

**THE ROLE OF THE SUPERVISOR**  
**IN AN**  
**EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME**  
**IN A MINING COMPANY**

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## SUMMARY

In the occupational setting, supervisory referral is a unique tool. It allows supervisors to spot emerging problems through deteriorating job performance and refer the employee to EAP by means of confrontation and threat of disciplinary action or job loss, (Googins & Godfrey, 1987:147).

For a variety of reasons, supervisors at Anglo-gold Ashanti may not have been carrying out their roles within the EAP sufficiently, and consequently referrals have not been made. In view of this, an exploratory study, including a literature review as well as an empirical survey was undertaken with respect to various trends and barriers that may affect the supervisors' role within EAP. Examples of these were lack of supervisor's knowledge about EAP, the tendency of supervisors to handle the problem themselves, the perception that referring might reflect badly on their ability to supervise, fear of the disciplinary process, fear of betrayal of the employee, a misguided sense of responsibility and/ or a reluctance to confront someone. In addition to these factors, the attitudes of supervisors towards EAP processes were also established as another possible determining factor influencing their referrals to EAP.

This main purpose of this survey was, if found necessary, to enhance the supervisor's role within EAP.

The empirical side of the study covers all Anglo-gold Ashanti supervisors from various mining shafts. The questionnaire was broken into questions covering the knowledge aspect on the one hand, and both perceptions and attitudes towards the EAP process in general on the other.

It was found that supervisors in general were experiencing problems in understanding their role within EAP. They are not clear about when and how to confront an employee with a personal problem, and what to do next. Some of them were also not properly trained for their role within an EAP.

The study therefore concludes that effective use of an EAP rests heavily on supervisors' shoulders – especially in programmes that involve a mandatory element. It is true that these are the people in the organization who identify, motivate and refer employees who need help to the relevant people. If the EAP helps the employee, it helps both the supervisor and the company, too. The study therefore recommends intensive training for supervisors about EAP processes.

## OPSOMMING

Verwysings deur 'n toesighouer is in die werksopset 'n unieke instrument. Dit gee aan toesighouers die geleentheid om ontluikende probleme in die vorm van werksagteruitgang te identifiseer en die werknemer by wyse van konfrontasie, 'n dreigement van dissiplinêre optrede of werkverlies na die werknemershulpprogram (hierna WHP genoem) te verwys, (Googins & Godfrey, 1987:147).

Vir 'n verskeidenheid van redes het toesighouers by Anglo-gold Ashanti nie hulle rol binne die WHP doeltreffend uitgevoer nie en gevolglik was geen verwysings gedoen nie. In die lig hierna is 'n verkennende studie, wat 'n literatuurstudie sowel as 'n empiriese opname ingesluit het, in verband met verskeie neigings en struikelblokke wat die toesighouer se rolle in die WHP bemoeilik, onderneem. Voorbeelde hiervan is die toesighouer se verlies aan kennis, 'n neiging deur toesighouers om probleme self te wil hanteer, 'n persepsie dat verwysings 'n negatiewe refleksie op hulle vermoëns om toesig te hou sou wees, 'n vrees vir die dissiplinêre proses, 'n vrees vir verraad teenoor die werknemer, 'n misplaaste sin vir verantwoordelikheid en/of 'n traagheid om werknemers te konfronteer.

Die hoofdoel van die studie was om die toesighouer se rol binne die WHP te bevorder.

Die empiriese opname het al Anglo-gold Ashanti se toesighouers by die verskillende mynsgagte ingesluit. Die vraelys wat gebruik was om die inligting in te win, het vrae ingesluit oor die kennis van toesighouers oor WHPs, sowel as hulle persepsie en houdings teenoor WHPs in die algemeen.

Die studie het bevind dat toesighouers in die algemeen probleme ondervind in hulle rol as toesighouers binne die WHP van die onderneming. Hulle was onseker oor hoe om 'n werknemer te konfronteer en wat die volgende stap moet wees. Sommige toesighouers was ook nie deeglik opgelei vir hulle rol binne die WHP nie.

Die studie kom tot die gevolgtrekking dat die doeltreffende gebruik van 'n WHP swaar op die skouers van die toesighouers rus, veral in programme waar die uitvoering van sekere verpligte handeling die verantwoordelikheid van die toesighouers is. Inderwaarheid is daar persone binne die organisasie wat werknemers wat hulp nodig het, identifiseer, motiveer en na die toepaslike mense verwys. As die WHP die mense hulp, word beide die organisasie gehulp. Die studie beveel dus intensiewe opleiding vir toesighouers ten opsigte van die WHP-prosesse aan.

## PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH RESULTS

This research will be presented in article format according to Rule A.11.5.3 and A.11.5.4 as stipulated in the North-West University Year book (2002:17). The content and technical requirements of the articles are based on the South African Journal *Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk*.

## GUIDELINES FOR AUTHORS

### INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS: SOCIAL WORK/ MAATSKAPLIKE WERK

The South African journal for social work "*Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk*" (ISSN – 0037-8054) provides the following instructions to authors:

#### INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS

The Journal publishes articles, short communications, book reviews and commentary on articles already published from any field of social work. Contributions relevant to social work from other disciplines will also be considered. Contributions may be written in English or Afrikaans. All contributions will be critically reviewed by at least two referees on whose advice contributions will be accepted or rejected by the editorial committee. All refereeing is strictly confidential. Manuscripts may be returned to the authors if extensive revision is required or if the style or presentation does not conform to the Journal practice. Commentary on articles already published in the Journal must be submitted with appropriate captions, the name(s) and addressees of the author(s) and preferably not exceed 5 pages. The whole manuscript plus one clear copy as well as a diskette with all the text, preferably in MS Windows (Word or WordPerfect) or ASCII must be submitted. Manuscripts must be typed double spaced on one side of A4 paper only. Use the Harvard system for references. Short references in the text: When word-for-word quotations, facts or arguments from other sources are cited, the surname(s) of the author(s), year of publication and page number(s) must appear in parenthesis in the text, e.g. "... (Berger 1967:12). More details about sources referred to in the text should appear at the end of the manuscript under the caption "References". The sources must be arranged alphabetically according to the surnames of the authors. Note the use of capitals and punctuation marks in the following examples.

#### VOORSKRIFTE AAN OUTEURS

Die Tydskrif publiseer artikels, kort mededelings, boekbesprekings en kommentaar op reeds gepubliseerde artikels uit enige gebied van die maatskaplike werk asook relevante bydraes uit ander dissiplines. Bydraes mag in Afrikaans of Engels geskryf word. Artikels in Afrikaans moet vergesel wees van 'n Engelse opsomming van ongeveer 200 woorde. Alle bydraes sal krities deur ten minste twee keurders beoordeel word. Beoordeling is streng vertroulik. Manuskripte sal na die outeurs teruggestuur word indien ingrypende hersiening vereis word of indien die styl nie ooreenstem met die tydskrif se standaard nie. Kommentaar op artikels wat in die Tydskrif gepubliseer is, moet van toepaslike titels, die naam(name) en adres(se) van die outeur(s) voorsien wees en verkieslik nie langer as 5 bladsye wees nie. 'n Disket met die hele teks, verkieslik in MS Windows of ASCII moet die hele manuskrip en een duidelike kopie daarvan vergesel. Manuskripte moet slegs op een kant van die bladsy in dubbelspasiëring getik word. Verwysings moet volgens die Harvard-stelsel geskied. Verwysings in die teks: Wanneer woordelike sitate, feite of argumente uit ander bronne gesitater word, moet die van(ne) van die outeur(s), jaar van publikasie, en bladsynommers tussen hakies in die teks verskyn, bv. "... (Berger, 1967:12). Meer besonderhede omtrent bronne moet alfabeties volgens die vanne van die outeurs aan die einde van die manuskrip onder die opskrif "Bibliografie" verskyn. Let op die gebruik van hoofletters en leestekens by die volgende voorbeelde.

