

The Value of an Employee Assistance Program



Have you ever had to find day care services for your children or someone to care for your elderly parent? Have you ever considered having a will drafted at no cost? Have you ever wanted to talk to someone about stressors with balancing work/home life? Consider how much time your employees spend trying to find the right services to meet their personal needs. These services (and more) are available to many employees through company-sponsored Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs).

The purpose of this employee benefit is to help employees manage their personal lives and problems that may impact their work performance, health, and well-being.

For example:

Relationships, abuse, and suffering.

An EAP is strictly confidential and can offer immediate help. If an employee or a family member is struggling with substance abuse, emotional distress, or relationship problems, contacting the EAP can start the individual on the road to resolving the problem. Experienced EAP counselors are typically available 24/7.

Major life events.

The birth of a child, the death of a loved one, a career change, or a job loss are all major life events that are difficult to handle. Talking with a professional may help keep the big picture in perspective. It can also assist employees in learning to deal with grief effectively and manage emotions in a healthy manner.

Emotional and physical well-being.

Employees who are struggling with health care concerns for themselves or an aging parent may need assistance finding a needed service. EAP professionals are familiar with available services, saving employees much time and frustration. Assistance with family difficulties, personal, or workplace concerns is also available. Counselors will conduct an initial assessment and may refer the individual to an in-network provider if long-term assistance is needed.



A general misconception about EAPs is that they only provide short-term counseling.

Catastrophe and tragedy.

Employees who experience a traumatic event at work, such as a co-worker's long-term illness or death, tragic injury, fire or explosion, or violence in the workplace, may experience strong feelings of guilt, sadness, fear or stress. EAP professionals can be brought onsite to a company's facility to talk with individual employees or offer group sessions.

If you do not currently offer an EAP to your employees, consider adding this value-added service to enhance your overall benefit package and retention plan. The benefits of an EAP include:

Lower medical costs

Employees may use the EAP prior to utilizing medical services. Short-term counseling needs are ideal for an EAP as the service is pre-paid by the employer and there is no cost to the employee (no co-pay or deductible). Utilizing the EAP, versus the health plan, will save dollars for the employer and the employee.

Reduced turnover and absenteeism

An employee that seeks and receives necessary help will have lower stress, better coping mechanisms, and be more “present” at work.

Confidential, trained resources

Having an EAP available to employees means they have access to confidential, trained professionals with a multitude of resources at their fingertips. This saves time for HR and managers who can refer employees to an outlet where they can talk through, and receive immediate help, for their personal concerns and challenges.

Higher employee productivity

Employees that receive help to function at their highest potential will be better performers. As an example, Instead of spending time and energy fretting over elder care services, a professional can offer a complete list of providers to the employee. Ultimately, fewer worries and concerns will positively impact the bottom line and overall productivity.

Training programs

Some EAP programs offer on-site training for employees and managers. These programs can teach work-life balance, communication skills, and how to handle conflict. The goal is to improve communication and life management skills.


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Employers generally find that the money they spend to provide their employees with an EAP comes back to them in the form of more productive and engaged employees. When employees are not distracted at work by personal issues, they are able to focus on their jobs and perform at a higher level.

Interested in finding out more about EAPs? MRA's [HR Hotline advisors](#) can help you!

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