

UCONN

HEALTH

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Supervisor Guide

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UConn Health

Supervisor Guide to The Employee Assistance Program

EAP



“People rarely succeed unless they are having fun in what they are doing”

...Dale Carnegie

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UCONN
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**EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE
PROGRAM**

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
EAP Policy Statement.....	1
Core Elements.....	1
Review of the Process	2
The Key to Your Role.....	3
Early Warning Signs	3
Behavioral Patterns of Declining Performance	4
What to Do.....	5
What to Say About EAP.....	5
EAP Supervisor Referral Flow Diagram.....	6
Some Things to Remember When Talking to an Employee.....	7
What You Can Expect from EAP	7
If You Call.....	8
Self-referral.....	8
What to Do Next About Performance	8
How You Can Help.....	8
If the Employee Refuses EAP Assistance.....	8
If Performance Declines	9
Safety or Health Concerns.....	9
Taking Disciplinary Action.....	9
Barriers to Supervisory Referral of Employees.....	10
Final Notes.....	11
Directions to EAP	12
Contact Information	13

Introduction

The purpose of this guide is to assist you, the supervisor or manager, in understanding and implementing the important role you play in your Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

Your employer is committed to assisting employees whose personal problems or work/life challenges may be affecting their job performance.

Supervisors have a responsibility to support their employees in maintaining satisfactory performance. If employees demonstrate a decline in performance due to personal problems or work/life challenges, supervisors should encourage them to seek help through the EAP to address these problems.

This guide provides specific information on how to make EAP referrals. If you have any questions or if you need help on any aspect of the program, contact the EAP at 860-679-2877 or (Connecticut toll-free) 800-852-4392.

“The only place success comes before work is in the dictionary.”

...Vince Lombardi

EAP Policy Statement

Your employer is committed to providing the necessary services to assist employees in the identification and resolution of personal problems or work/life challenges that affect job performance. To meet this objective, an Employee Assistance Program has been established. The objective of the EAP is to reduce problems in the work force and to retain valued employees.

It is recognized that problems of a personal nature, not directly associated with one's job, can have an adverse effect on an employee's job performance. It is also a fact that early identification and intervention results in less intensive treatment and lower medical costs, benefiting both the employee and the employer. Additionally, early identification of a problem results in fewer disruptions in the employee's work and personal life and leads to a healthier work/life balance for the employee.

Core Elements

All aspects of a person's EAP interaction are handled in a confidential manner within the limits of the law. The program offers assistance in dealing with a wide range of emotional and behavioral problems such as drug/alcohol related issues, family/marital concerns, financial difficulties, legal matters, and other personal problems. The program provides assessment, brief counseling, referral when necessary, and follow-up services.

These services are provided at no cost to the employee. Costs incurred for services offered outside the EAP are the responsibility of the employee, though many are covered by insurance. The program is available on a self-referral basis to all employees—and their families—regardless of the employee's job title or responsibilities.

If employees or family members have personal problems that may benefit from assistance, we encourage them to use the program. We particularly encourage employees to seek assistance if they believe that personal problems are causing unsatisfactory job performance.

If performance problems exist and are corrected through the services we recommend, no further action is taken. Participation in the program will not jeopardize one's present job, future employment, or career advancement.

The presence of a personal problem is not justification for lowering performance standards; however, after an employee has sought help, it is realistic for a supervisor to consider allowing a reasonable transition period before performance is expected to return to an acceptable level.

If performance problems persist, the employee is subject to normal corrective procedures and disciplinary action, though services of the EAP will continue to be offered.

Management has a genuine concern for improving employee performance through reducing personal problems that may affect employees on the job. All levels of management are therefore responsible for using this program to assist in resolving job performance problems.

Review of the Process

When contact is made with the Employee Assistance Program, a counselor meets with the employee or family member to assess the situation and determine a plan of action. This might include a referral to community resources.

Most employees seek the help of EAP independently and voluntarily; this is a self-referral. If an employee approaches you with a problem on an informal basis, encourage self-referral.

If you observe performance being affected by a personal problem, however, encourage the employee to let you make the appointment. In such cases, you and the EAP will maintain communication regarding the employee's progress on the job.

