

Mental Health Matters In the Workplace



Getting Help When You Need it Most

We could all use help from time to time dealing with stress, family concerns, and other life challenges. Sometimes discussing problems with a friend or co-worker is not enough. We go to the doctor when we have physical problems. So where do we turn for help when our mental health is at stake?

Some employees have access to an EAP, whose sole purpose is to provide help. When employees bring their personal problems to the job, they can lead to poor job performance issues and impact productivity as well as co-workers and colleagues.

Often employees fail to seek help until it is too late. They may be too embarrassed to go to counseling, feel they can't afford it, or do not know what resources are available. Personal issues may continue to have a negative impact on the employee or they may leave the job due to stress; other emotional issues or they may be faced with disciplinary action. It makes good business sense for a company to provide encouragement to use an employee assistance program for their employees to provide resources in a convenient and timely manner.

When and How to Use Your EAP

Any situation that is causing you or a family member distress is appropriate for the EAP. Typical referrals to EAP may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Substance abuse
- Family – Marital relationships
- Depression – Anxiety
- Grief and Loss
- Job related issues
- Stress

- Child – Elder Care Issues
- Legal or Financial problems

A variety of services that include assessment, brief solution focused counseling, referral to the appropriate level of treatment, interface with resources and follow-up are provided by the EAP.

Access is quick and easy; your company will provide a number to call to speak with your EAP and coverage is available 24/7 for emergencies. Based on your specific needs, you will be referred to an EAP counselor for a personal appointment. From there, the counselor will help you assess the situation, identify options and develop a plan of action to achieve your goals. Depending upon your situation, your EAP may provide problem-focused counseling or refer you to another resource. Should you need assistance beyond the scope of EAP, the counselor will offer recommendations of where to obtain care including local resources and/or referral to your behavioral health benefits.



Using your Behavioral Health Benefits

EAPs are provided by many employers and are free to the employee and their family members. Having a place for early intervention of problems and concerns can be cost effective. However, there are times when it is necessary to have on-going counseling, medication management, or inpatient treatment to deal with problems.

Many EAPs provide gate-keeping services for the behavioral part of the company's insurance and they are often accessed when a referral is warranted whether or not you are an EAP client. They can give you information on behavioral health providers and facilitate a referral for out/inpatient treatment and provide appropriate aftercare.



ADA

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 prohibits employers from discriminating against a person with a disability. According to the EEOC an individual with a disability is a person who:

- Has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities;
- Has a record of such an impairment; or
- Is regarded as having such an impairment

There are several questions often surrounding substance abuse and mental health issues. ADA does not cover an individual who is currently engaging in illegal use of drugs, but a rehabilitated user may be protected. In the case of mental health issues, it is not the name of the impairment that determines whether an individual is covered under the ADA, but instead it is the effect of the impairment on the individual. Your Human Resource can answer any questions concerning the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Getting into Treatment

Knowing the community resources and how to access them is a strong component of the EAP. Your EAP can make sure that the treatment option you or a family member may need is covered under your insurance benefits and is the best fit for your needs. They can also help facilitate getting access to services. Finally, the EAP can provide “return to work” assistance by appointing a liaison between you and your workplace.

FMLA

Family Medical Leave Act of 1993 allows “eligible” employees to take off up to 12 work weeks in any 12 month period for certain issues such as birth or adoption, caring for a family member, or if the employee has a serious health condition. An employee can take this leave on an intermittent basis, allowing him or her to work on a less than full-time schedule. FMLA is often used to cover time off for treatment options such as inpatient care for emotional illness or residential substance abuse treatment. This program is managed by your Human Resources Department and they can provide additional information.

For More Information:

Contact the Mental Health Association of East Tennessee at 865-584-9125.

The Mental Health Association offers equally all services to eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin or disability.

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