



Top 10 reasons why your company needs an Employee Assistance Program

Companies commonly adopt employee Assistance Programs in order to maintain a productive, effective and functional working environment. The primary goal of an EAP is to ensure the mental health of employees so that they can consistently contribute to the growth of the company. EAPs cover everything from mental illness, stress-related illness, and drug and alcohol addictions to family related stress, marital problems and therapy. These types of programs have proven highly effective for the wider success of companies that employ them and for the individual employees of those companies. The aim of an [EAP](#) is to reduce the amount of time employees take away from work and to ensure that when they return they do so with renewed strength and optimal mental health.

So why do you need an EAP? Here are the top ten reasons why your company needs an Employee Assistance Program.

#1 Improved Productivity

Employee Assistance Programs are designed to improve the productivity of your employees. When an employee is dealing with personal issues such as mental illness, family problems or substance abuse, to name a few, the result is often a drop in productivity at work. EAPs provide the company with prevention techniques, assessment protocols and health management services. This means that while helping your employees deal with all of life's little ups and downs and we all know these are unavoidable, you are also ensuring effective company growth and development.

#2 Reduced Company Costs

When an employee is suffering personally it is likely their work will suffer too. The bottom line is when this occurs the company incurs financial losses. [Employee Assistance Programs](#) are designed to reduce the impact that social, psychological or physical problems have on the employee in order to reduce the financial impact on the company. To further explore the cost of implementing an [employee assistance program](#) please click on the link to receive multiple quotes.

#3 Third Party Assistance

EAPs are third party agencies that specialize in connecting employees with appropriate services according to their needs. EAPs work with the company to provide employees with the best possible health, safety and training services. They assess individual employee needs, refer employees to suitable services and provide employees and their families with confidential access to professional health services. Essentially an EAP agency can manage the overall health and safety of your employees so that you can get on with business.

#4 Increased Morale and Work Place Harmony

Human resources are the most invaluable of all resources so it makes sense that as an employer you need to look after your employees. A happy and healthy employee is a productive and effective one. EAPs ensure that your employees are well taken care of as individuals so that they can perform as part of your team. An EAP provides prevention and management services that ensure

employees are happy and healthy. An EAP is highly conducive to a harmonious work place. The added advantage here is that the employees know that the company supports them therefore they feel a connection to the work they are doing and are more committed to the achieving desirable results.

#5 Reduced Absenteeism

Absenteeism costs the company money. Frequent absenteeism can be devastating to business. EAPs reduce the amount of time employee's take of work. These programs aim to provide a range of prevention and treatment options for employees and their families. In the event that time of work is required the amount of time is greatly reduced and the employee is able to return to work with renewed strength.

#6 Reduced Turnovers

A high turnover of employees can be costly for any company. EAPs effectively reduce the turnover of employees by managing work related and personal stress. EAPs improve the working environment in terms of morale and company support ensuring employees are well looked after and less likely to leave their jobs.

#7 Reduced Accidents at Work

It is easy to see how accidents can happen at work when you're stressed. A person suffering from stress-related symptoms will often experience difficulty with concentration, mental focus and physical function. This can be a dangerous combination in any environment. An EAP is equipped to prevent this from occurring or at least prevent it from reoccurring. EAPs look after the mental health and ability of your employees ensuring that they are able to function at the required level

#8 Resolution of Work Related Problems

External stress often results in a reduction in work place performance. Problems within the working environment lead to absenteeism, high turnover and low morale. EAPs look after the physiological health of employees developing strategies for coping with external stress as well as work related stress. An EAP will help employees develop the skills they need to cope with all types of work related stress. In turn this reduces the impact of work related stress as there is a quick resolution.

#9 Professional Services

EAPs connect troubled employees to professional services. The great thing about an EAP is they are able to connect employees directly with these services and the first appointment will usually occur within a few days. This means that your employees are getting the help they need quickly, dealing with and averting crisis situations.

#10 Improved Work Performance

Companies employing the services of a professional EAP have not only experienced increases in productivity but also in quality of work. Work performance is greatly affected by stress and personal problems often escalate into personal problems. An EAP manages these problems and

ensures employee issues are quickly resolved. This means fewer mistakes at work, high quality output and an overall increase in work place performance.

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Benefits to Employers Outweigh Enhanced Depression-Care Costs

It may be in society's and employers' best interests to offer programs that actively seek out and treat depression in the workforce, suggests an analysis funded by the National Institutes of Health's (NIH) National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). A simulation based on dozens of studies revealed that providing a minimal level of enhanced care for employees' [depression](#) would result in a cumulative savings to employers of \$2,898 per 1,000 workers over 5 years. Even though the intervention would initially increase use of mental health services, it ultimately would save employers money, by reducing absenteeism and employee turnover costs, according to Drs. Philip Wang and Ronald Kessler, of Harvard University, and colleagues, who report on their findings in the December 2006 issue of the *Archives of General Psychiatry*.^{*} "Depression exacts economic costs totaling tens of billions of dollars annually in the United States, mostly from lost work productivity," noted Wang. "Yet we're not making the most of available services and treatments. Our study calculates what employers' return on their investment would be if they purchased enhanced depression treatment programs for their workers."

The analysis simulated an enhanced intervention in which master's-level health professionals managed the care of a hypothetical group of 40-year-old depressed workers diagnosed with depression. In this scenario, after assessments had detected the workers' depression, the care managers did further assessments and, when necessary, referred the workers for treatment in this scenario. The researchers gauged the cost-effectiveness for society and cost-benefit to employers, using data from existing trials and epidemiological studies, including the National Comorbidity Survey Replication, a nationally representative household survey of 9,282 U.S. adults, conducted in 2001-2003.

The hypothetical workers were assigned to either the enhanced care or "usual care" — care-seeking and treatment patterns that would normally occur in the absence of care management. For both groups, treatment was defined in terms of visits to either a primary care physician or a psychiatrist who prescribed an antidepressant. Every three months, the hypothetical workers' illness status could change, based on depression prevalence, remission and ongoing treatment rates, and the probabilities of various outcomes, including increased risk of death by suicide.

Using results of recent primary care effectiveness trials, the researchers estimated how successful care managers might be in helping workers seek out and adhere to adequate treatment regimens. While the cost-benefit analysis from employers' perspectives weighed only monetary factors, quality of life figured into the cost-effectiveness to society calculation. Savings from reduced absenteeism and employee turnover and other benefits of the intervention began to exceed the costs of the program by the second year, yielding a net savings of \$4,633 per 1,000 workers. These savings were somewhat reduced in years 3 through 5, based on conservative assumptions that benefits wane after care management ceases, while increased use of treatments continues. The intervention became more expensive than usual care (no workplace depression management) when there was greater use of psychiatrists (instead of primary care doctors) or brand-name (instead of generic) drugs. It also ceased to be cost-saving if employees spent more than 4 hours of work time in treatment per 3-month cycle. Enhanced care had the most benefit in cases of higher-level employees who influenced the productivity of co-workers.

The intervention yielded gains when the simulated costs for care were consistent with those charged in the real world, suggesting that providing such programs for workers "appears to be a good investment of society's resources," say the researchers. It will be important to see if the

findings are replicated in effectiveness trials that directly assess the intervention's impact on work outcomes, they added.

The research was also supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Wang PS, Patrick A, Avorn J, Azocar F, Ludman E, McCulloch J, Simon G, Kessler R. The costs and benefits of enhanced depression care to employers. *Arch Gen Psychiatry*. 2006 Dec;63(12).

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NIMH Press Office

301-443-4536

NIMHpress@nih.gov