



Commonly Asked Questions about the Employee and Family Assistance Program

Below are commonly asked questions about the Employee & Family Assistance Program.

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1. What is an Employee & Family Assistance Program?

An Employee & Family Assistance Program (EFAP) provides professional, confidential support services and programs, including counselling for employees and members of their immediate families in an effort to help with common life issues. It can also offer the information, tools and insights you need to deal with minor issues in the present so they don't grow into more serious problems in the future.



It is important to remember that no problem is too small or too large for the EFAP and that accessing the EFAP is the first step towards addressing a problem.

2. What is the hotline, and how does it work?

The EFAP toll-free hotline—available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, is a first point of contact should you require assistance with a problem. A Shepell Client Care Representative will answer your call and is on hand to understand your challenges, connect you to the support you need to discover solutions, and answer your questions about the EFAP and the programs and services available.

Your customized EFAP toll-free hotline is 1 844 336 3136 and service is available in English and French.

Prefer services in another language? Let us know at the time of your call and our language matching service will ensure you receive help in the language you're most comfortable with.

3. Is the service confidential?

Yes. The EFAP's strict confidentiality policy and safeguards ensure that no one will ever know you're using EFAP services unless you choose to tell them. Complete confidentiality is the foundation of our services and our caring professionals work within a strict code of professional ethics, within the limits of the law.

To preserve confidentiality:

- Two people from the same organization will not have back-to-back appointments with the same counsellor, ensuring that they will not accidentally meet each other.
- Identifying telephone messages are never left at home or at work.

Personal information is only ever provided to authorities when certain conditions—including threat of violence to oneself or others, child abuse or a subpoena—require Shepell to release it by law.

4. If I decide to use the EFAP, will my manager or co-workers know about it?

Not unless you tell them. EFAP counsellors will deal only with you, not with your organizations management, your manager or your co-workers.

5. Can my employer make me use EFAP services?

No. Your participation is always voluntary. Employers can privately remind you EFAP services are available if you are noticeably experiencing difficulties, or if your work performance has been negatively impacted. The decision to access these services is entirely yours to make.

6. What kinds of problems or concerns can the EFAP help me with?



Employees can bring any problem or issue to the EFAP that they feel is affecting their physical, mental and emotional health or, their quality of life and work.

Common issues that the EFAP can help you with include:

- Emotional and mental health
- Relationships and family
- Workplace concerns
- Work-life balance and stress
- Addictions
- Physical health
- Career questions
- Child and eldercare

7. What if I feel as though I have more than one issue, will this program help me with all of them?

If you want to discuss them together, you're free to do so. You can talk over as many problems with your counsellor as you see fit.

8. Do I have to make the initial contact for a family member?

No. In fact, a family member must access the service independently as appointments from a third party are not accepted. The service is available for you and your family should they choose to use it. It is a voluntary program.

9. Will the EFAP provide service to my minor children without my consent?

Laws vary from province-to-province. Children under the age of 16 require a signed parental consent form to use EFAP services. Unless the law requires otherwise, EFAP services provided to children between age 16 and the local age of majority remain confidential. Because the successful resolution of a minor's problem often depends on parental support, EFAP counsellors usually encourage the minor to involve the parent(s).

10. What are the ways I can receive counselling from my EFAP?

Our goal is to ensure that you are provided with the service that will best meet your needs – leading to efficient and effective problem resolution. Our unique model of service helps us to establish your needs and connect you to programs and services that will help you discover that resolution.

Once the Client Care Representative understands your needs they'll connect you to one of the following counselling options:

- Professional counselling in person.
- Professional counselling over the telephone.
- Professional support online via E-Counselling, Video Conferencing, First Chat or an interactive support program.
- Self-directed resource packages and tools.



A combination of the above can help you resolve your specific issue.

11. Does the EFAP only offer counselling services?

No. Your EFAP also offers a wide variety of work/life-oriented services to help you balance your responsibilities at work with the obligations you have at home. You can access professional assistance in the form of information, resources and even resource referrals.

This range of services includes:

- **Family Support Services** connects you with a Family Support Specialist for personalized assistance with family planning, parenting, childcare, eldercare, homecare support and more.
- **Legal Support Services** provide consultation with professional lawyers to answer legal questions surrounding divorce, custody, adoption, real estate, debt, bankruptcy, landlord/tenant issues, and more.
- **Financial Support Services** provide consultation with financial professionals to answer financial questions about budgeting, debt management, tax issues, and more.
- **Nutritional Services** offer consultation with Registered Dietitians on any nutritional matter or concern.
- **Health Coaching** by Registered Nurses can provide information and advice, coordination and support; and coaching on any health risk or concern.

12. I am currently seeing a counsellor, how will the change in vendor impact that arrangement?

If you or a member of your family initiated counselling on or before September 30th, you have the option to stay with the Homewood counsellor until resolution, or you may choose to initiate service with Shepell, beginning October 1, 2015. Please note, your case files with Homewood Health will not be transferred to Shepell.

Counselling cases will not end immediately because of the provider change. A change in provider will not affect the work you are accomplishing with your Homewood counsellor.

If you would like to begin counselling or initiate any support services, please contact Shepell for more information beginning Oct. 1, 2015 at 1-844-336-3136.

13. Is there anything new from Shepell that was not available before?

Yes. Employees and their families will have access to a mobile app, text messaging and video counseling. These services address the forms of communication that have become the norm for many people.

14. Who pays for EFAP services?

The cost of EFAP services is paid by your employer as a health benefit.



If you need more specialized or longer-term support, your EFAP will help you select an appropriate specialist or service that can provide assistance. While fees for these additional services are your responsibility, some may be covered by your provincial or organizational health plan.

15. Do I have to come to Shepell offices to use counselling services?

No. Shepell provides a variety of support options that don't require your in-person attendance at our counselling offices. The EFAP offers access to programs and services over the telephone, online and/or through text-based tools. When you contact your EFAP, a Client Care Representative will identify the solution that best fits your lifestyle and learning preferences.

16. How soon can an individual have an appointment with an EFAP counsellor?

We are able to arrange an appointment within 3-5 working days from the time you call the hotline. In urgent situations, arrangements will be made to connect with you on the same day as the hotline call.

17. How likely am I to run into a fellow employee at a counselling office?

Shepell does not book any two individuals from the same organization back-to-back at the same counselling office.

18. What are the counsellors' backgrounds?

Shepell counsellors are all social workers, psychologists and addictions counsellors with a minimum of 5 years of experience.

19. If the individual is referred to another resource, will he or she have contact with their original Shepell counsellor?

Yes. If the counsellor feels that the problem is going to require further ongoing counselling or specialized care, he/she will make these recommendations known to the individual and will suggest several resources. Your counsellor will manage the referral process, including follow-up to ensure that your concern has been addressed effectively.

20. I'm already seeing a professional counsellor (i.e. Psychologist, Social Worker, Psychiatrist) for treatment of emotional problems. Can I use the EFAP as well?

Yes, but it may depend on the situation. You should always tell the EFAP counsellor about your current or previous medical or psychological treatments.