

Employee Assistance Program Assessment

Properly designed and utilized, your employee assistance program is both a valuable benefit that you, the employer, provide to your employees and their family members, and an effective management tool for you and your management team. Answers to the following questions will assist in assessing whether you are getting the most from your investment in your employee assistance program:

1. What is your client utilization rate?

The national average EAP utilization rate across all business and industry is 4.5% for a face-to-face program, and 3% for a telephone model program.

2. How often do you receive utilization reports from your EAP provider?

Most commonly, EAP firms provide utilization reports on a quarterly basis, plus annual summary reports. Some larger employers receive monthly utilization reports. In order to protect the anonymity of employees using the program, some smaller employers receive only annual utilization reports.

3. Does your current provider see both self-referred and management-referred clients? What percentage of EAP clients are self and what percentage are management referrals

Since a comprehensive EAP is both an employee benefit and a management tool, most EAP firms provide services for both types of referrals. On average, 90% of EAP clients tend to be self-referred and 10% management-referred. If your reports do not show management referrals, it may indicate that your managers and supervisors do not know how to or are reluctant to use your EAP service.

4. Does your current program offer EAP program promotion materials?

Most EAP firms offer a variety of program promotion materials, including EAP brochures, wallet cards, posters, leaflets/payroll stuffers, articles and newsletters. Regular distribution of these materials to your employees is necessary in order to remind them of the existence of your EAP program and to maximize your investment in the program.

5. Are you offered and do you utilize supervisory training? Does your current provider offer more management training than on how to use the EAP as a management tool?

A key component of a fully operational EAP program is training for your managers and supervisors on how to identify, intervene and refer

to the employee assistance program troubled employees who could be more productive on the job if they were encouraged to seek help with whatever issues, on or off the job, are interfering with their work performance. In addition, many EAP firms offer a wide variety of seminars in such areas as effective supervisory skills, teambuilding, and leadership development that are focused on developing the management skill sets of your supervisors.

- 6. Does your EAP provider offer and do you utilize employee education seminars? Can your EAP conduct some of the employee training that you are required to provide periodically?**

Employee education in such areas as wellness, stress management, communication skills, conflict resolution, and employee morale is a good preventive measure for both personal and workplace problems. Seminars in which employees meet face-to-face with EAP providers often result in employees seeking EAP assistance on their own before issues get out-of-hand. Your EAP can usually assist you by providing some required seminars such as substance abuse awareness, prevention of sexual harassment and prevention of workplace violence in support of your organizational policies.

- 7. Does your EAP offer critical incident stress management services?**

Critical incident or CISD services following a critical incident that impacts your employees is important in assisting your employees work through the emotions of a death or near death situation so they can move on with their lives and their work. CISD assistance should ideally be made available to your employees 36 to 48 hours after the incident.

- 8. Do you receive timely and sound advice from your EAP provider when you ask for telephonic assistance with workplace issues?**

Some EAP firms employ professional mental health staff. Their expertise lies strictly in the area of understanding and addressing the behavioral issues of clients they see in their offices. Other EAP providers have on staff employees who are both mental health and employee assistance professionals, many of whom are Certified Employee Assistance Professionals. These providers are skilled and experienced in providing expert management consultation to their client companies for individual employee and for work group issues.

9. Does your EAP provider offer on-site assistance with work group and organizational problems?

Some EAP firms strictly offer employee assessment, counseling, and referral services at off-site locations. Other employee assistance firms, who advocate providing traditional EAP core technology, also offer skilled on-site organizational assessment and intervention assistance to address such issues as workplace conflict, teamwork problems, and work group morale problems. These on-site services include employee surveys, teambuilding, workplace mediation, and specially designed seminars.

10. How often do you have telephonic and face-to-face contact with your EAP provider representative?

If you are fully utilizing your EAP resource, you should be thinking of and asking for assistance from your EAP provider whenever you have difficult employee and work group issues. If you are not calling your EAP for assistance, your EAP provider should be calling and asking to meet with you. Responsive EAP firms often make monthly phone calls to their client company representatives, and schedule face-to-face meetings on at least a quarterly basis to deliver utilization reports, discuss program trends, and schedule EAP program activities.

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