

**Caring for South Africa's Public Sector Employees in the
Workplace: A Study of Employee Assistance and HIV/AIDS
Workplace Programmes**

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ABSTRACT The management of work-life balance is complex and exigent as employees need to be supported in an environment of scarce skills that is exacerbated by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Employee wellness programmes (including Employee Assistance Programmes [EAP], HIV/AIDS workplace programmes and health promotion interventions) have been criticized for not providing holistic services. In this study, a survey design method was used to compare the nature, type and relationship between HIV/AIDS workplace and EAPs programmes within South African government structures with the purpose of understanding the type of services offered to employees who are in need of socio-emotional assistance. The respondents were fourteen implementers of services from nine state departments. The results indicate that the counselling was an activity common to the EAP and HIV/AIDS workplace programmes and a written policy, staff training and an adequate budget are essential for employee workplace programmes. The article provides practical recommendations for the delivery of wellness programmes incorporating EAP and HIV/AIDS streams. Recommendations regarding qualifications of personnel to coordinate the programme and the type of support required by management are outlined. The small sample did not allow for significant conclusions and suggested the need for on-going collaboration between employees support interventions.