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# INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION

## THE ROLE OF THE SUPERVISOR IN AN EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM IN A MINING COMPANY

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### 1. PROBLEM STATEMENT

This research project focused on the role of the supervisor in an Employee Assistance Programme. Conceptually he or she is a gatekeeper between the individual and the organization, and the supervisor is in a pivotal position to identify performance problems, confront the employee and get him or her into therapeutic processes (Googins & Godfrey, 1987:139). In addition to this recognition, Googins & Kurtzman (1981) state that supervisors by virtue of their organizational role and functions are not only in an ideal position to identify, confront and refer employees for help, but are expected and sanctioned to identify and resolve deteriorating job performance.

The Safety World (2006:4) add that many companies operate a formal Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) and that even in those that do not, supervisors are generally able to refer employees with problems to their human resource departments.

Roberts (2006:8) stresses that supervisors are the link between employees and EAP's. She mentions that supervisory intervention can be a key in targeting people who will not seek help without confrontation, since they may sense an implicit threat to job security. In addition, she emphasizes that the quality of a referral is determined by the time at which the problem has been recognized, the manner in which the employee has been confronted with the facts of his or her declining job performance and the manner in which the EAP has been offered to the employee.

It is the policy at Anglo-gold Ashanti in accordance with its Policy Statement Procedure (2005:2) that use of EAP is voluntary. Supervisors cannot force employees to seek assistance but the process of recognizing problem situations and responding with an EAP referral is a normal and expected supervisory task. In support of this perspective that literature offers, it can be said that the supervisor's primary responsibility is to maintain a productive work environment and to promote employee development (Roberts, 2006:10).

Despite the company policy with a view to the use of EAP, there is a policy in place with respect to the referral system within the EAP department. It states that, should there be personal difficulties affecting employee job performance; the supervisor should encourage the use of EAP, while he or she should take corrective action simultaneously. Usually, this takes the form of a discussion or a written letter outlining performance concerns. In such a letter, the supervisor should mention the availability of the EAP (Anglo-gold Health Service EAP Referral Policy document, 2005:2).

A supervisor's corrective action about job performance could provide some of the motivation required by the employee to resolve the personal difficulty. In a practical situation at the mining company where the research was done, there seem to be a marked decline in respect of supervisor's role within EAP. It has been observed that the referrals from these sources are minimal whilst employee's job performance is reported to be deteriorating due to malingering and or frequent absenteeism. The assumption is that the root of these problems is social in nature. For example one of the measures that oversee employee's well-being is the red ticket examination that employees are expected to undergo periodically, decided by the Occupational Health Centre Personnel. It is during this process that most employees are referred to EAP, commonly with

alcohol and or drug-related and other psychosocial problems. The facility seems to be working quite effectively comparatively speaking. It was from this procedure that it was identified that there may be problems with regard to supervisor's role within the Employee Assistance Programme needing attention. According to the EAP statistics, referrals from supervisors were found to be minimal as compared to problems identified from the occupational health centre. That is, following EAP assessments it was discovered that most problems identified from the health centre were long standing and could have been referred from the workplace at an early stage. This implies that intervention could have been easier with early identification rather than delaying the process of therapeutic treatment. The present study thus flowed from the observation that supervisors should play a more meaningful role in the Employee Assistance Programme (hereafter referred to as EAP).

The following research questions flow from the statement of the problem:

- What is the role of the supervisor in the EAP of the company where the research was done
- What are the perceptions of supervisors at the company of an EAP?
- What are the attitudes of supervisors towards the EAP of the company?

The empirical survey results will reveal the difference found between the supervisor's perceptions as well as their attitudes.

## **2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

### **General Aim**

The overall aim of this study is to investigate the role of supervisors in EAP's of Anglo-gold Ashanti.

### **Objectives**

The following were the specific objectives of the research:

- ◆ To establish the role of supervisors in EAP services;
- ◆ To establish the perceptions of that supervisors have of EAP; and
- ◆ To establish the attitudes of supervisors within EAP in order to make a recommendations based on the findings.

## **3. CENTRAL THEORETICAL ASSUMPTION**

The central theoretical assumption of the study was that the role of the supervisors in the EAP of the particular mining company can be improved,

measured against the number of referrals of troubled employees.

## **4. DEMARCATION OF THE STUDY**

Structurally, the study was limited to the role of supervisors in the EAP of a particular mining company. In terms of field of practice, it focuses on EAP's, in particular with a view of the role of the supervisors in the programme.

## **5. LITERATURE REVIEW**

In order to get a clear understanding of EAP's in a particular mining company, the following were covered during literature review.

### **5.1 WHAT IS AN EAP**

EAP practitioners at the mining company consider an EAP as a company sponsored programme designed to assist employees with problems that might hinder their effective functioning and directly or indirectly interfere with job performance. DuPlessis (1991:210) defines EAP's as programmes aimed at linking employees with personal problems to appropriate resources in order to correct job performance or to prevent deterioration in job performance. Riggio (1990:424) and Griffin & O'Leary (2004:341) are more specific and put more emphasis on alcohol and substance

abuse. They define EAPs as workplace programmes designed to ameliorate a variety of organizational problems, including substance abuse. Riggio (1990:425) elaborates by stating that it is a "human service programme in or associated with a workplace, which aims to link employees with personal problems to appropriate resources in order to correct job performance, or to prevent deterioration of job performance".

EAPA (1999:6) defines EAP as "an a work-site based programme designed to assist in the identification and resolution of productivity problems associated with employees impaired by personal concerns, but not limited to: health, marital, family, financial, alcohol, drug, legal, emotional, stress, or other personal concerns which may adversely affect employee job performance." This definition is more comprehensive and detailed. It focuses on productivity problems while simultaneously acknowledges the association of productivity problems with a wide variety of problems elsewhere in the life of the individual.

The specific core activities of EAPs according to the list of EAPA standards (1999:6) include the following:

- Consultation and training to appropriate persons in the identification and resolution of job performance issues related to employees personal concerns and difficulties;
- Confidential, appropriate, relevant and timely problem assessment services;
- Appropriate and relevant referrals for diagnosis, treatment and assistance;
- The formation of linkages between the work-site EAP, community resources and individual practitioners who provide such services; and
- Follow up services for employees who utilize the services.

It is imperative that newly employed employees should be trained on what the EAP is to ensure that they are knowledgeable in so far as employee assistance program go (Googins and Godfrey, 1987:147)

Robertson, (2006:4) defines EAP as a comprehensive program offering free, confidential assessments and short-term counselling to employees and their families. They further explained that areas of counselling include family and marital issues, emotional difficulties, alcohol and drug problems, and work-related stress issues; crisis intervention, program development, referrals, follow-up, and educational workshops are covered within the scope of EAP.

In South Africa, EAP's developed rapidly from the early 1980's onwards so that by 1990 Terblanche (1999) was able to identify 64 fully functioning programmes. Generally modelled after the "broad-brush" programmes of the time in the United States, South African EAP's nevertheless manifested a particular emphasis on treating alcohol abuse and drug addiction, the most costly employee problems to an employer (Maiden, 1992).