Generally, the only information you receive about the employee's personal problem is whether the employee came to the EAP appointment and whether he or she is compliant with the plan of action. No specific information about the case will be released without the employee's consent. Many times, though, the employee chooses to discuss the situation with you directly.

"Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced."

...James Baldwin

The Key to Your Role

Monitoring job performance is the key to your role as supervisor. Supervisors are responsible to see that work gets done and that employees are doing their jobs according to job standards.

You are in the unique position of knowing the job requirements for each position in your unit and of knowing, in a general way, present and past performance of each employee.

When there is deteriorating job performance, there may be something in the employee's personal life adversely affecting his or her performance. You should address what you know best: the job and the performance required to accomplish that job. Then suggest the Employee Assistance Program.

Early Warning Signs

When people are troubled or concerned, their behavior usually changes. Work patterns commonly alter and job performance may decline. Occasional incidents of poor job performance do not necessarily mean that there is a serious problem. One way to assess more serious problems is to know how often and how severe the employee's job impairment becomes.

Remember, however, that an employee does not have to display substandard performance before making a referral to the Employee Assistance Program. The sooner a pattern is identified, the more quickly an employee's well-being, work/life balance, and capabilities can be restored.

When several of the performance patterns described on the following page begin to appear, a problem may exist. As a supervisor, you should document these occurrences. Your observations will provide specific feedback during discussions with the employee, which may lead to an EAP referral. The problem may result from a variety of family concerns or from a form of substance abuse. As previously described, the EAP will identify the specific need and resources available for help.

*"People are motivated by fear, but they are not inspired by it.
Everything that inspires us comes from love."*

...Lance Secretan



Behavioral Patterns of Declining Performance

Increased Absenteeism <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Unexcused absences- Excessive disability- Repeated short absences- Improbable excuses for absences- Abnormally high number of absences for minor illnesses- Excessive tardiness	On-the-job absenteeism <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Continued absences from desk or work- Increased number and length of coffee breaks, increasingly long lunches; increased number of trips to rest room- Physical illness on the job (headaches, stomach aches, etc.)- Complaints from coworkers
Erratic work pattern <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Extremes of high or low productivity- Extremes in quality of work- Having to put in extra hours to finish work	Friction with other employees <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Overreaction to real or imagined criticism- Wide swings in mood- Unreasonable resentments- Avoidance of associates- Irritability
Concentration problems <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Greater effort to finish work- Jobs and projects take longer- Easily distracted	Unusual behavior <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Temper tantrums- Physical violence- Emotional outbursts
Confusion <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Difficulty in recalling instructions and details- Increasing difficulty in handling and completing assignments- Difficulty in recalling own mistakes	Lowered job efficiency <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Missed deadlines- Increased number of errors- Wasted time and materials- Poor decision-making
High accident rate or many close calls	

What to Do

Ideally, employees will self-refer long before their work is affected. This can be encouraged by discussing the EAP at staff meetings, informing new employees of the program, and by having brochures available. If job performance is impaired and the employee does not seek help on his or her own, it is again suggested that you take the initiative and offer to arrange an appointment for the employee with the EAP.

