

**TENNESSEE COLLEAGUE ASSISTANCE
FOUNDATION (TCAF)**

Policies and Procedures

I. Mission & Purpose

The psychological profession has recognized the need to provide rehabilitative and monitoring mechanisms for those of its members who may experience impairments that affect daily functioning and/or performance of professional duties. To meet this need, the Tennessee Psychological Association (TPA), in conjunction with the Tennessee state Board of Examiners in Psychology has established the Tennessee Colleague Assistance Foundation (TCAF).

The purpose of the TCAF is to provide a statewide peer review program to assist with rehabilitation and monitoring of impaired mental healthcare and other healthcare professionals (hereinafter referred to collectively by the term “professionals”), and to provide support and advocacy for professionals deemed fit to return to practicing or continue practicing, in the interest of protection of the public.

A. Guiding Principles

The TCAF ascribes to the following guiding principles regarding impaired professionals:

- 1) Treatment and rehabilitation of afflicted colleagues is preferred over any other alternatives;
- 2) Early intervention is preferred in order to preserve resources and to effect the greatest degree of rehabilitation;
- 3) Chemical dependency and psychological difficulties are treatable

conditions for which rehabilitation can be effected;

- 4) All actions taken on behalf of an impaired colleague will be done in such a manner as to attempt to effect the professional's return to practice with the least restrictions possible;
- 5) All actions taken in regard to impaired professionals are intended in the best interest of the professional. Actions by the TCAF and its members are in good faith and intended at all times to be reasonable under a given set of circumstances:
- 6) The need for privacy of any colleague who may be impaired will be respected by the TCAF at all times, unless otherwise directed by professional standards (e.g., ethics) and law.

II. Composition

The TCAF is an affiliated foundation of the Tennessee Psychological Association (TPA). It consists of a Board of seven members (including six healthcare professionals and a non-healthcare professional member at large), a Director of Services, and four to six Associate Directors of Services. Membership is nominated for three of the TCAF Board members by the TPA President. The remaining four TCAF Board members will be appointed as part of a cooperative effort between the Tennessee state Board of Examiners in Psychology, the TCAF Director of Services and the TCAF Board members nominated by the TPA President. An effort will be made to have male and female representation, as well as representation (with two members each) from East, Middle, and West

Tennessee. The Director of Services will select Associate Directors of Services, also with representation (with one to two members each) from East, Middle, and West Tennessee. Board members and the Associate Directors of Services shall serve terms of four years, while the Director of Services will serve a term of five years. Terms may be staggered.

Additionally, the TCAF Board may develop and use at its discretion special ad hoc Advisory Committees.

III. Scheduled Meetings

The TCAF Board will meet on a quarterly basis, with the Director of Services reporting to the TCAF Board on cases and expenses. The Associate Directors of Services may also be called to be present at quarterly Board meetings.

IV. Duties and Responsibilities

Among other duties, the Director of Services (in conjunction with the Associate Directors of Services and the TCAF Board) will:

- A) Establish a registry of appropriate resources for evaluation and treatment in the area of chemical dependency, mental health, and geriatrics. The registry will be continually updated; in the case of chemical dependency, if the colleague does not have a documented history of chemical dependence/abuse, a ninety-six hour residential evaluation is strongly

recommended. Every effort is also made to avoid referring colleagues for evaluation/treatment to agencies and or individuals where conflict of interest or dual relationships exist. Every attempt will be made to provide the impaired professional with three options for evaluation and/or treatment facilities in his or her area.

- B) Supply current factual information to the TCAF Board, TPA Board, and the Tennessee state Board of Examiners in Psychology concerning prevention and treatment of impairing conditions;
- C) Establish, through efforts reasonable under the circumstances, the credibility of reports brought to light regarding likelihood of a colleague's professional impairment;
- D) Share with the identified colleague the TCAF's information regarding possible professional impairment;
- E) Conduct interventions, with identified colleagues, using efforts reasonable under circumstances;
- F) Provide collegial support and recommendations regarding evaluation, treatment and rehabilitation recommendations to intervened colleagues;
- G) Provide on-going support for all colleagues found to have impairing conditions regarding adherence to treatment recommendations;
- H) For impaired professionals who have undergone or are currently undergoing treatment, structure a Rehabilitation Aftercare Monitoring Program (RAMP) via a contractual agreement;
- I) Obtain follow-up information to/from treatment providers to determine on-

- going status of the impaired professional in rehabilitation;
- J) Provide regular review with the impaired professional regarding progress toward rehabilitation goals;
 - K) Maintain a confidential record file in the custody of the Director of Services.
 - L) Provide continued monitoring, peer support, and advocacy for the recovering professional to the Tennessee state Board of Examiners in Psychology, professional organizations, and employers regarding the professional's ability to work, as well as his or her rights.
 - M) Provide outcome data to the TCAF Board and Tennessee state Board of Examiners in Psychology regarding the "recovery status" of each impaired professional.
 - N) Serve as an active psychoeducational resource to Tennessee professionals and professional agencies with respect to impaired professionals, impairment issues generally, treatment and monitoring considerations, and emotional health in mental health providers.

