



The guide to modern **Employee Assistance Programs**





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Trends and the future of EAPs

Discover the future of healthcare

The success of your business depends on the health of your people.

The modern workplace is changing. We've witnessed some of these changes take shape through recent workplace trends like quiet quitting,¹ career cushioning,² rage applying,³ and more. As a direct result, employees have increased expectations regarding better health and wellness support from their employers. Whether looking to improve conditions in their current workplace or seek a new opportunity elsewhere, potential candidates from all experience levels search for organizations with the best health and wellness benefits.

It's not just viral workforce trends that suggest employees want better health services. Research has shown that burnout, depression, and anxiety are still alarmingly present in the post-pandemic workplace. For instance, Benefits Canada's 2025 Healthcare Survey found that four in 10 or 39 per cent of plan members said they experience high to extreme levels of daily stress over the last three months.⁴ And according to talent solution firm, Robert Half, over 1 in 2 Canadians report burnout,⁵ making it an imminent employee health risk and increasing potential disability costs for organizations.

An employee assistance program (EAP) can help prevent, manage, and solve common workplace wellness concerns, including stress management, anxiety, burnout, depression, and more. Through employee sponsored counselling options, specialized clinical services, health and wellness services and mental health training, HR leaders and the organizations they work for can successfully support employees with the resources to deal with life challenges. Additionally, today's leaders understand that personal challenges could eventually influence the work performance of even the most dedicated employees, resulting in absenteeism, low employee retention, high disability costs, and more.

To put it simply, **investing in an EAP is good business.**

Whether you are looking to improve your existing wellness programs or are just starting to create a mental health strategy, our guide to modern EAPs will cover everything you need to know, including the transformational impact an EAP can have on organizational culture, employee well-being and productivity.



What is an employee assistance program?

An employee assistance program, or employee and family assistance program (EFAP), is an employee benefits program that supports a more significant mental health and wellness strategy unique to each organization. An EAP generally includes employer-sponsored counselling hours and other health and wellness services for employees and their dependents.



For HR leaders, EAPs are a great way to start **prioritizing your organization's mental health strategy**, often leading to more engaged, happy, and motivated employees.

According to a 2023 Statistics Canada survey, 21 per cent of working Canadians experience high-stress levels and find most days “quite a bit” or “extremely stressful” – with higher levels noted in women, 2SLGBTQI+, and those living with children.⁶ While these trends are alarming, it's helpful to know that investing in an accessible mental health solution, such as an EAP, can help prevent, address, and often resolve the personal and work-related issues employees may experience. Not all EAP services are created equal, but most modern EAPs provide a full spectrum of services, including counselling, specialized clinical services, life and career coaching, legal and financial advisory, and mental health training. Better access to more health and wellness services ensures employers can provide better support for the differing needs of a diverse workforce.



The benefits of investing in an EAP

Adopting and utilizing an effective EAP program could lead to increased productivity, reduced absenteeism, higher motivation, improved job performance and lower disability costs.

An effective EAP provides comprehensive well-being support. Clinically designed for the demands of today's workplace, modern EAPs are optimized to help your employees navigate all areas of life.

Below are some of the expected benefits of an EAP.



Accessibility with a digital-first approach

In Canada, mental health is one of the leading causes of disability in the workplace. In 2022, more than a third of Canadian employer-sponsored benefits plan claims were due to mental health.⁷ A digital-first approach to mental health services means improved accessibility for your employees. While traditional EAPs can involve weeks-long wait times for employees seeking immediate support, most modern EAPs with digital access to practitioners can offer support within 24-72 hours.

Some programs may also offer in-person counselling options. However, digital access allows employees to work with therapists outside of their geographic location, providing access to a more diverse selection of counsellors. Better accessibility also ensures that all employees get convenient, confidential and secure care that fits their schedule and preferences, resulting in higher engagement and utilization than traditional EAPs.



