

live well, work well

Health and wellness tips for your work, home, and life—
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Understanding Your Employee Assistance Program

Employers are increasingly aware that their employees' mental and emotional health is as important to their job performance as their physical health. For this reason, many employers now offer employee assistance programs (EAPs) that offer free, confidential, professional counseling and consultation services.

Purpose

EAPs typically can be accessed by telephone or in person. These services provide assistance for a variety of problems, including:

- Marital or relationship problems
- Parenting issues
- Child or eldercare concerns
- Financial worries
- Mental health problems
- Alcohol/Substance abuse problems
- Stress
- Grief
- Interpersonal conflicts
- Job performance

In addition, employees with concerns in the workplace such as

job performance or conflict resolution can contact the EAP for help. Similarly, supervisors can contact the EAP when they are concerned about an employee's behavior at work.

Proven Results

Because EAPs support increased productivity by reducing behavioral health issues, as well as medical issues, funds spent on EAPs have documented investment returns in such areas as productivity, work performance, absenteeism, and medical benefits costs.

In 1998, Federal Occupational Health (FOH), a division of the Department of Health and Human Services, evaluated the health status of 16,055 EAP clients before and after they used the FOH EAP. Improvement rates ranging from 33% to 71% were found in the following areas: health, work attendance, productivity at work,

day-to-day functioning, and social activities. In a follow-up study during the three-year period between July 1999 and June 2002, FOH gathered data that showed job absence and tardiness decreased by 67% after EAP intervention.

EAP services provide both prevention and early intervention for employee problems, thus improving the employees' mental and physical health, functionality, and overall quality of life.



Did you know...?

A prospective cost-benefit estimate of FOH EAP services showed that for every \$1 spent on the EAP, the expected savings for the first year would be \$1.27, rising to \$7.21 by the fifth year!

Source: Federal Occupational Health