IV. Program Coordination

Professionals may become involved with the TCAF's program through any of the following mechanisms:

- 1) Referral from the Tennessee state Board of Examiners in Psychology
- 2) Referral from the TPA Ethics Committee
- 3) Referral by colleagues
- 4) Referral by patients/clients

- 5) Referral by co-workers, family, friends
- 6) Self-referral.

V. Program Procedures

In keeping with the TCAF's responsibilities to assist those colleagues who may be deemed to possess a likelihood to be impaired, to encourage them in seeking appropriate professional evaluation, to encourage the treatment of impairing conditions when they are found to exist, and to be supportive of rehabilitation efforts through monitoring the course of rehabilitation, the following procedures are set forth:

Initiation of Concern

Initiation of concern regarding a potentially impaired professional will preferably be made by contacting the Tennessee state Board of Examiners in Psychology (or alternatively the TPA central office) by telephone. The Tennessee state Board of Examiners in Psychology will route the call to the Director of Services, who will in turn share information about the case as appropriate with the Associate Directors of Services in the impaired professional's area of the state. When a report of a possible impairment in a professional is made, the Director of Services will assign a confidential code number to the report, obtain and record pertinent information, including the source of the information/report, and the reasons to believe impairment may exist, and attempts which have been made to bring the problem to attention of the colleague.

The Director of Services, with the assistance of the Associate Directors of Services, will act to delineate the credibility of the concern. They will deliberate to fulfill their obligation to assess the credibility of reports, and once it has established that sufficient and credible concern exists, they will act to contact the identified colleague.

Informing

The identified colleague will be contacted, every effort will be made to meet with the professional, and the Director of Services with at least one Associate Director of Services will be present at meetings. When efforts to meet personally fail, however, other forms of communication of notice may be employed.

The Director of Services and the Associate Director(s) of Services will present the colleague with their determination of the likelihood of presence of impairment, and invite the colleague to discuss the possible problem(s). Further, they may request proper consent to contact significant others such as family, staff, and/or colleagues in order to assist in their duty to determine the possible presence of impairment.

If the Director of Services and the Associate Director(s) of Services determine through their efforts that impairment is likely to exist, they will advise the colleague of their recommendation to obtain professional diagnostic and evaluative procedures to definitely establish the presence or absence of an impairing condition. The process of intervention may involve a range of activities. These may include TCAF interactions with concerned colleagues, families and co-workers, and the participation of some or all of these individuals in meetings

with the colleague.

In instances in which a medical condition contraindicates a colleague's traveling or attending meetings, such activities may be rescheduled or rearranged. The colleague will be instructed to have their physician notify the TCAF.

Support

When it is determined, through professional evaluation, that an impairing condition exists, the TCAF will encourage adherence to professional recommendations for treatment, and for rehabilitation consistent with the impairment.

VI. Monitoring Cases

- A.)** The primary work of monitoring cases will be performed by the TCAF. Monitoring information will be provided by the Director of Services to the TCAF Board as part of the quarterly TCAF Board meeting case presentations, and as appropriate and/or requested will provide monitoring information to the Tennessee state Board of Examiners in Psychology. For impaired professionals who are recovering and have been returned to or are continuing practice, the TCAF will structure a Rehabilitation Aftercare Monitoring Program (RAMP) via a contractual agreement. The RAMP contract is to include such activities as aftercare group attendance (12 Step or Caduceus), individual psychotherapy, and other activities as deemed appropriate based on the recommendations of the Directors of Services and Associate Directors of Services, in conjunction with the

evaluation and/or treatment facilities. The recovering professional's progress in adhering to the conditions outlined in his or her contract will be shared with the TCAF Board and with the Tennessee state Board of Examiners in Psychology, as appropriate.

B.) TCAF Activities

The TCAF's RAMP activities are designed to assist the impaired colleague in rehabilitative processes and may include but are not limited to, with proper consent, contact with treatment programs and providers regarding recommendations for rehabilitation, contact with employers and colleagues to facilitate the rehabilitation process, and continuation of an aftercare/monitoring process of five years' duration.

If the TCAF's intervention recommendations or RAMP recommendations are rejected by the colleague at any point in the process, determination will be made by the Director of Services, and/or TCAF Board regarding whether notification of the TPA/APA ethics committee and/or the Tennessee state Board of Examiners in Psychology as appropriate. If the TCAF decides to notify any of these bodies the colleague will be notified in advance. Documentation of disposition of all cases will be maintained in the professional's file. Any professional against whom reporting action is taken will have the right to a hearing with the professional agency to whom he or she is reported.

C.) The Director of Services and the Associate Directors of Services should be careful to avoid meeting alone with a professional referred to the

TCAF. The Director of Services and the Associate Directors of Services should work as a team with the support of the TCAF Board. One member should not represent the TCAF. However, contact with an impaired professional may not always be in the presence of another TCAF member. Such contacts should be supportive and affirmative. Investigation, fact finding, and questioning about whether the professional is meeting RAMP requirements should be done when there are witnesses that are sub-committee members.