Generally, EAP provides **confidential** assistance to the employee who experiences a personal problem, which may or may not alter work performance or attendance. If ignored, personal problems can jeopardize an employee's health; have a serious impact on lives or families and have negative effects on the ability to perform a job. Problems may be the result of alcoholism, drug abuse, emotional, marital, parent/child relationships, grief, or other concerns.

## 5.2 CORE ELEMENTS

The Safety World (2006:5) shows that all aspects of a person's EAP interaction are handled in a confidential manner within the limits of the law, and that the programme offers assistance in dealing with a wide range of emotional and behavioural problems such as drug/alcohol related issues, family/marital concerns, financial difficulties, legal matters and other personal problems. The programme provides assessment, brief counselling, referral when necessary, and follow-up services.

Anglo-gold Ashanti is also rendering the same services at no cost to the mine employees. Costs incurred for services offered within the EAP are covered by the company policy – referred to as the capitation fee - and those that incurred outside EAP are the responsibility of the employee, though many are covered by insurance (EAP Policy Statement, 2005:3).

The programme 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, they are encouraged to use the programme, especially if it seems that personal problems are causing unsatisfactory job performance.

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

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 subjected 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.

### 5.3 THE EAP AT ANGLO-GOLD ASHANTI

The EAP at Anglo-gold Ashanti has a Policy Statement (2005:3) that asserts that every mining employee together with their families and dependants should access EAP services.

The confidentiality aspect includes maintenance of clients' records, which entails the conversations or discussions, written or verbally, between clients and therapists that should not be disclosed to anyone other than the two recipients, unless in case of a written consent that includes the supervisor. The supervisor can only be informed if the employees kept the appointments.

As has been outlined in the definitions that have been discussed, EAP is a work-site programme designed to assist employees with their personal problems. The EAP at Anglo-gold Ashanti is situated at Anglo-gold Health Services premises where it is accessible and readily available for mine employees and their dependants.

At Anglo-gold Ashanti, the EAP was designed based on needs identification by the employer, employees and organized labour. The employer's concern was based on poor performance, accidents underground (safety) and a high rate of absenteeism, all of which were mostly alcohol or/and substance abuse related. While the employees and organized labour's concern is particularly personal problems leading to inability to function at work.

The strategy behind the availability of the service is based on the following purposes:

- Personal problems do affect job performance and poor job performance seriously affects the workplace safety and productivity.
- The company shares the responsibility for the health of its employees.
- EAP does not replace discipline, but provides an alternative method of dealing with poor job performance.
- The employers concern is with job performance and not with personal; problems of the employee, (Policy Statement, 2005: 5).

Riggio (1990:425) add that "although employee counselling has long been offered by companies, only in the past dozen years have comprehensive EAPs become commonplace in large organizations due to the growing concern over the devastating consequences of substance abuse in terms of harming worker health and organizational productivity. Dejoy and Wilson (1995:72) hold a similar view when he say that "historically, employers' involvement in employees' health issues has centred on a limited number of responsibilities which includes; minimizing health hazards in the workplace and responding to employee accidents and injury."

In so far as the induction programme is concerned, employees need to be informed about the availability of the service that aims at improving their health and their psychological and social functioning if deterioration has been identified already. People differ in terms of coping; some may be made well aware of the impact and effects of alcohol abuse in the workplace in advance. The

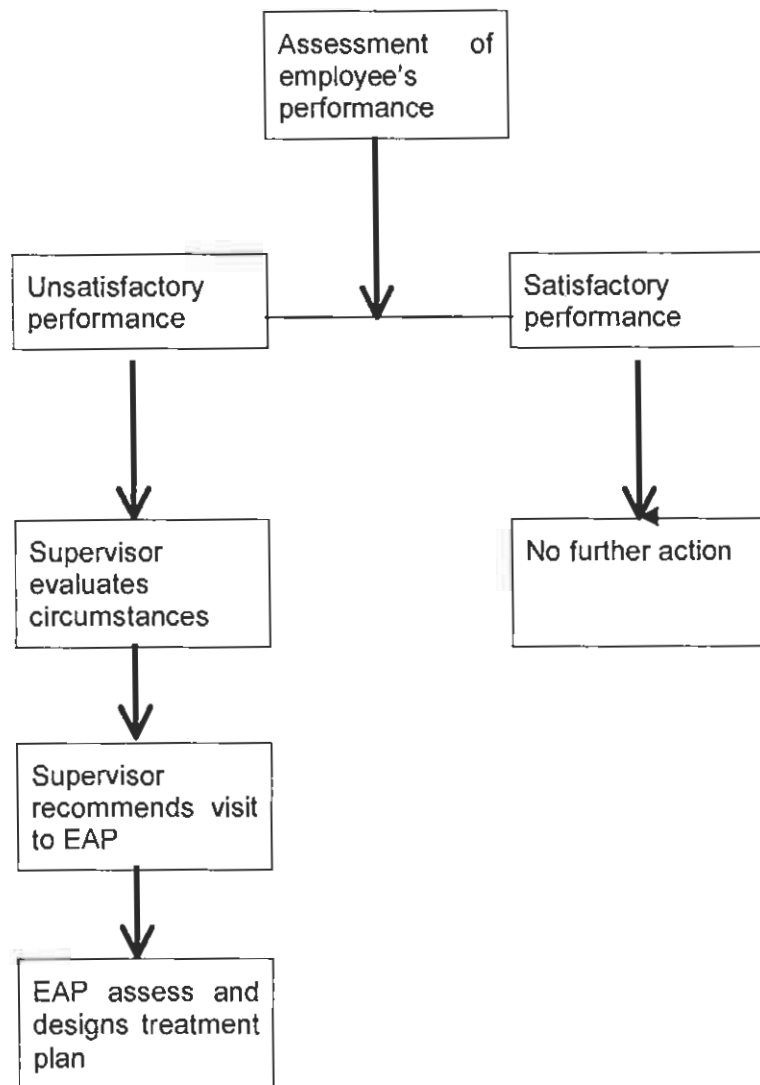
pressures of companionships and hardships at work might as well lead them to forget what they have been informed about during their entry. However, if it is assured that EAP is there to help them through their struggle with alcohol abuse, it would benefit both the company and its employees, because they will then have knowledge of their reasons for referral. When time comes for them to recognize that they have a problem, they will remember that they were the ones that have been informed about the issue. They will then be more likely to cooperate; hence it is important that they be inducted into the importance, availability and accessibility of the service.

## **6. THE KEY ROLE OF A SUPERVISOR**

Rankin (1991:105) points out that the development, implementation, maintenance and evaluation of any industrial/occupational social work programme, regardless of whether it is part of an EAP or not, supervisors are key actors. He adds that they are in a strategic position to identify employees who experience problems. For this reason, he asserts that supervisors need to understand EAPs very well.

The Safety World (2006:6) asserts that monitoring job performance is the key role of a supervisor. Supervisors are responsible to see that work gets done and that employee is doing their jobs according to job standards. In addition, supervisors are placed in a unique position of knowing the job requirements for each position in a particular unit and knowing in a general way the present and past performance of each employee. When there is deteriorating job performance, there may be something in the employee's personal life that is affecting his or her performance adversely. In brief, supervisors should address what they know best, and that is the job and the performance required – EAP can then be recommended if necessary .

Googins and Godfrey (1987:139) say the supervisor's primary tasks within the EAP range from early identification, documentation, constructive confrontation to referral. Their views can be presented by the following diagram:



Source: Adapted from Googins & Godfrey (1987:147)

## 7. THE REFERRAL PROCESS

### 7.1 EARLY IDENTIFICATION

When people are troubled or concerned, their behaviour usually changes. At this stage, the supervisor may intervene. Most literature explains this stage or role of the supervisor with regard to alcoholism. Googins and Godfrey, (1987:143) add that the identification measures are focused on deteriorating and impaired job performance as perceived and monitored by supervisors and managers within the organization.

