



DCF COVID-19 Daily Update Supporting Children, Families and Staff MARCH 31, 2020

SUPPORT FOR STAFF - CALL EAP AT 800-252-4555

Even in normal times, Department of Children and Family staff face extraordinary challenges that can adversely affect emotional wellbeing and health - Every one of us needs help at times.

THERE IS HELP FOR OUR STAFF THROUGH THE EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP) BY CALLING 1-800-252-4555.

This is a 24 -hour, seven days-a -week confidential phone service for you to access.

Dr. Mike Schultz, a long-time Department manager and family therapist who has supported staff through difficult experiences over many years, said the Employee Assistance Program and Ms. Annie Linden are fantastic resources.

"I really value Annie for her collaboration and understanding," said Dr. Schultz, who has delayed his planned retirement to assist Department leaders and staff during the crisis. "I found Annie to be open-minded, creative and responsive."

Annie Linden, the EAP's vice president for clinical services, said the EAP procedures have not changed as a result of the coronavirus situation. Any employee seeking support should please call the EAP at [1-800-252-4555](tel:1-800-252-4555) for any need or service, she said. This is a 24-7-365 clinical line with professional counselors picking up the phone.

"It is the point of access for all requests," said Ms. Linden. "You can be an employee reaching out for assistance because of emotional stress or a family challenge due to the impact of the coronavirus. Or maybe a manager, supervisor, or human resources contact looking to consult on how to support their employees or help them adjust to the impact of working remotely as examples.

"If a need arises for trauma response services, please call to discuss with one of our counselors," she added. Ms. Linden said tele-services are offered during this time as well, and she stressed that the services are confidential and available for family members of the employee.

Dr. Schultz added that he remains available to the Department's leadership teams from all the Department offices and facilities -- and any staff they identify -- for consultation regarding self-care and stress management.

Dr. Schultz said he takes an approach that integrates "the personal, the professional and the organizational." That may sound complicated -- but his basic message is not.

"There are four principles of self-care," he said. They are:

1. Get adequate and regular rest and sleep;
2. Eat a nutritional diet;
3. Exercise routinely and regularly and get out into nature; and
4. Cultivate your relationships - with family, colleagues from work and friends.

Department Commissioner Vanessa Dorantes, who started her career with the Department as a social worker in 1992, said the challenges of the work are intense --but that the organization's strength comes from cohesion and mutual understanding of individual staff.

"We are all in this together," she said. "Help is available to anyone who seeks it, and I heartily recommend that staff take advantage of it. We are here for you."