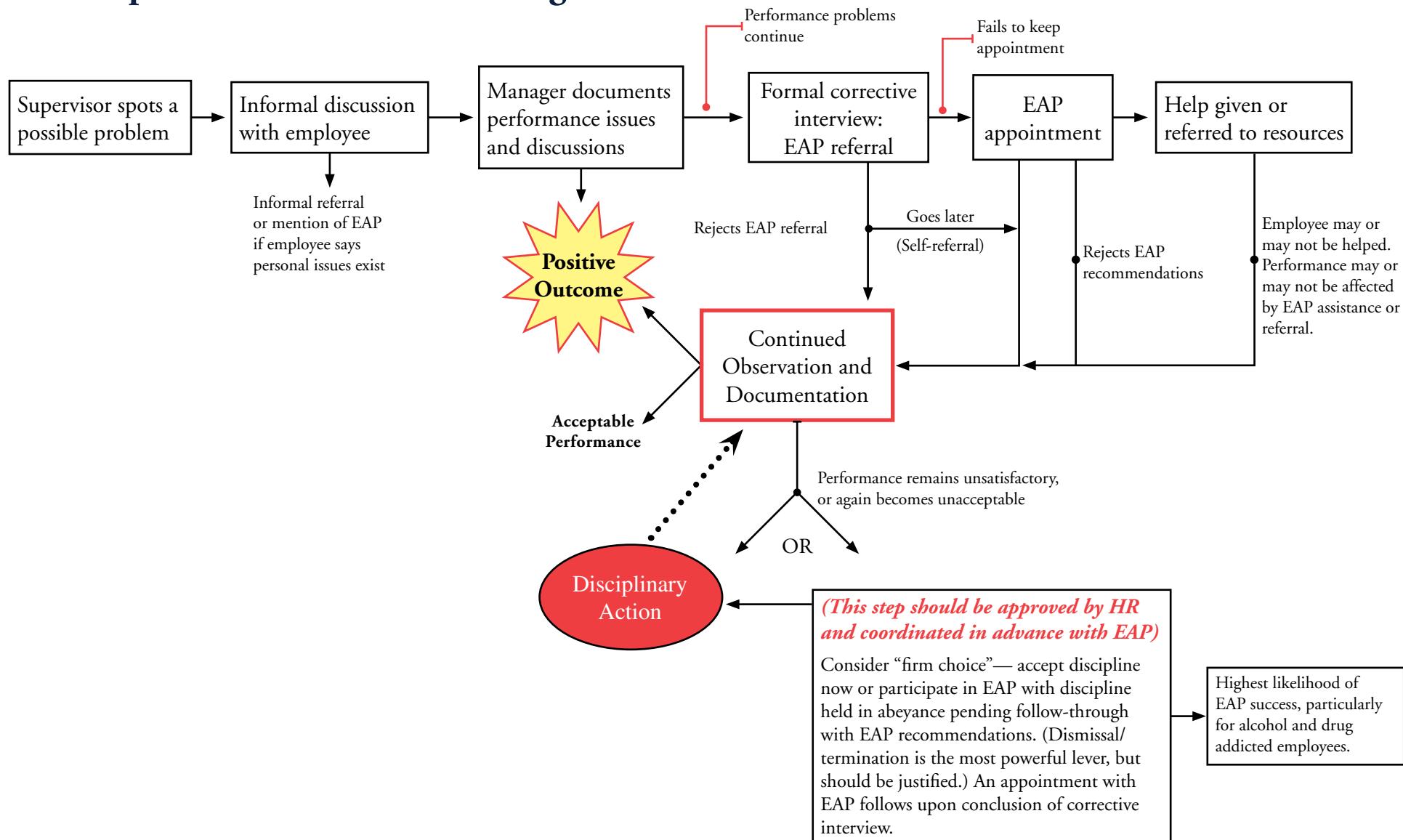
Here are some basic guidelines to be followed when handling and discussing a performance problem with an employee:

- Document declining performance.
- Tell the employee what you have observed, referring to your documentation. If you need help preparing for this interview, contact your EAP coordinator, Human Resources, or a Labor Relations representative prior to meeting with the employee.
- Communicate as clearly as possible your view of the performance problem.
- Let the employee know the consequences of failure to resolve the performance issue.
- Don't speculate on the cause of the performance decline.
- Get the employee's view of the performance problem.
- Don't engage in any discussion with the employee about any personal problem that may be hampering the employee's performance.
- Focus only on work performance.
- Outline a path to correct the situation within the bounds of the work situation.
- Review the Employee Assistance Program with the employee.

What to Say About the EAP

When you advise the employee about the EAP, describe it as professional assistance for any personal problem. Assure the employee that the program is completely confidential, and strongly encourage him or her to let you arrange an appointment with an EAP counselor. Tell the employee that it is their decision to use the program, but emphasize its importance.