The supervisory training manual at Anglo-gold Ashanti EAP (1999:10) asserts that work patterns commonly alter, and job performance may decline. Occasionally, incidents of poor job performance do not necessarily mean that there is a serious problem. One way to assess problems that are more serious is to know how often the impairment occurs and how severe it becomes.

In general, the identification stage entails that the sooner a pattern is identified, the more quickly an employees' well-being and capabilities can be restored. When several of the performance patterns appear, a problem may exist. In that situation, the supervisor should document these occurrences. This will provide specific feedback during discussion 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.

## 7.2 DOCUMENTATION

Record keeping is intimately linked to identification mechanisms. They are an essential element of any personnel-oriented programme (Googins & Godfrey, 1987:127). The EAPA (1999:46) specifies that EAP record-keeping system consists of scrupulously guarded confidential material gathered through approved organizational channels and from outside treatment agencies as well as from the client. They further maintain that these records are tools for assessing the problems, confronting denial and evaluating outcome.

The documentation process in terms of the supervisor's role is a written record of identified job deterioration, routinely kept by most organizations (Kurzman, 1981). Kurzman (1981:472) further asserts that there can be no formal identification without documentation of the problem. He mentions the following as functions of documentation:

- Documentation is required by the employer as assurance that action is needed.
- Documentation serves as the basis for the cooperation between management and labour for helping the troubled employee and finally.
- Documentation is the primary tool of the supervisor in initiating action with a problem employee.

Googins and Godfrey (1987:144) add that uneven and unreliable record keeping and human tendencies to overlook problems or attempt to solve them, have long frustrated the rational process of identification and documentation. They further argue that despite their shortcomings, many of these procedures are widely used and have become the first step in solving the complex problem of alcoholism within the workplace, providing the supervisor and treatment personnel with a tool for initiating aid for the alcoholic.

The EAPA guidelines conclude that, if not documented then it never occurred.

## 7.3 CONSTRUCTIVE CONFRONTATION

Anon (2006 (b):10) mentions that the concept confrontation emerges from the dynamics of the work organization. Googins and Godfrey (1987:145) hold the view that constructive confrontation provides a means of coercing the employee to face his or her pattern of performance problems. Trice & Roman (1972) mentions that using documented information about performance decline, a supervisor exercises his or her prerogatives guided by basic organizational policies. Confrontation can occur formally or informally (Roberts, 2006:10). Formally, confrontation follows the policies and procedures set forth as quoted by the company. For example, the strength of denial will indicate the degree of force required in the confrontation. Without such a correlation, the confrontation may fail. Consequently, policy set out in conjunction with the appropriate personnel and disciplinary guidelines will be employed to conclude the confrontation, as Googins and Godfrey argue (1987:146)

Informally, confrontation may occur in numerous situations, without initiating the formal process. For example, it can occur over a cup of coffee, in passing comments in the hallway or via a heart-to-heart talk between a supervisor and the employee. Trice (1972:15) adds, "because of the supervisor's natural avoidance of the hardhearted role, and reluctance to fire an employee – the informal approach may function as an early warning with the same coercive message and effect without formally entering the confrontation into the record. In such situations he asserts that the employee gets the message but still feels there is a chance to act before the company becomes formally involved."

In general, one may infer that the supervisor becomes more attuned to EAP by seeing confrontation as a device for helping a troubled employee, rather than punishment.

## 7.4 REFERRAL

This stage entails the accessibility and availability of EAP services. It is a stage at which the employee accepts or agrees to assistance. Googins & Godfrey (1987:147) refer to this stage as representing the natural culmination of identifying and confronting the problem.

The referral system at Anglo-gold Ashanti (2003:5) consists of formal referrals, informal referrals and self-referrals. Formal referrals are those in which a supervisor refers an employee to the programme with a written note identifying the nature of the problem and what has been done regarding the problem, while informal referrals are those in which a supervisor calls an EAP practitioner and briefly explains the nature of the problem over the telephone. Self-referrals are those in which an employee steps into the EAP office, and presents his or her troubles. Formal referrals have a variety of forms though. There are those that are coercive in nature, for example those that involve alcohol and/or drug addiction problems, and there are those that threaten an individual's health and safety in working environment. Regularly, supervisors and management tend to seek EAP's recommendations in terms of those that involve industrial relations issues.

Googins and Godfrey (1987:147) refer to coercive referrals as those in which the employee comes into therapy as the result of a confrontation.

The researcher has observed that self-referrals at Anglo-gold Ashanti outweigh both formal and informal referrals. EAP practitioners report that most self-referrals problems are work related. If this is an accurate observation, the question arises why the supervisors have not noticed the signs and symptoms and referred the employee if the problems are work-related? Googins and Godfrey (1987:147) confirms that supervisory referral is a unique tool, because it provides supervisor with an opportunity to spot emerging problems through deteriorating job performance, while it also affords him or her opportunity to refer the employee to therapy through confrontation and threat of disciplinary action or job loss. However, some literature (EAPA 1999, Googins & Godfrey, 1987) concludes that even though referral is a complex and unfamiliar process, the onus lies with the supervisor and it will remain his or her task.

## **7.5 FOLLOW-UP**

Follow-ups rather than reviews have been regarded as treatment alternatives when employees are reintegrated back into their work environment following therapy, with close supervision by the immediate supervisor (Frankel, 1982; Googins & Godfrey 1987; Roman, 1981). They all declare that performance should always be monitored, whether the employee decides to go to the EAP or not – and this task should be carried out by the supervisor.

Anon (2006(a):10) states that one of the EAP's objectives is to restore productivity that was adversely affected. However, it is important for the supervisor to keep in touch with the EAP, and let the therapist know about the employee's performance level. If no improvement occurs, they further suggest that additional performance discussions and documentation should be conducted. The other strategy would be of encouraging the employee to utilize the EAP facility and allow the supervisor to set up special appointments, and focus should always be performance based. This also goes with the health and safety issues, if an employee behaviour affects his or her health and or safety it is the responsibility of the supervisor to intervene (Anon, 2006 (a): 10) .

Disciplinary action should be the last resort, and should perhaps occur in the face of resistance. In cases in which disciplinary action is instigated, the guidance furnished by the company's Human Resources representatives should be followed.

## **8. BARRIERS TO SUPERVISORY REFERRAL**

Barriers are occasions in which supervisors fail to put into practice established guidelines for disciplinary actions – usually intentionally. Anon (2006(b):10) outlines several reasons for the gap between policy and practice. Below some common factors that influence the effective running of the service as found at Anglo-gold Ashanti are briefly discussed.

### **8.1 RELUCTANCE TO CONFRONT**

Reluctance to confront an employee may occur in different forms: one of those is when the supervisor himself has hidden agendas. For example, it is assumed, based on practical experience, that when a supervisor has problems himself or herself automatically this affects his or her professional requirement with regard to employee confrontation. Alternatively, the supervisor may feel inadequate to help the employee, since he or she cannot help himself or herself. Another factor that plays a role here is the fear of the possibility of the employee will loose his or her job. Usually this form occurs mostly among supervisors who lack appropriate knowledge in terms of

EAP. In some cases, the employee's problems may be overwhelming or perhaps too sensitive for the supervisor to deal with (Anon. 2006 (c):10).

