



COUNSELING, CLEARANCES, AND YOU



Will counseling jeopardize my security clearance?

More than 8,000 employees have received services through the Laboratory's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) Counseling and Referral office. Most, but not all, held clearances. None of those employees lost a clearance due to their participation in mental health treatment through the EAP.

An employee who enters counseling protects his or her clearance by addressing a problem early on, before personal and/or workplace difficulties become potential safety or security concerns.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, about 1 in 4 of us will experience a diagnosable mental condition in any given year. Any one of us could unexpectedly have a problem—diagnosable or not—that warrants the help of a mental health professional.

DOE and Personnel Security reporting requirements

DOE states, "Mental health counseling in and of itself is not a reason to revoke or deny eligibility for access to classified information."

You are not required to immediately report outpatient counseling to the Laboratory's Personnel Security Office. However, DOE requires you to report mental health treatment on your initial and renewal clearance applications. Exceptions: counseling strictly for marital, family, or grief not related to violence by you or counseling strictly related to adjustments from service in a military combat environment.

What must be reported immediately:

- Hospitalization for a mental health illness
- Outpatient or inpatient treatment for illicit drug use and/or prescription drug misuse
- Outpatient or inpatient treatment for alcohol

These must be reported verbally to the Laboratory's Personnel Security office within 2 working days, followed by written notification within the next 3 working days.



What action will DOE take when I report counseling?

If you answer “Yes” to the question, “Have you consulted with a health care professional regarding an emotional or mental health condition?” you must provide the dates of treatment and the name of the provider *unless* the consultations involved only marital, family, grief counseling, or military-related trauma. Note: A health care professional may be a medical or counseling professional.



What if I had individual counseling?

If you have had individual counseling, DOE will ask you to sign a release so that they may talk with your counselor or doctor. DOE will ask the provider, “Does the person under investigation have a condition or treatment that could impair his/her judgment or reliability?”

When the provider responds “No” to that question, the counselor/doctor should give no specific or private information about your treatment to DOE.

If your counselor responds “Yes” to the question, s/he will be asked, “Describe the nature of the condition, the extent and duration of the impairment and treatments, and your prognosis.”

You then may have to meet with a DOE investigator or evaluator again. This action does not mean your clearance will be denied or revoked.



Questions or concerns?

- Laboratory’s Employee Assistance Program: (505) 667-7339, eap@lanl.gov
- Personnel Security: (505) 665-8500, Mail Stop B236