EAP Supervisor Referral Flow Diagram



Some Things to Remember When Talking to Employees

- Don't apologize for bringing up performance deficiencies. As a supervisor, it's your right and responsibility to do so.
- Don't be a diagnostician. Your area of expertise is performance; don't try to diagnose your employee's problems or personal issues.
- Don't moralize. Your employer places no stigma on personal problems.
- Don't get involved in a discussion about possible treatment. If your employee tells you he or she is seeing or will see someone about a problem, recommend that he or she also allow you to arrange an appointment with the EAP for advice and recommendations.
- Do offer EAP assistance to a previously satisfactory employee before taking adverse action.

Here are three techniques for referring employees:

Casually encourage self-referral.

Remind the employee that the EAP is an available resource when the employee talks about having some personal problems.

Strongly encourage self-referral.

The supervisor mentions the EAP in response to an existing job performance problem with the hope that the employee will self-refer. No disciplinary action is used or believed necessary. No contact with the EAP is made prior to the corrective interview.

Supervisor Referral.

You, as a supervisor notify or consult with the EAP first. Then you meet with the employee to discuss performance issues and request changes. Tell the employee that a "supervisor referral" is being made to the EAP. Advise the employee to call the EAP for an appointment, or you may offer to arrange the appointment. You will only learn whether the employee keeps the appointment and is following recommendations.

What You Can Expect from the EAP

An appointment will be arranged for the employee to meet with a counselor who will assess the situation and suggest a plan of action. This might include referral to internal or community resources for help.

If You Call

If you call the EAP to discuss the employee's performance problem, an EAP counselor will contact you following the initial visit and give you only general information, without providing personal treatment or diagnostic data. Such feedback will include whether the employee made it to the EAP, and whether the employee is working on a plan to resolve the personal problem.

One of the most important tenets of the EAP program is its respect for an employee's privacy. Even if you have referred a person to the EAP, no specific information concerning personal problems will be released without the employee's consent, though in many cases, the employee may choose to discuss the situation with you directly.

Self-Referral

Remember, if the supervisor does not call the EAP beforehand, the supervisor won't receive information about any action the employee may take. Employees who contact the EAP on their own are guaranteed confidentiality. Information and records created in this program will not be released outside the EAP unless the employee requests it or agrees to it.

What to Do Next About Performance

Whether or not your employee decides to go to the EAP, you will continue to monitor performance. Work may improve with or without contact with the EAP. We encourage you to offer EAP assistance to every employee throughout any disciplinary process.



How You Can Help

One of the objectives of the EAP is to restore productivity once it has been adversely affected. That's why it's important for you to keep in touch with the EAP and let a counselor know about the employee's performance level. How often you contact the EAP will depend on the situation; you can discuss frequency with the EAP. Of course, if there are any problems or questions, contact the EAP at any time.

"See the rocks in your path not as obstacles, but as opportunities to climb higher."

...Eleanor Wiley

If the Employee Refuses EAP Assistance

If your employee decides not to accept help from the EAP at this time, you should reemphasize your expectation that performance will improve—and the consequences for failure to improve. Before describing probable consequences, check with the Human Resources Department to make sure they are actually enforceable. You should also point out that the EAP will be available at any time in the future, if the employee changes his or her mind.

If Performance Declines

If performance doesn't improve, hold additional performance discussions and document them. Encourage the employee more strongly to consider the use of the EAP and to allow you to set up an appointment, particularly if other efforts to improve performance have failed. Remind the employee that he or she faces possible performance based action unless the quality of work improves.

When Safety or Health Is Affected

If the behavior of an employee under your supervision affects his or her own safety or that of other employees, it is your responsibility to intervene. This should be done in close consultation with the Human Resources Department.

"Health is worth more than learning."
... Thomas Jefferson

Taking Disciplinary Action

When you take action based on negative performance, follow the guidance furnished by your manager or Human Resources representative. The number of discussions you'll need before you take action will, of course, depend on the individual situation.



*"No man can think clearly
when his fists are clenched."*
... George Jean Nathan

Barriers to Supervisory Referral of Employees

(Good Intentions Gone Awry)

Occasionally a well-meaning supervisor fails to put into practice established guidelines for disciplinary actions, usually with the best of intentions. Below you'll find a few of the reasons for this gap between policy and practice—rationalizations we hope you'll avoid:

Betrayal of the Employee

Perhaps you feel that you're helping an employee by letting problems persist, and you'll hurt the employee by referring him or her to the EAP. Exactly the opposite is true.