## **8.2 BETRAYAL OF THE EMPLOYEE**

Anon (2006 (a):10) suggests that some supervisors may feel letting problems persist is helping the employee, while they may concomitantly believe that referral may just do more damage. They identified the following reasons associated with betrayal of the employee:

- Employee's personal problems that may be revealed,
- Employee's work performance may be exposed to management,
- Employee's job security may be at stake, and
- Employees may develop hostile attitudes toward the supervisor and may influence other colleagues against the supervisor.

## **8.3 COVERING UP**

The Safety World (2006:6) states that covering up is often confused with fear to confront, while the two actually differ. According to reports in the mines, covering up is mostly used in cases of alcohol and or drug addiction. For example, the supervisor may be well aware of behavioural patterns of an employee with an alcohol problem. Because some work related alcohol problems may result in dismissal, often supervisors are caught in situations in which they are forced to follow procedures and company policies that may end up with an employee losing his or her job.

It is in such complicated and difficult situations that supervisors may as well think they can resolve the problem by themselves. Eventually, when the problem persists and turns conspicuous, supervisors find themselves in a rather negative situation of having had to deal with symptoms of the problem instead of the real problem. Fear of confrontation on the other hand involves being aware of the existence of the problem and doing nothing about it.

## **8.4 MISGUIDED SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY**

Roberts (2006:7) states that supervisors often feel it is their responsibility to resolve employee's problems, while they also feel that referral would somehow prove them incompetent. Supervisors need to be properly trained in their lines of responsibilities with regard to EAP referral. There has to be a demarcation line as to where and when they should come in and let go.

They should know that failure occurs only when they do not make every effort to improve the morale and productivity of an employee with a performance problem.

## **9. METHOD OF INVESTIGATION**

The empirical study was conducted at Anglo-gold Ashanti. It consisted of supervisors employed by the particular mining company. A total of 48 supervisors were included in the study. All the supervisors operate from various mining shafts of Anglo-gold Ashanti. Questionnaires were mainly used as a data collection tool, with some questionnaires completed during a group session.

### **9.1 Design**

An exploratory design (Rubin & Babbie, 2005:123) was used in the study. The design was found appropriate for the specific study since Employee Assistance Programme already existed in the company. The main issue was to establish the extent to which the service is utilized specifically by supervisors as it has not been researched previously.

### **9.2 Research participants**

Research participants consisted of the supervisors at the different shafts of the mine. Since their numbers were limited, no sample was drawn and the total population of 48 supervisors were included in the study

### **9.3 Data collection**

Data was collected by means of a semi-structured questionnaire (Monette and De Jong, 2002:163). The questionnaire was designed by the researcher in such a manner that it allowed

room for the supervisors' personal views with regard to their use of EAP at Anglo-gold Ashanti based on their knowledge, perceptions and attitudes of EAPs in general.

#### **9.4 Procedures**

The intention was to have a once off session interview with research participants to respond to the questionnaire. Of the 48 supervisors, 7 supervisors could attend the group session. For those who could not make it, copies of questionnaires were provided with the explanation that they should be completed and submitted as arranged.

The following process was followed:

- Permission for the research was obtained from the relevant authorities;
- Supervisors were consulted individually, some telephonically and some personally to arrange a meeting for the completion of the questionnaires as well as to provide details about the purposes of the study.
- A group session was held with 7 supervisors and 41 of the questionnaires were distributed to the remaining supervisors and collected later.

#### **9.5 Ethical Aspects**

The ethical aspects (Rubin & Babbie, 2005:71) pertaining to the study will be dealt with in the following fashion:

- The nature, purpose and procedures of the study were explained to participants;
- Respondents were informed about their right to remain anonymous and their right to confidentiality during the interview;
- A commitment was made to maintain honesty, sensitivity towards culture, emotionality, acceptance and empathy were respected;
- It was decided that feedback would be provided to respondents;
- The proposal was approved by the Ethics Committee of the North West University (Project 06K27)

#### **9.6 Data Analysis**

A predominant qualitative approach was followed since the study attempted to gain firsthand understanding of the phenomena of interest (Reid & Smith, 1981:121). Data analysis was done manually as far as possible, and responses to the open questions were categorised and ordered according to the structure of the questionnaires. Brink (1999:192) stressed that coding is used to organize data collected in an interview and other types of documents. To establish reliability of processing data the researcher had another social worker to verify the same data which was subsequently checked for agreement.

### **10. DATA PRESENTATION**

The population consisted of a combination of surface and underground supervisors employed by Anglo-gold Ashanti – a mine located near Vaal River in Orkney. The river is situated across the borders of the North West and Free State provinces of South Africa.

The questionnaire was divided into sections and sub-sections and was presented as follows:

## SECTION A

### Age of supervisors

Supervisors were asked to list their ages. Their responses are categorized in the following table:

**TABLE 1: AGE OF SUPERVISORS**

Age	20-25 Years	26-30 Years	31-35 Years	36-40 Years	41-45 Years	46-50 Years	51-55 Years	55 Years +	TOTAL
	0	0	3	33	11	1	0	0	48
%	0	0	6,25	68,75	22,91	2,08	0	0	100

The biggest group of supervisors (91, 66%) fell in the age group 36 – 45. A remarkable observation is that relatively small groups of supervisors fell outside this middle age group. It must be accepted that it takes several years of experience to get to the rank of supervisor. Supervisors are in all likelihood promoted to a higher rank in the 41-45 age groups, which will explain the diminishing numbers in the higher age brackets.

### Supervisor's employment service at a particular company

Supervisors were asked to state their years of experience as supervisors at their present company as indicated from the table below.

**TABLE 2: SUPERVISOR'S EMPLOYMENT SERVICE AT A PARTICULAR COMPANY.**

Experience	0-5 Years	6-10 Years	11-15 Years	16-20 Years	20 Years +	TOTAL
<b>Work service</b>	24	22	2	0	0	0
%	50	45,83	4,16	0	0	0

Fifty percent,(50%) of the supervisors indicated that they have been employed as supervisors in the present company for a period of between 0 – 5 years, while 45,83% indicated that they have been employed in the company for 6- 10 years. Only 4, 16% were employed as supervisors in the company for a period of longer than 10 years. Approximately half of the supervisors were therefore employed by the company for a length of time that would allow them considerable experience of troubled employees, and they would have had the opportunity to establish their views on EAPs.

### Supervisor's work experience as a supervisor

Supervisors were to state with a "yes" or a "no" answer to a question: "were you in a position of a supervisor before you were appointed in the present organization?"

**TABLE 3: SUPERVISOR'S WORK EXPERIENCE AS A SUPERVISOR.**

Work experience as a supervisor	Yes	No	TOTAL
	45	3	48
%	93,75	6,25	100

A large majority (93, 75%) of the supervisors had experience as supervisors in another company prior to their appointment as supervisors in the company studied here. it can be accepted that

most of the supervisors in the study were no novices as far as supervisory responsibilities were concerned. Their responses to the measuring instrument can thus be regarded as meaningful and useful.

## SECTION B

Section B of the questionnaire entails responses on their general attitude towards EAP, which encompasses their beliefs and knowledge about employee with a personal problem.

The responses on the attitude of supervisors towards employee with personal problems will, however, help to ascertain whether supervisors lack knowledge in identifying troubled employee or that they believe EAP was just a waste of time for both the company and its employees.

