supervisor has the full range of progressive discipline available. (Refer to the Policy 6.11.3, Discipline) Progressive discipline designed to help rehabilitate a staff member may always be considered in addition to an FSAP referral for a staff member with performance difficulties.

**Confidentiality**

FSAP services are strictly confidential. Records will not be kept in the staff member's official personnel file except to document a condition of employment referral. In such case only the fact that a referral has been made will be entered into the record. There will be no risk of job loss as a result of participation in this program.

**Time Off**

The university considers normally scheduled work hours spent conferring with an FSAP counselor as health or personal leave. However, if a staff member prefers to use the program anonymously, vacation hours can be used to cover the absence. Should a staff member be referred for extended services beyond FSAP counseling, working hours spent away from work may also be handled as health and personal leave.

**NOTE:**
For Cornell University policy information, visit the [University Policy Office](#).