Customizable programs and services

Mental health programs can't be one-size-fits-all. The best EAP service offerings are built to help optimize your team's well-being beyond individual and couples counselling with access to clinical services and other health and wellness programming. Programming can vary depending on the service provider. Still, an EAP that offers customizable programs and services will have the ability to empower your employees to tackle life's challenges with resilience, including navigating anxiety, depression, caretaking, eldercare, parenting, nutrition, substance abuse, financial and legal difficulties, and more.



Meaningful insights and reporting

Whether HR professionals and leaders are looking to monitor the success of their organization's health and wellness offering, understand company utilization rates or gauge employee satisfaction, an EAP with in-depth reporting can provide meaningful insights into employee well-being. These insights can help inform your company's ongoing mental health strategy by indicating any emerging mental health concerns, well-being trends within the workforce, and stressors employees face.



Attract and retain engaged employees

It is no secret that your employees' physical and emotional health profoundly impacts their job performance, motivation and, ultimately, the strength of your organization. EAP benefits improve your company's bottom line by increasing employee retention and lowering disability costs. Employees benefit individually from prioritizing their well-being. However, company-wide utilization of an EAP can create transformational changes in work environments, leading to greater job satisfaction and attracting top talent to your organization.



Provide a better approach to long-term care solutions

The reality is that work-life separation is rare. At some point, even the most dedicated employees will likely experience personal incidents or stressors that affect how they show up in the workplace. Proactive organizations understand that investment into an EAP signals your organization's commitment to employee health while creating positive changes to company culture.



What are some of the common issues that EAPs can address?

One of the most common components of an EAP offering is company-sponsored counselling services to support employees and their dependents through any mental health-related concern.

But mental health needs are **complex**.



A holistic approach to health and wellness care ensures your chosen EAP can address all the **unique needs** that may emerge in a diverse workforce.

Since the path to getting well is different for everyone, an accessible and comprehensive EAP should focus on total well-being. With that in mind, HR leaders and decision-makers should look to invest in an EAP provider that offers care options across the health spectrum.

Below are some standard categories and related issues that can be addressed by implementing an EAP.



Counselling

Depending on the provider, individual or couples counselling can be offered virtually or in person, covering a wide range of mental health concerns.

- Grief
- Anxiety
- Burnout
- Depression
- Stress management
- Substance use and addiction

And much more



Work, Health and Life Services

Lifestyle services are commonly delivered by registered nurses, dietitians, coaches and trained experts to help employees navigate all aspects of life and achieve their personal goals.

- Eldercare
- Family planning
- Navigating child care
- Becoming a new parent
- Career transitions
- Workplace stress
- Workplace conflict
- Professional development
- Adapting to a changing workforce
- Wills and estate planning
- Budgeting, investing and retirement planning
- Credit management, mortgage planning and taxes
- Nutrition advice
- Smoking cessation
- Weight management
- Illness and disease management
- Preventative health and well-being support



Specialized Clinical Services

Providers may offer supplementary specialized care services for employee needs that expand beyond traditional counselling. Services will vary depending on the provider, but some common options include the following:

- Chronic disease management
- Psychological assessments and treatments
- Substance use assessments and treatments
- Psychiatric consultations and assessments
- Specialized trauma intervention and treatment



Webinars and Training

Organizational leaders can request access to educational resources and specialized training generally facilitated by clinicians, practitioners and career and lifestyle coaches to help bridge the gap between work and mental health needs while helping to increase employee engagement. Topics will vary based on the provider and its instructors.



How to choose an EAP provider

The best-in-class EAPs encourage high employee engagement by prioritizing convenience, accessibility, and continuous care.

Many traditional EAPs have complicated systems, rely on 1-800 numbers, and have long wait times to get employees the care they need. Employee satisfaction and utilization are essential to get the highest return on your investment (ROI). Therefore, choosing the right EAP involves finding a provider with solutions across the health spectrum to address diverse employee needs, prioritizing ease-of-use through a digital-first platform and allowing employees to continue accessing care even after benefits max out.

The following are some other elements you may want to look for before you decide to invest in an EAP to achieve the highest ROI:



Seamless continuity of care to support employees' long-term health by allowing them to use services even after their benefits are up.