Several questions whose answers would have revealed the **supervisors' attitude towards employees with personal problems** were asked. The responses to these questions are listed in the table below

**TABLE 4: ATTITUDE OF SUPERVISORS TOWARDS EMPLOYEES WITH PERSONAL PROBLEMS**

Item	Yes	%	No	%	Uncertain	%
Are you aware of employees under your control with work – or – family related problems?	48	100	0	0	0	0
Do you think that their happiness affect their productivity?	48	100	0	0	0	0
Are people with personal and/or family related problems the concern of the company?	48	100	0	0	0	0
If employees' productivity problems are caused by personal or family problems, should they be assisted to solve their problems?	48	100	0	0	0	0
Do you think there is a relationship between problems at home and those at work?	48	100	0	0	0	0
Do you think that a person's productivity should increase once care has been taken about his problems?	22	45,83	0	0	26	54,13

Responses of supervisors reflected in the above table are meaningful and lay a good foundation for their role in an EAP. Their awareness of employees under their control with family – or work-related problems implies that they have experience of employee problems and have observed the behaviour of troubled employees can be used in training about human behaviour. They also saw a link between happiness and productivity which means that they may be prepared to explore this link and not invoke disciplinary procedures against the employee. Their view that employees with problems be assisted should make it easier for them to refer the employee to the EAP staff in the company.

The attitude of the supervisors that employees with problems are the concern of the company should foster a positive attitude towards EAP because the EAP is the mechanism used by the company to show its concern about troubled workers. It is also their assumption that an employee's productivity should improve once his problems has been taken care of.

The fact that they see a relationship between problems at home and those at work is the beginning of viewing the employee within his family context.

In summary it can be said that the views of the supervisors regarding the issues listed in the above table should establish a sound foundation for proper training of supervisors regarding EAP.

From the responses that were motivated it seems that the supervisors are concerned about the lack of feedback they get about the employee after therapy. This could indicate an underestimation of the role of the supervisors by persons responsible for therapy. Some supervisors however, fail to follow up on employees as planned, mainly because of a busy schedule. Some feel employees never give feedback about the developments of the problems that give rise to a referral. In addition, among the 26 who were uncertain, 2 never gave any motivation for their answers, and it can be assumed that they do not care.

Anon (2006(c):10) asserts that confrontation is a critical stage: it requires a supervisor to apply necessary and specific skills in dealing with employees with personal problems.

### SECTION C

Section C of the questionnaire was designed in a manner in which it would be possible to detect if EAP service is an essential instrument for both the company and its employees in dealing with troubled employees as perceived by supervisors.

#### Supervisors' view about the role of the EAP

In getting the detection reliable in this sub-section supervisors were asked to provide their views on whether EAP is there to solve employees personal and or work related problems. Furthermore, they were asked to state their views on EAP's output with regard to the image of the company and workforce happiness, particularly the unions.

TABLE 5: THE VIEWS OF SUPERVISORS ON THE ROLE OF THE EAP

Item	Frequency of responses	%
Solve employees' personal and work related problems	16	33,33
Keep the workforce happy	3	6,25
Improve the image of the company	12	25,00
Keep the unions happy	0	0
Improve productivity	17	34,41
All of those mentioned	0	0
None of those mentioned	0	0
TOTAL	48	100

The responses with the highest frequency saw the role of their EAP as solving the personal- and work-related problems of the employees, improving the image of the company and improve productivity. This is a reflection of the differences amongst supervisors regarding the role of the EAP. The supervisors believing that the EAP serves to improve the image of the company may be suspicious of the motives of management regarding EAP, making it thus important that they be briefed on the true meaning of EAP's. A lack of understanding may well lead to underutilisation of EAP as a helping mechanism. EAPA (1999:17) specifies that the emphasis of a supervisor in terms of referring employees with problems should be on ensuring that intervention is made with

regard to resolving whatever setbacks an employee may be experiencing without neglecting productivity issues.

### The views of the supervisors on the bona fides of the EAP in the company

The purpose of this sub-section is to establish supervisor's views on their general perceptions regarding the value of the EAP in the company as well as its contributions towards workforce's satisfaction and the support EAP receives from management.

**TABLE 6: THE VIEWS OF THE SUPERVISORS ON THE BONA FIDES OF THE EAP IN THE COMPANY**

Item	Yes	%	No	%	Uncertain	%
1. Do you think that an EAP is an asset to the company?	48	100	0	0	0	0
2. Do you think EAP services contribute to a happier workforce?	48	100	0	0	0	0
3. Do you think that senior management supports the EAP?	32	66,66	2	4,16	14	29,16
4. Do you think that it is necessary for senior management to support the EAP?	48	100	0	0	0	0
5. Will you refer a troubled employee to the EAP counsellor?	48	100	0	0	0	0

Judging from the responses of the supervisors to three out of the five questions, they seem to have a generally positive view of the EAP in the company. However, there appears to be doubt about the support that EAP receives from management. The question about this is the only in which 14 (29, 16%) of the respondents are uncertain, while 4, (16 %) do not seem to think that management supports EAP. In spite of the fact that 6, 25% (table 6) of the supervisors state that the function of EAP is to keep the workforce happy, while 100% of the supervisors feel that EAP indeed contribute to a happier workforce.

Of the 32 (66%) respondents who feel that management does support EAP only two provided motivations to support their view. They state that the fact that EAP is around within the industry clearly indicates management's acknowledgement of the service. Although this was not a convincing answer, their perception that management supports the service will at least give them some confidence in the bona fides of the service.

In support of the questions from the questionnaire with regard to management support of EAP, McKendrick (1991:212) is of the opinion that the role of worker representatives and trade unions is of major concern in getting EAP's accepted in organizations. He maintains that in those programmes under management sponsorship in which workers are unionized, it is imperative for shop stewards and for union officials to be involved from the beginning, in at least a consultative relationship. A joint steering committee is recommended, where both labour and management are represented, and which aims to develop, maintain and evaluate the programme.

NIAAA, (1999:2) on the other hand asserts that employers (*supervisors*), <sup>1</sup> once they recognize the troubled employee, should deal with the problem, act on the problem, follow up and give an ongoing support.

Of importance is that the roles of the employer in dealing with employee problems remain the same for all types of problems, not only for particular problems. It is not the task of the employer to diagnose the nature of the problem, but job performance deterioration is the employers' concern, (SETA, 2003:17).

## SECTION D

Section D is mainly to establish if any training was provided from supervisors on EAP. Also to establish the methods of the training in cases where training was provided.

The induction programme at Anglo-gold Ashanti covers some information on the use of EAP. The information includes the availability and accessibility of the service as well as the purpose of the service (EAP referral procedure, 2005:2). The information covered at induction is not meant for supervisors to use for referral purpose as there is a formal training needed to be provided specifically to supervisors for the purpose of referrals. However, the questions in the questionnaire are designed to cover the different sources of information available at a particular company established during data collection.

<sup>1</sup> *Italics are those of the researcher*

### Awareness of the EAP in the company

The question was asked how the supervisors became aware of the EAP in the company. The results are reflected below.

**TABLE 7: AWARENESS OF THE EAP IN THE COMPANY**

SOURCE OF INFORMATION	FREQUENCY OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Informed as part of induction course	11	22,91
Informed by my superior	2	4,16
Informed by the employees under my control	0	0
Informally by word of mouth	5	10,41
Informed by colleagues	30	62,50
TOTAL	48	100

Of the 48 total number of respondents, 11 (23%) of them claim to have been informed about the programme through the induction programme. They state that EAP was addressed when dealing with substance abuse problems in the workplace during induction. Their understanding seems to be that EAP is there to answer to drug related problems only, which embodies a limited view of it. The Induction Orientation at Anglo-gold Ashanti serves the following purposes:

- Information sharing
- Safety
- Compliance to the Health and Safety Act, which includes substance abuse.
- Skills awareness
- Compliance to the skills development bill, (Policy Document, 2005:8).

