

Workplace Wellbeing Hub

Employee Assistance Program: Mental Health Benefits Guide for Safety Professionals and Supervisors

What is an EAP?

An Employee Assistance Program (EAP), similar to a Member Assistance Program (MAP), is a free and confidential benefit your organization may provide to help you and your team handle life's challenges on and off the job. While EAPs and MAPs can be used for many concerns, mental health concerns are a common and well justified reason to utilize this benefit. For safety professionals, mental health is just as critical as PPE. The EAP or MAP is designed to support you and your employees emotional and mental wellbeing to stay alert, make sound decisions, and keep yourself and your team safe.

How EAPs Support Supervisors in Talking About Mental Health

Supervisors play a key role in recognizing when an employee might be struggling. Creating a safe space for open conversations is essential. Many EAPs offer training, coaching and consultation specifically for leaders to help them approach these sensitive situations with confidence and empathy.



Through the EAP Supervisors Can:

- **Receive guidance before a conversation:** Consult confidentially with an EAP counselor for advice on how to prepare for a discussion about performance changes, distress, or safety concerns
- **Learn what to say (and not say):** Get practical scripts and conversation tips that help you express concern without diagnosing, prying, or making assumptions
- **Understand the signs of crisis:** Learn how to spot red flags for urgent mental health issues, such as talk of self-harm, extreme withdrawal, or erratic behavior and how to respond appropriately
- **Know when and how to refer to the EAP:** Practice framing the EAP as a free, confidential and supportive resource, reducing stigma and encouraging employees to accept help
- **Access crisis support:** In urgent situations, the EAP can provide real-time coaching for supervisors during a crisis and help coordinate immediate intervention

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Why Mental Health Matters for Safety

Mental health directly affects:

- Alertness and reaction time
- Decision-making under pressure
- Situational awareness
- Team communication and trust



When to Recommend EAPs to Employees

- If you've noticed an employee being distracted, stressed, or exhausted
- If an employee has experienced or witnessed a traumatic workplace incident
- If an employee is dealing with personal issues that could affect focus or performance
- If you think an employee just needs to talk through a problem with someone who's trained to help

Be prepared:

- Keep your EAP contact information handy & stay up-to-date on company benefits and communications
- Regularly share EAP details and its benefits with colleagues and anyone you manage
- Lead by example and use the EAP yourself so you can "walk the talk"
- Remember, everyone has something they could use support for



*Workers with poorer mental health have **12 more missed days per year**, costing employers **\$47.6 billion** in lost productivity annually.*



*Stress, fatigue or personal struggles can **lead to errors, near misses, or incidents**. Using the EAP is one way to lower that risk.*

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What Supervisors Should be Communicating to Employees

- ✓ **It's free:** no out-of-pocket cost for you or your family
- ✓ **It's confidential:** your employer does not get details about what you discuss
- ✓ **It's supportive:** help is available 24/7, even for non-work issues

The EAP is more than counseling; it's a toolbox for **total wellbeing** that can help with:

- **Financial Support:** Budgeting help, debt management or planning for future stability
- **Critical Incident Support:** Immediate help after a workplace accident or traumatic event
- **Work-Life Solutions:** Legal advice, finding childcare or eldercare
- **Substance Use Support:** Guidance, treatment referrals, relapse prevention
- **Wellness Coaching:** Sleep improvement, stress management, healthy routines

By using these EAP tools supervisors can better support employees, foster trust and help prevent small problems from becoming bigger risks to health, wellbeing and safety.

Who can use the EAP?

- You, as an employee
- Your household members, often including spouses, partners, and dependents
- Sometimes extended family, check your plan details

How to access the EAP

EAPs are designed to be easy to reach, especially when you're working shifts or in the field:

- Call the toll-free number anytime, day or night
- Use the website or app for self-help tools, videos, articles, and secure messaging
- Meet with a local counselor in-person
- Access virtual sessions using secure video or phone calls for convenience.

How many sessions are free?

Most EAPs provide 3–8 free counseling sessions per issue each year. If you need more, they can help you connect to providers covered by your health insurance

Confidentiality & Trust

Your employer won't be told what you share, the EAP only reports overall usage numbers, not names or details. Supervisors may suggest you contact the EAP after a tough event, but the choice to use it is yours.