Good Worker

You may feel that you should protect an employee who was a good worker. That employee should be referred to the EAP precisely because he or she was a good worker and no longer is.

Misguided Sense of Responsibility

You may feel it's your responsibility to handle and correct the problem yourself, that referral to the EAP program is somehow an admission of failure as a supervisor. Your job is monitoring performance, not handling your employees' personal problems. You fail as a supervisor only if you don't make every effort to improve the morale and productivity that are being hurt by an employee with a performance problem.

Esprit de Corps

Maybe you'd like to keep problems within the unit—you may feel that "dirty linen shouldn't be aired." But in the same way that you'd seek professional help for an employee injured in an automobile accident, you should get proper help for the person who is "hurting" because of a personal problem.

Reluctance to Confront

It is not unusual for people to prefer to avoid confronting an unpleasant situation. An employee with a sensitive problem may be among the most difficult to deal with.

Fear of Losing Control

Some supervisors may fear losing control of their actions through anger during a stressful discussion.

Problems of Your Own

Perhaps you're reluctant to address an employee's problem because you have a comparable one. If so, who should know better than you the pain and stress the employee is experiencing—and how much he or she needs someone to talk to.

Liability Concerns

Personnel files are confidential. Medical files are confidential and, of course, EAP files are confidential.

A Final Note

The EAP is a resource for you, the manager or supervisor. It can help you when you notice personal problems begin to interfere with an employee's performance. Again, the signals might be increasing absenteeism, accidents and errors, or a variety of other behavior. Family or marital problems, parenting concerns, alcoholism or drug abuse may be at the heart of these problems on the job.

The EAP is a resource you can offer these employees to help them work towards solving their problems in a confidential manner. This guide is intended to help managers and supervisors recognize warning signs of behavior problems and provide suggestions for dealing with them.

Remember, Employee Assistance is not intended to be used by managers or supervisors as a form of discipline. Rather, the program is designed as a benefit to be made available to employees who need assistance with personal problems or work/life challenges that affect job performance.

Please contact the EAP counselor at 860-679-2877 or (Connecticut toll-free) 800-852-4392 if you have any questions about the program or the referral process.

"There is no such thing as a self-made man. You will reach your goals only with the help of others."

--George Shinn



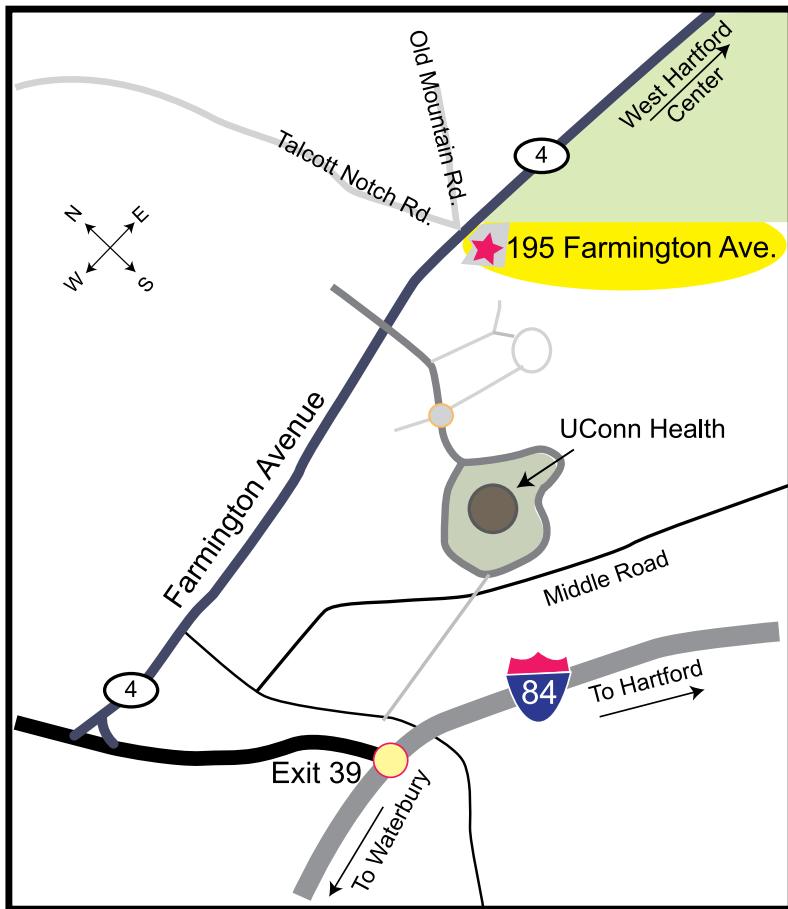
Directions

Below you will find driving directions and a map to the main office of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) at UConn Health. Affiliate offices are located throughout Connecticut and are listed on page 13. All calls initially go through the EAP main office at UConn Health before they are referred to convenient affiliate locations.

The EAP Program office is located on the UConn Health Campus in Farmington at 195 Farmington Avenue, Suite 2000 (second floor).

From I-84

- Take Exit 39.
- Turn right at first traffic light onto Route 4 East (Farmington Avenue).
- Proceed about one mile.
- Turn right at the fourth traffic light into 195 Farmington Avenue.
- EAP is on the second floor, Suite 2000.





Contact Information

Director: Elizabeth Robinson, LMFT, CEAP
263 Farmington Avenue, MC 6020
Farmington, CT 06032-6020

Phone: 860.679.2877

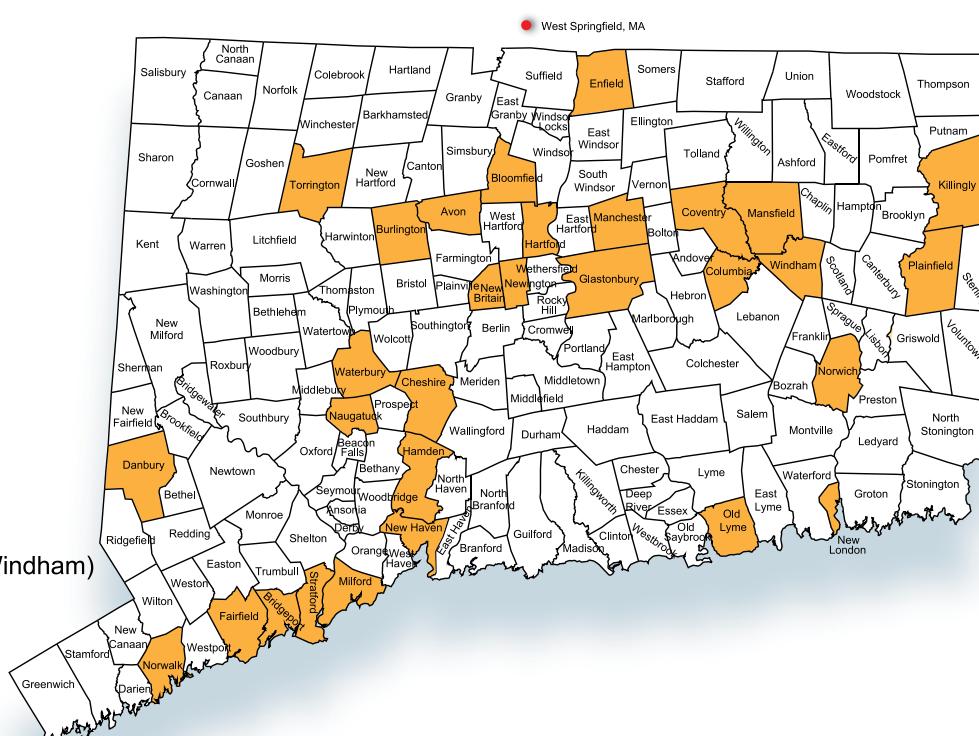
Fax: 860.679.0130

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Milford
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New Britain
New Haven
New London
Newington
North Windham (Windham)
Norwalk
Norwich
Old Lyme
Storrs (Mansfield)
Stratford
Torrington
Waterbury
Wauregan (Plainfield)
West Springfield, MA
Willimantic (Windham)

EAP Affiliate Locations by Town



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