Briefly, all this entails sharing information with individuals concerning the values, norms and expectations in terms of their behavioural patterns at the workplace and in the organization they work for. Referring to the definition that they use at Anglo-gold Ashanti – a definition provided earlier - Anglo-gold Ashanti values integrity and production, both of which an employee with an alcohol problem would not possess. At Anglo-gold Ashanti it is a norm to demonstrate the behaviour

that is acceptable to meet their expectations. It is therefore clear that there is no induction programme to introduce EAP in particular, and this is the source of confusion.

**How supervisors were informed about the EAP in the company**

The question was asked how the supervisors were informed about the EAP in the company. The reason for this question was to assess the efficiency of the methods used to inform the supervisors about the EAP.

**TABLE 8: WAYS IN WHICH SUPERVISORS WERE INFORMED ABOUT THE EAP**

METHOD OF INFORMATION	FREQUENCY OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Part of a training programme	5	10,42
Informally mentioned	22	45,83
Formally mentioned	0	0
Not applicable	21	43,75
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100</b>

The information contained in the above table indicates that supervisors were informed about the EAP through different methods. The problem with these methods of spreading of information is that every recipient of information may not get the same message which may lead to inaccurate and distorted information about the EAP of the company. A cause for concern is the percentage of supervisors who stated that they were informed informally.

The figures in the above table do not quite tally with those in table 7. It is assumed that the explanation for the discrepancies lies in the difference between "being informed" and "explained." It is accepted that in many cases supervisors are informed about the programme informally, without a thorough explanation. It could also be that EAP received scant attention during the induction programme. Significantly, in table 7 62,5 % of the supervisors stated that they heard about the EAP from their colleagues which leads to the deduction that information about the EAP is being spread by word of mouth, or the proverbial grapevine.

Whatever deductions are made, one infers that not all supervisors at the company are properly informed about the EAP of the company.

**The supervisors' role in the EAP.**

This question was asked to establish to what extent the supervisors understood their role in the EAP.

**TABLE 9: ROLE IN EAP**

Role clarity	Very clearly	Clearly	Unclearly	Very unclearly	TOTAL
Frequency of responses	0	3	36	9	48
Percentage	0	6,25	75	18,75	100

In response to the question about the extent to which the role of the supervisors in EAP is explained to them 3 (6, 25%) say that it has been explained clearly, while 36 (75%) stated that it has been explained unclearly and while a further 9 (18, 75%) state that it has been explained very unclearly. It is assumed that the supervisors who state that EAP has been explained clearly were formally informed by management, while the rest was informed informally. Considering the

responses contained in the previous two tables, it comes as no surprise that the biggest majority of supervisors felt that the nature of the EAP was insufficiently explained to them. If this is the scenario, it is to be expected that supervisors would not know how to utilise the EAP in the company.

**The degree of comfort experienced by the supervisors with the explanation of their role in the EAP**

This question was asked to establish the degree of comfort the supervisors experienced with the way in which their role in the EAP was explained to them.

**TABLE 10: UNDERSTANDING SUPERVISOR'S ROLE IN THE EAP**

Role understanding	Yes	No	TOTAL
Frequency of responses	45	3	48
Percentage	93,75	6,25	100

As was to be expected, the majority of 45 (93, 75%) of the supervisors feel that they are uncomfortable with their roles in the EAP, while 3 (6, 25%) feel comfortable. It should be assumed that the minority feeling comfortable with their roles are part of the group that was formally informed by management about their roles. The responses to this question would explain why there is uncertainty among the supervisors about the nature of the EAP in the company.

## SECTION E

Section E of the questionnaire is designed to establish supervisors responsibilities about EAP, whether they are comfortable with such responsibilities.

**TABLE 11: HAS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY IN THE EAP BEEN EXPLAINED TO YOU?**

Explanation about role responsibilities	Yes	No	TOTAL
Frequency of responses	3	43	46
Percentage	6,25	89,58	95,83

In response to the question of whether the responsibilities of the supervisors in the company EAP have been explained to them, 3 (6, 66%) confirm that they have been explained, while 43 (95, 55%) state that they have not been explained. A further two respondents did not answer the question. These numbers confirm the deduction that training of supervisors regarding EAP needs improvement.

### Understanding supervisor's responsibilities in the EAP

Supervisors were asked to respond to the question: "Do you understand your responsibilities in the programme?" and their responses were as follows:

**TABLE 12: UNDERSTANDING SUPERVISOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE EAP**

Understanding responsibilities	Yes	No	Uncertain	TOTAL
Frequency of responses	3	22	23	
Percentage	6,25	45,83	47,91	100

The responses to the question of whether they understand their responsibilities in the programme, only 3 (6, 25%) say they do, while 22 (45, 83%) say they do not and while a further 23 (47, 91%) of supervisors are uncertain. This reaction is in line with the reactions reflected in previous tables and confirms the deduction that the training of the supervisors in the company leaves much to be desired.

### Supervisors' satisfaction about their roles

The question state: "Are you comfortable with these responsibilities?" This is the follow up question from the previous question about understanding their responsibilities in the programme.

**TABLE 13: SUPERVISORS SATISFACTION ABOUT THEIR ROLES**

Their satisfaction about their roles	Very comfortable	Comfortable	Uncomfortable	Very uncomfortable	TOTAL
Frequency of responses	1	2	22	23	48
Percentage	2,08	4,16	45,83	47,91	100

The responses on the question of whether the supervisors feel comfortable with their responsibilities within the EAP, 1 (2, 08%) feels very comfortable, while 2 (4, 16%) feel comfortable, and while another 22 (45, 83%) feel uncomfortable, in addition to a further 23 (47, 91%) who state that they feel very uncomfortable. It is assumed that these responses will be related to the way in which they were informed about the EAP in general.

#### Understanding the referral procedure

The question about understanding the referral procedure states: "Do you understand the procedure of referral of a troubled employee to the EAP staff member?"

**TABLE 14: UNDERSTANDING THE REFERRAL PROCEDURE**

Understanding referral procedure	Very clearly	Clearly	Unclearly	Very unclearly
Frequency of responses	7	33	8	0
Percentage	14,58	68,75	16,66	0

The responses on the question of how well they understand the referral procedures of a troubled employee to the EAP, 7 (14, 58%) state that they understand it very clearly, while 33 (68, 75%) say that they understand it clearly. Eight (16, 66%) of the supervisors state that their understanding of the procedure is unclear. From the motivation to their answers it is clear that those who understand well received an explanation from the induction programme. Most of them seem merely to merely call EAP office when they were confronted with a problem, while some of them seem to make use of the referral slips they received from their colleagues. They seem to have some understanding of the EAP referral procedure, but whether they use it effectively is not clear.

All of the supervisors indicate that they do confront a person experiencing personal or work-related problems. It is impossible though to verify their answers.

#### Confronting employee with personal or work related problems

The last question about supervisor's responsibilities in EAP is about their confrontation experiences. The question state: "Do you confront a person experiencing personal or work-related problems?" Following are supervisor's responses:

**TABLE 15: CONFRONTING EMPLOYEE WITH PERSONAL OR WORK RELATED PROBLEMS**

Confrontation	Yes	No	Uncertain	TOTAL
Frequency of responses	48	0	0	48
Percentage	100	0	0	100

All seem to be confronting employee with personal or work-related problems. Their motivations to this question differ in terms of phrasing but they all indicate that without confrontation, productivity deteriorates.