A flexible online booking system allows employees to book appointments that suit their schedule with ease.



An intuitive and user-friendly interface can help employees find the support they need.



Transparent and in-depth reporting on key metrics to evaluate the success of an EAP and help HR leaders build their mental health strategy.



A simplified onboarding process that makes EAP integration easy.



An EAP promotion plan to assist with immediate uptake of the programs and services offered.



A wide range of customizable services that provide support within 24-72 hours.



What is the best way to determine if an EAP has a good reputation?

When searching for the right EAP, it is advised that HR leaders research each program thoroughly. One way to find out if an EAP has a good reputation is to ask for testimonials from other companies that have used the service. This will give insight into the effectiveness of an EAP and the providers' client relationships. Decision makers can also evaluate an EAP's track record by asking for clinical improvement rates that indicate how quickly health symptoms decrease after accessing the employee assistance program.

An EAP provider should be willing to work collaboratively with HR leaders to build a well-being solution that addresses any emerging workplace well-being issues or acute health crises. This can be evaluated by whether a provider maintains regular communication and support throughout the implementation of an EAP.

Asking the following questions to your EAP provider will help you better gauge the quality and reputation of your employee assistance program.

Questions to ask your provider

- What services do you provide outside of counselling?
- Do you ensure employees can get personalized care?
- How do you protect the confidentiality of employee information?
- What are the utilization rates of your EAP?
- How do you measure employee satisfaction?
- Does your EAP offer both short-term support and long-term treatment?
- Do you have a detailed onboarding plan to ensure the EAP is integrated seamlessly?
- What assistance do you provide to promote EAP services?
- Do you provide transparent reporting for insights on key program metrics?
- Do you follow up with employees who have recently used your service and address specific concerns in a timely manner?
- Do you provide an account manager dedicated to improving health outcomes?
- Does your EAP integrate employee feedback?



Another way to measure effectiveness is by gathering employee feedback after EAP usage to learn more about their experiences and satisfaction levels. This can be done through surveys, focus groups, or one-on-one interviews.

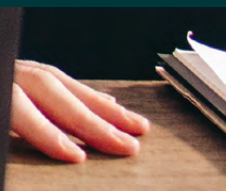
Lastly, an effective EAP will allow employers to track specific outcomes, such as reduced absenteeism, improved job performance, or decreased healthcare costs, to evaluate the impact of the EAP on the organization.



How to implement an EAP in the modern workplace

Building an internal communication strategy to promote an EAP is smart business, but knowing where to start can feel overwhelming.

Good EAP providers play a key role in supporting the implementation and promotion of their services. An account manager is an excellent resource for leveraging the required materials to help employees navigate the health and wellness support available to them.



The top 3 steps to implementing an EAP

It's common for employees to be confused by what their EAP offers, including how it works, how to access the services and more. Provide your workforce with the information they need to access their EAP quickly and efficiently using the three steps below.



Start with an implementation strategy

Work with your EAP provider to determine the tools and resources you need to support a seamless EAP implementation for your employees. Whether you require onboarding assistance, information sessions, or promotional materials, an EAP provider should be equipped to deliver support. Account managers are often available to help guide implementation plans and secure all the resources and assets required to assist internal communications.



Introduce employee onboarding

Simplified and fast onboarding is an effective way to get employees to start using the services available to them. A good EAP company will be able to deliver easy-to-use onboarding materials and guidance based on the size and needs of your organization. Onboarding materials may vary depending on your provider. Some common tactics include digital brochures, guides, and HR/leadership training to ensure executives have the right tools to encourage engagement and address employees' questions.



Provide open communication and support

The best way to ensure employees know about an EAP program is to communicate frequently about the services available. Leaders may also consider surveying their workforce to better understand their needs and what materials would support them best in utilizing their EAP. A hands-on account manager can help relieve human resource departments by providing additional communication support, including promoting mental health resources and learning centres, employee newsletters, and informative webinars.



Breaking down the trends and future of employee assistance programs

More than ever, investing in an EAP has become a clear choice to reduce the risk of rising healthcare costs and absenteeism.



The GreenShield Health EAP was designed with the modern workplace in mind. Our user-friendly platform provides employees with personalized, comprehensive, and accessible well-being services whenever they need support.

As the workplace landscape continues to evolve with hybrid and remote work options, it's important that you select an EAP that can adapt to the new stressors employees are facing. According to a survey by the International Foundation of Employee Benefit Plans, 73 per cent of employers have increased their communications emphasis on mental health and behavioural health offerings in the past two years,⁸ which could indicate that organizations are taking a more holistic approach to mental health by rapidly expanding their wellness programs and employee benefits.

Leaders in human resources can expect to see a rise in EAP services with increased technological innovation to make programs more flexible, comprehensive, and personalized. According to a 2022 Canadian Digital Health Survey conducted by Canadian Health Infoway, 84 per cent of respondents were satisfied with Health Services they received virtually,⁹ indicating the increasing popularity of virtual care.

By providing a broad scope of services, EAP providers can better address the unique needs of a diverse workforce as organizations become more inclusive.

How the GreenShield Health EAP stays ahead of the trends:



Faster access to care

Our digital-first approach ensures employees can get the support they need within 24-72 hours while offering in-person options if needed.



Supplementary and specialized services

Mental health is never one-size-fits-all. We offer various supplementary services to allow leaders to scale their EAP up or down as needed.



Personalized therapist matching

Employees can find their best therapeutic match based on clinical expertise, cultural fit, language, availability and more by completing a quick online questionnaire. As a result, 90 per cent of users across our platform report being satisfied with their therapist match.



Internet-based cognitive behaviour therapy (Digital CBT)

CBT is an interactive digital program that can be added to your EAP to help employees experiencing mild-to-moderate anxiety and/or depression achieve their wellness goals.



In-depth reporting

HR leaders always have access to key metrics to help them continue to build their mental health strategy according to emerging workplace well-being trends.



Webinars and training

Access specialized online training and webinars that provide learning on various topics to meet your organization's specific needs. Some examples include burnout prevention, finding your life's purpose, self-care strategies for better sleep, mood, nutrition, and more.



Secure online appointments

Our intuitive platform ensures complete confidentiality, privacy, and security while placing care at the employee's fingertips.



A diverse network of practitioners

Support from a wide range of health professionals, including registered nurses, dietitians, coaches, social workers, counsellors, therapists and more. We optimize your team's total well-being by giving employees the tools to navigate all aspects of life with access to more than 5000 professionals across Canada.

What is the future of EAPs?

In the past, many employee assistance programs took a band-aid approach to health and prioritized short-term crisis intervention rather than addressing the long-term impacts of declining well-being. As we look to the future, there's an opportunity to reinvent the healthcare and benefits experience with the help of our all-in-one solution, GreenShield+.

From filling prescriptions, booking therapy appointments, filing benefits claims and more, GreenShield+ provides access to better wellness solutions by offering an all-in-one platform that streamlines connected care and reimbursement for workforces of all sizes. By seamlessly integrating the experience across mental health, pharmacy, telemedicine, health services, and benefits plans, GreenShield+ simplifies the health journey and helps individuals address their "whole health" anytime, anywhere.



Better Health for All starts with providing more accessible solutions, including:



Better Access

Connect easily with thousands of health professionals without long wait times.



Better Health Outcomes

Leverage data-driven insights to take charge of your health and improve your quality of life.



Better Convenience

Leverage services anytime, anywhere with effortless digital capabilities and seamless reimbursement of your benefits claims.



Better Integration

Stop repeating your story. Get personalized care and easier navigation with services that increasingly talk to each other and your benefits plan.



Workplace trends continue to indicate that more and more employees are demanding **better support for mental health** from their employers. The GreenShield+ all-in-one platform is the expert choice for employee **retention and recruitment**.



Get in touch

To learn more about GreenShield+, GreenShield Health EAP and other services we offer, reach out to our sales team:

[Book a demo](#)

Endnotes

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