

# 10 ways to increase use of your employee assistance plan

Is your organization reaping the full financial benefits of having an employee assistance program? If your employees aren't using it, probably not.

EAPs can yield \$1.50 to \$16 in savings for each dollar invested, with average savings of \$3 to \$5, according to various studies. Organizations with the highest rates of employee EAP use save the most money through reduced absenteeism, lower employee medical costs and employees who get back on track sooner after personal and substance abuse crises.

Here are 10 suggestions for boosting employees' EAP use:

- 1. Make it convenient** for employees to contact the EAP. Employees are more likely to use the service if counselors are a five-minute drive from work or if they can access them online or via a 24-hour, toll-free hotline.
  - 2. Allow discreet access** to the EAP so employees won't worry that co-workers will see or hear them asking for help.
  - 3. Ask your EAP provider to host wellness seminars**, such as free lunchtime "brown bag" sessions on stress management or time management.
  - 4. Let employees' families know** they can call for help. Ask your EAP provider to send workers' families information advertising their services, hours and phone numbers.
  - 5. Publicize the program constantly.** Promote your EAP through regular reminders via email, your website or intranet, etc. Ask your EAP for free posters and refrigerator magnets that advertise the EAP's hours and phone numbers. Introduce the EAP to new employees during orientation sessions and emphasize the benefits.
  - 6. Run regular reminders** about the EAP in your employee newsletter, complete with the EAP office location, website and phone number.
  - 7. Remind employees that it's not just a work thing.** They can use the EAP services for personal problems as well as work worries. *Examples:* financial planning, legal services, relationship counseling.
- Also, remind workers that EAPs keep personal information strictly confidential.
- 8. Encourage staff to bookmark** the EAP's website. Add a link on your intranet to the EAP site.
  - 9. Provide on-site counselors**, if possible. Most organizations don't, but those that do raise their employee participation rates by up to 60%.
  - 10. Train supervisors** to recognize work problems and to suggest the EAP as an option to improve job performance. *Example:* On its website, the University of Connecticut offers a Supervisor's Guide to the

Employee Assistance Program, which outlines behavioral patterns that could indicate an employee has problems that could be helped by the EAP. (See it at [tinyurl.com/EAP-guide](https://tinyurl.com/EAP-guide).)

## **How can EAPs help employees?**

Employee assistance programs can help workers deal with marriage and family problems, stress, financial and legal difficulties, psychological and emotional health issues and workplace conflict.

EAP professionals provide confidential assessments of employee problems and offer short-term counseling. EAP counselors can provide referrals to outside experts who can provide more in-depth services. EAP services are typically available to employees and their family members. Your benefits broker or health insurance carrier can help you identify EAP providers.

Learn more about EAP services at [www.easna.org](https://www.easna.org).