## 11. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The conclusion and recommendations will be discussed below.

### 11.1 CONCLUSIONS

- Judging from the respondents included in this study, supervisors in the mining industry do not get promoted to the rank of supervisor until in their mid-thirties. This means that they have considerable prior experience in non-supervisor jobs, which should place them in a

position to have knowledge of the problems workers normally experience, because they have rubbed shoulders with employees experiencing problems.

- Supervisors seem to move around, given that 90% of the supervisors who took part in the research had experience as supervisors in another company. If they were employed before in a company without an EAP they would not have the same amount of experience compared to those who have worked for Anglo-gold Ashanti for longer periods.
- The supervisors in the study seem to have an understanding of people with personal and work-related problems, and they also have first hand experience with such employees. They also think that the company should accept responsibility for people with problems.
- Supervisors tend to view the function of EAP either as helping employee's personal and work-related problems or as improving productivity. An interesting view that this study revealed is that it also serves to improve the image of the company.
- Generally, supervisors have a positive view about the EAP in the company, but they are not sure about support from management, although they feel sure that support from them is necessary.
- There seems to be a problem regarding training of supervisors when it comes to their role in EAP's. Only a few seem to have been trained formally, while the biggest majority is informed by informal sources such as colleagues passing by.
- The majority of supervisors do not understand their roles and responsibilities in EAP's properly or clearly, and also report that they are uncomfortable in that role.
- It also appears as if all the supervisors do not understand the referral procedure of troubled employees clearly maybe because that depends largely on the EAP training for supervisors. It is not clear whether the procedures were clearly explained to them.

## **11.2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Care should be taken that all supervisors participate in a formal training course for supervisors about the EAP of the company.
- Supervisors should be informed clearly about the nature and purposes of the programme.
- Supervisors should be trained for their role as supervisors in the EAP's.
- Supervisors should be properly informed about their responsibilities and tasks regarding EAP.
- The training course offered to supervisors should preferably not be part of a general introduction programme, but should be offered separately instead, in a practical way.
- It is suggested that a training course for supervisors should be conducted on a group basis to make it economical in terms of time.
- Such a training course should be offered periodically, at least once a year or as soon as enough new supervisors have been appointed to warrant such a course.
- There seems to be uncertainty amongst supervisors on whether the EAP is supported by management. Management support should be shown, and supervisors should be reminded that they are also part of management. The programme should thus also be supported by them.
- It is also suggested that a follow up procedure should be drawn as part of an evaluation programme to ensure continuous utilization of the programme.

## **12. CONCLUDING REMARKS**

The literature consulted stresses the need for supervisory training on EAP in companies where EAP services are in existence. However, based on the above conclusions and recommendations derived from the study results, it will be at the best interest of everyone involved to ensure that supervisors at this particular company receives intensive training on EAP. And that they also need

to be followed up on the progress they made in identifying and referring troubled employees accordingly.

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## APPENDICES

### QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE ROLE OF THE SUPERVISOR WITHIN AN EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME

This questionnaire has been designed to establish the views of the supervisors on their role within an employee assistance programme. As this is regarded as important for the success of employee assistance programme your cooperation in this venture is needed in view of the fact that only you can provide the information necessary. You are thus asked to answer the questions as honestly as possible by following the instructions provided beforehand and those that are part of the questionnaire. Your anonymity is guaranteed, as not any information you provide will be divulged to anybody in such a way that you will be incriminated

#### SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS

1. Your age

20 -25 Years	26 – 30 Years	31-35 Years	36 – 40 Years	41 - 45 Years	46 – 50 years	51 – 55 Years	55 Years +
1	2	3	4	5			

2. How long have you been employed as a supervisor in the organization where you are presently working?

0 -5 Years	6 – 10 years	11-15 Years	16 – 20 Years	20 Years+
1	2	3	4	5

3. Were you in the position of supervisor before you were appointed in the present organization?

Yes	No
1	2

**SECTION B: YOUR BELIEFS ABOUT THE EMPLOYEE WITH PERSONAL PROBLEMS**

1. Are you aware of employees under your control with work- or family related problems?

Yes	No	Uncertain
1	2	3

Please motivate your answer.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

3. Do you think that their unhappiness affect their productivity?

Yes	No	Uncertain
1	2	3

Please motivate your answer.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

3. Are people with personal and/or family-related problems the concern of the company?

Yes	No	Uncertain
1	2	3

Please motivate your answer.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

.....

4. If employees' productivity problems are caused by personal or family problems, should they be disciplined or assisted to solve their problems?

Disciplined	Assisted	Both	Left on their own
1	2	3	4

Please motivate your answer.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

5. Do you think there is a relationship between problems at home and those at work?

Yes	No	Uncertain
1	2	3

Please motivate your answer.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

6. Do you think that a person's productivity should increase once care has been taken about his problems?

Yes	No	Uncertain
1	2	3

Please motivate your answer.....

.....

.....

.....  
 .....  
 .....

**SECTION C: YOUR VIEWS ON THE EAP**

1. What do you think is the purpose of an EAP?

Solve employees' personal and work-related problems	Keep the workforce happy	Improve the image of the company	Keep the unions happy	Improve productivity	All of those mentioned	None of those mentioned
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Please motivate your answer.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

2. Do you think that an EAP is an asset to the company?

Yes	No	Uncertain
1	2	3

Please motivate your answer.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

3. Do you think EAP services contribute to a happier workforce?

Yes	No	Uncertain
1	2	3

Please motivate your answer.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

4. Do you think that senior management supports the EAP?

Yes	No	Uncertain
1	2	3

Please motivate your answer.....  
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.....  
.....  
.....

5. Do you think that it is necessary for senior management to support the EAP?

Yes	No	Uncertain
1	2	3

Please motivate your answer.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

6. Will you refer a troubled employee to the EAP counsellor?

Yes	No	Uncertain
1	2	3

Please motivate your answer.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

**SECTION D: TRAINING FOR THE EAP**

1. How did you become aware of the EAP in your company?

Informed as part of induction course	Informed by my superior	Informed by the employees under my control	Informally by word of mouth	Informed by colleagues
1	2	3	4	5

If none of ten options mentioned, please explain how you became aware of the programme

.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

2. Have the programme been explained to you?

Yes	No
1	2

3. If yes, was the explanation part of a formal training programme, or was it informally mentioned to you.

Part of a training programme	Informally mentioned	Formally mentioned	Not applicable
1	2	3	

4. Has your role in the Employment Assistant Programme been explained to you?

Very clearly	Clearly	Unclearly	Very unclearly
1	2	3	4

Please motivate your answer.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

5. Are you comfortable with the explanation of your role in the programme?

Yes	No
1	2

Please motivate your answer.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

**SECTION E: YOUR RESPONSIBILITY IN THE EAP**

1. Has your responsibilities in the EAP been explained to you?

Yes	No
1	2

2. Do you understand your responsibilities in the programme?

Yes	No	Uncertain
1	2	3

Please motivate your answer.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

3. Are you comfortable with these responsibilities?

Very comfortable	Comfortable	Uncomfortable	Very uncomfortable
1	2	3	4

Please motivate your answer.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

4. Do you understand the procedure of referral of a troubled employee to the EAP staff member?

Very clearly	Clearly	Unclearly	Very unclearly
1	2	3	4

Please motivate your answer.....  
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.....

5. Do you confront a person experiencing personal or work-related problems?

Yes	No	Uncertain
1	2	3

Please motivate your answer.....  
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.....  
.....  
.....

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME