



Understanding Confidentiality*

and the Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

The EAP is a confidential resource supporting the well-being of USPS employees and their families. Trust is key—and it starts with knowing how privacy and confidentiality works.

What Does Confidentiality Mean in the EAP?

When an employee uses the EAP, **all conversations, assessments, and services are private.** This includes:

- What the employee discusses with a counselor
 - The reason for the visit
 - Any outcomes or follow-up plans
- EAP services are not shared with supervisors, HR, or other USPS staff—unless the employee gives written consent or in specific legal situations. (see below).

What Supervisors and Managers Should Know:

You will not be informed if an employee uses the EAP—unless:

- The employee voluntarily shares with you
 - The employee signs a release allowing the EAP to confirm their participation
 - There is a legal or safety concern
- Tip for Leaders:** Avoid asking employees about the details of their EAP sessions. Instead, reinforce that the program is confidential and available for all USPS employee support.

When Confidentiality Can Be Broken:

EAP counselors are legally required to break confidentiality **only in the following circumstances:**

- A threat of serious harm to self or others
- Suspected abuse or neglect of a child, elder, or vulnerable adult
- A court order requiring the release of records
- If the employee provides written permission to share information

How Confidentiality Benefits Everyone

- Employees feel safer seeking help early—before issues escalate.
- Supervisors can focus on supporting performance, not managing personal matters.
- Trust is built across the workplace when privacy is respected.

*EAP counselors have master's degrees and are licensed professionals. Your privacy is protected by strict federal and state confidentiality laws and regulations and by professional ethical standards for counselors. Information you share with the EAP may not be released to anyone without your prior written consent, except as required by law (e.g. when a person's emotional condition is a threat to him or herself or others, or there is suspected child or elder abuse) or the issuance of a court order upon a showing of good cause.