

ALLEN COLLEGE – UNITYPOINT HEALTH  
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

Supersedes: New

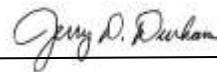
No: 2-E-800-03

Date: April 2015

Required Review Date: April 2019

Written By: Student Services

Approved By:



Jerry D. Durham, PhD, RN, FAAN

**SUBJECT:** Formal Referral of Allen College students to the Employee Assistance Program at Allen Hospital (the EAP)

**PURPOSE:** To establish a protocol for referring students in need of counseling assistance.

**EFFECTIVE FOR:** All Allen College faculty and staff

**DEFINITIONS:**

Informal Referral:

In an Informal Referral, a faculty/staff member offers the availability of EAP services to the student as a source of support and confidential assistance. The student makes the decision whether or not to go to EAP. An Informal Referral is made if the student is experiencing an unhealthy, but non-crisis, level of stress as indicated by the signs and symptoms observed. This stress may be related to academic issues, personal issues, or both. After the initial assessment session in EAP, the student may pursue short-term counseling with EAP or be referred to another appropriate resource for assistance. All student contacts with EAP are confidential; no one, including the referring person, will know if the student chooses to use EAP unless the student shares that information. Students may also self-refer with the same assurance of confidentiality.

Crisis Situation: Whether or not a situation is a crisis is dependent on how the individual reacts to the situation. A crisis is “a perception or experience of an event or situation as an intolerable difficulty that exceeds [or challenges] the person’s current resources and coping mechanisms” (James & Gilliland, 2001).

Formal Referral:

In a Formal Referral, a faculty/staff member requests that the student use the EAP for counseling assistance. A formal referral may be either mandatory or voluntary. A mandatory referral may include consequences if the student fails to comply with the referral. With a voluntary referral, the student chooses whether or not to comply.

A mandatory Formal Referral is made when

- a faculty or staff member observes or suspects that a student’s health and safety or the health and safety of another are at imminent risk (e.g., suicidal or homicidal references or threats are made) or

- there is reasonable suspicion that the student is in violation of the Drug-free Campus policy.

A voluntary Formal Referral is made

- when the student is displaying signs of a crisis situation or mental health issues not involving imminent risk,
- as a part of a behavioral contract or as a contingency for remaining in or returning to class, or
- when there is danger of attrition or academic failure.

Either type of Formal Referral usually requires three EAP sessions to address the student's personal issues, develop a plan of action, make appropriate referrals outside of EAP (if needed), and monitor the student's progress. The referral is intended to ensure that the student has the help that is needed to be successful.

When either type of Formal Referral is made, the referring individual should complete the Faculty/Staff referral form (pp. 6-7 of this policy) and, with the student, set goals for the EAP intervention. Fax the form to EAP (235-3642). Send a copy of all academic-related referrals to the program dean; for non-academic referrals, send a copy to the head of the appropriate department. Inform the student of the following expectations:

- the time frame for making the appointment with EAP;
- that a release of information will be signed in EAP, allowing the EAP staff to confirm that the student has made and kept the appointment;
- to whom this information will be given; and
- that three appointments should be anticipated.

With a Formal Referral, the EAP feedback to the program dean will include the following:

1. the dates and times that the student attended EAP;
2. verification that the problem areas and goals identified by the referring individual were addressed in the EAP sessions;
3. verification of whether the student was provided a specific plan of action—specific recommendations/referrals are not disclosed to the referring individual; and
4. verification of whether the student plans to comply or has complied with any recommended referral outside of EAP.

**POLICY:** An Allen College – UnityPoint Health (Allen College) faculty or staff member should refer a student to the counseling services available at the EAP when it is determined that the student is showing signs of distress or imminent risk that would be appropriately addressed by and responsive to professional counseling services.

Allen College enlists the services of the EAP to provide a professional and confidential setting for the psychological, emotional, and developmental support of students as they pursue their academic goals. The EAP will also act as a resource for faculty and staff members and assist them in their interactions with students. This partnership between

Allen College and the EAP will enhance the quality of the students' experiences at Allen College by supporting their academic and personal success.

