

# Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

## Frequently asked questions



### What is EAP?

Employee Assistance Program, or EAP, is an accessible and confidential counseling benefit.

### Who can use EAP?

Any employee in your organization can use EAP services, as well as any employee's spouse or dependent children. Sometimes people come in individually, and sometimes it is more helpful to come in as a couple or a family.

### Who will know if I have used EAP?

No one will know if you have used EAP. Your confidentiality is important to us, but not only that, it is the law.

### How much does it cost?

EAP is FREE to you and your family. Your organization provides this benefit at no cost to you.

### When should I use EAP?

Our counselors can help with all sorts of problems including: family relationships, grief, work conflicts, substance abuse, mental illness, trauma and more. There is no problem too big or too small.

### What will happen when I call?

When you call, you will reach the main office where a professional counselor is available to talk Monday through Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. They can either help you set up an appointment or connect you with someone to talk to immediately on the phone. If you are in crisis after hours, the answering service can page a counselor who will call you back shortly. You never have to struggle alone!

### Who are the counselors?

All our counselors are licensed to provide counseling in the state in which they practice. Their bios can be found on our website under the link 'About Us' at [www.ascensionwieap.org](http://www.ascensionwieap.org).

### How much can I use EAP?

EAP is short-term, solution-focused counseling. Many people can resolve their concerns within a few sessions, but if you need something more than short-term counseling can provide your counselor can make referrals to help you get you connected to the right type of support for your needs.

## Do you offer virtual appointments?

As the world around us continues to change and evolve, our Employee Assistance Program (EAP) does as well, to meet our clients' and patients' needs. Over this past year, we transitioned to providing EAP services virtually while many have been sheltered in place. Not only did we see an increase in utilization, but we have heard nothing but positive feedback.

While our EAP has offered virtual sessions (either by video or phone) for many years, when the pandemic hit, our virtual sessions increased overwhelmingly. We found that it was extremely well received by our clients and we've seen an increase in utilization of our services. We've also seen a decrease in "no-show" appointments and cancellations. Our patients and clients have expressed their satisfaction with our services through our customer satisfaction surveys. And we want to continue to meet them where they are at.

## What does 'virtual' mean?

A 'virtual' session with EAP means meeting with a counselor either through a video or telephone conference. The patient joins the appointment by clicking on a link that is emailed or through a phone call with a counselor on your own personal phone. We currently use Ascension Virtual Chat, Google Meets and Zoom as our platforms for video counseling services.

## What is the benefit of having a virtual appointment?

- Convenience: Less time away from work or home, and often no need to find child care.
- Fewer barriers: Weather, transportation issues, sick kids at home, etc. These things used to cause clients (or our counselors) the need to cancel. By providing services virtually, these issues don't need to keep you from your appointment.
- More options: You are not bound by physical distance to access a counselor. You have a statewide resource of counselors providing more availability, and more time options to better fit your schedule.
- Confidential: We secure client data by using hospital-grade technology with firewall protection and security features.



## What will happen when I make an appointment?

You will be asked your name, the reason for scheduling and your contact information. The intake counselor will work with you to offer the soonest appointment available and work with you to get you scheduled at a convenient time and with a counselor who is a good fit for you. If you make a virtual appointment, intake will follow up with an email that includes your appointment information and link to join your session if you opted for a video call.

## Are there downsides to having a virtual appointment?

Because there is a need for technology to have a virtual appointment, there may be connectivity issues for the client or the counselor. However, the counselor can always meet with the client by phone to help troubleshoot the issue or provide the session via phone.

In addition, clients may be challenged to find a confidential place within their environment to meet. In any situation, we put client-centered service first to solve barriers to our services. Lack of technology for the client will never cause us to not provide service.

## Can virtual work for everyone?

We haven't run across a situation where virtual care won't work, but of course, it may happen. If it does, we will work with the client to figure out the best solution. Here are some common needs that people often ask about.

- **Children and adolescents.** If a child is under 12, the counselor will meet with the parent first to gather information, and then together come up with a plan in moving forward for future virtual sessions. We've found that children and teens work well within the virtual platform, and our counselors have found some very helpful interactive tools to use in these sessions.
- **Need for translators.** Translators are available for virtual session, just as they are for in-person appointments.
- **Marital counseling.** Marital counseling has also worked well through the virtual platform, often both people meet on one device.
- **Domestic violence.** In some situations, we have worked with the client in their workplace to secure a safe and confidential location to avoid having an appointment in their home.
- **Family counseling.** The counselors can provide guidance on best approach for the session. They will first meet with one or both parents and then create a plan to move forward. Virtual appointments allow clients to be in different households and attend the same session at the same time.

## I still want to meet in person, how do I do that?

While we continue to assess strategy and demand for our physical office presence across our service area, we do recognize the need for access to in-person appointments, when necessary. EAP offices are available at multiple locations across the state. We talk with the caller to assess needs and preferences at the point of intake to ensure the client is getting the right service, at the right place, at the right time. We also recognize that it may be helpful to have a counselor come into the workplace to deliver service occasionally. We'll work with you and the client to provide the best service possible.

## Can I get organizational support?

Yes! We will work with you to provide the best option for your teams to deliver virtual education/lunch and learn sessions to large groups for multiple organizations. You'll see invitations to those events going forward.

## How do employees schedule?

Employees can call 1-800-540-3758, email [eap@ascension.org](mailto:eap@ascension.org) or visit our website [www.ascensionwieap.org](http://www.ascensionwieap.org)

## EAP is here for you!

EAP remains the same accessible, short-term, solution-focused counseling that we've always provided. Many people can resolve their concerns within the scope of their EAP plan, but if you need something more than short-term counseling can provide, your counselor can make a referral to help you get you connected to the right type of support for your needs.

Whether you've been struggling for a long time, or just want a wellness tune up, there is no problem too big or too small for EAP. Call, e-mail or check out our website, and get started on your path to recovery today!

If you have more questions, want to make an appointment, or would like to talk to one of our counselors please contact us today. We can always be reached at 1-800-540-3758 or [eap@ascension.org](mailto:eap@ascension.org). You can also go to our website [www.ascensionwieap.org](http://www.ascensionwieap.org) for more information or to schedule.

**Ascension WI EAP | 800-540-3758 | [eap@ascension.org](mailto:eap@ascension.org) | [www.ascension.org](http://www.ascension.org)**