Identifying Students in Distress

Some of the signs of distress that faculty and staff should be aware of and watchful for are listed below. Signs of distress are not limited to this list and may be only a subtle change that you notice in your interactions with the student.

Academic Performance:

- Drop in class attendance or academic performance
- Incapacitating test anxiety
- Severe reaction to a poor test or quiz score
- Academic probation
- Clingy behavior; student makes excessive appointments to see you during office hours
- Late assignments or requests for extensions of due dates

Life Circumstance and Personal Concerns:

- Death or serious illness of family member or friend
- Relationship breakup, involving self or a family member
- Culture-related difficulties (isolation, discrimination)
- Problems with roommates
- Severe homesickness
- Feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, or worthlessness
- References to suicide or homicide
- Disruptive classroom behavior
- Alcohol or drug use/abuse
- Self-injurious behavior or engaging in behaviors that involve significant risk of personal injury

**PROCEDURE:**

When you note student behaviors that suggest that the student is in distress, ask the student to visit with you privately. During this conversation, express your concern for the student and offer examples of the behaviors you have noted. For example, "I have noticed that you have not been participating in class discussions lately, your quiz scores have dropped, and you look like you are feeling down. I am concerned about these changes."

If the student discloses a problem, allow him/her to discuss it openly. Convey your support by listening in a calm, nonjudgmental, and encouraging manner. Let the student know that there are professionals available to assist him/her.

If you are unsure about whether or not to refer a student, call the EAP (235-3550) and ask to speak to a counselor regarding your concerns. A consultation with an EAP staff member is usually available within one hour of your call, and this person will assist you in making decisions about how to be most helpful to the student in the current situation.

If your consultation questions are of a more urgent nature and you feel that the student is in a crisis situation, inform the EAP receptionist that your concerns require immediate attention.

**Formal Referral in a crisis situation that does not involve imminent danger of harm or a Drug-free Campus violation (Formal Referral - Voluntary)**

If conversation with the student reveals that there is no imminent danger to self or others but the student is in crisis and should be seen as soon as possible by a counselor at the EAP, express your desire to assist the student in managing his/her current stressors and offer to help the student to make an appointment with EAP.

*If the student is in agreement*, call EAP and ask to set up a crisis session, giving a brief description of the student's issues. Offer to walk the student over to EAP or ask someone else to do so.

*If the student refuses referral to EAP*, you cannot mandate a referral in a situation that does not involve imminent danger or is not in violation of any Allen policies (e.g., the Drug Free Campus policy). Offer what support you can to the student and discuss available options. Continue to encourage the student to seek assistance, and offer to help the student to do so.

**Formal Referral in a crisis situation involving imminent danger or Drug-free Campus violation (Formal Referral - Mandatory)**

If the conversation reveals that the student is in imminent danger of either harming self or harming another, express not only your concern for the student and her/his safety but also your eagerness to help the student seek help in dealing with the stress s/he is under. Ask the student to remain with you while you place a call to get her/him some help. Call 911 and ask for assistance in transferring the student to the Emergency Department (ED) for evaluation. Stay with the student until s/he is handed off to the EMTs. If you are able to do so and feel that the student would benefit from your presence, offer to go to the ED with the student. Notify your department dean of the situation and of the transfer to the hospital ED.

When this student returns to campus or makes contact with the college to arrange for return or readmission, a formal referral should be made to the EAP. EAP can be a valuable resource to (a) ensure that the student has any ongoing support that is needed for academic success, (b) monitor the student's compliance with any recommended post-discharge appointments and treatments, and (c) continue monitoring the student's ongoing mental status.

A violation of the policy Maintaining a Drug-free Campus (2-D-800-01) will result in a mandatory referral of the student to EAP. Students are subject to the disciplinary actions set forth by the Allen Hospital policy 3-D-20-0, Maintaining a Drug-Free Workplace, which states that "failure to use the EAP after such a violation may result in disciplinary action, up to and including [dismissal]" (Sec. V, B). When a mandatory formal referral is made, the student should be informed that their participation in EAP services, including visits and follow-up, is required as a condition of continued enrollment at the College.

If at any time you feel threatened by the student, it would be a good idea to have a second person present when you are talking to the student about the situation and making arrangements for transfer to the ED. This will also prevent the student being left alone if you need to leave your office.

**When you are speaking with a student about a referral to EAP, remember the following points:**

- Assure the student that counseling is CONFIDENTIAL. A student's involvement with EAP will not be disclosed unless the student signs a release of information to provide specific information to specific individuals.
- Assure the student that asking for help is a sign of strength and maturity rather than weakness.
- If the student feels that his/her problem is too small to warrant "bothering" a counselor, assure the student that counselors meet with students for all kinds of concerns—large and small.
- Refer to the situation as one involving stress as opposed to mental illness. For example, say, "From what you have told me, I can tell that you are under a lot of stress. We have counselors at the EAP who are trained to help students to deal with this type of stress. Can I help you to make an appointment to see a counselor?" "Stress" may be seen as less threatening and negative than references to mental health or psychological problems.

**Following a formal referral to EAP, the faculty/staff member should take the following actions:**

- Fill out the Referral form and fax it to EAP. (See pages 6-7 of this policy). Ideally, this form should be filled out with the student's collaboration and input.
- Indicate whether the Referral is *Mandatory* or *Voluntary*.
- Send a copy of the referral form to the program dean or the appropriate department head.
- Indicate in the Student Risk portion of CAMS that an EAP referral has been made.
  - Details of that referral should not be disclosed in this format
- Follow up with the student after two weeks to ask how he/she is doing. (You may want to make the appointment for follow-up at the time of the referral.)
  - Did the student make and keep an appointment with EAP?
    - Inform the dean if the student has not met the expectation.
  - Is the student continuing to experience difficulties?
  - Has the original problem escalated, requiring additional action?
  - Have the difficulties begun to affect the student's academic standing?

Per policy, if the student has not complied with the formal referral within 30 days, the EAP will inform the dean or whomever information is released to. Otherwise, with a release of information, EAP will communicate with the individuals to whom information is released after the first and third sessions unless indicated otherwise.

**Employee Assistance Program Contact Information**

Amanda Schara, Manager

*Phone:* (319) 235-3550      Toll free: 1-800-303-9996

*Fax:* (319) 235-3642

*Location:* Allen Hospital, fifth floor via Elevator B

*Hours:* 8 a.m. – 8 p.m., Monday through Thursday; 8 a.m. – 3 p.m., Friday

*Evening appointments available*

## **Allen College Faculty/Staff-initiated Formal Referral of a Student to the Employee Assistance Program at Allen Hospital**

**This formal referral is** (check one of the following)

- Mandatory (there is danger to self or others or a violation of the Drug-free Campus policy)
- Voluntary

The following information will be shared with the individual(s) to whom information is released:

- Verification that the student met with the counselor (appointment times/dates)
- Verification that problem areas and expected goals, identified on the referral form, were addressed in EAP sessions.
- Verification of whether the student was provided with a recommended plan of action, but not the specifics of the plan.
- Verification of whether the employee planned to complete or had already completed any recommended referral outside of EAP.

**Name of student:** \_\_\_\_\_ (please print)

**Description and time frame of problematic behavior:**

---

---

---

---

---

**Describe any actions that have been taken, the dates of intervention, and the outcomes:**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**What are this student's strengths?**

---

---

---

---

---

**List the behavioral change goal(s) for or desired outcomes of EAP intervention (to be established with the student):**

---

---

---

---

**Release(s) should be signed to** \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of dean and contact information

\_\_\_\_\_ Other

**The student has been made aware of the following:** (check if they have been completed)

- The behavioral change goal(s)
- The deadline for having the appointment: by \_\_\_\_\_ (mm/dd/yy)
  - The time frame should not exceed a 2 week period.
- The need for signing an EAP release or releases of information and to whom information will be released
- The program dean will be informed of the student's compliance or lack of compliance with the EAP appointment(s).
- The program dean will be informed if the student fails to comply with recommended follow-up.
- Three sessions with EAP should be anticipated.
- For a mandatory formal referral, participation in EAP services, including visits and follow-up, is required as a condition of continued enrollment at the College.

Signature of referring individual: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed name: \_\_\_\_\_

Position/Relationship to student: \_\_\_\_\_