

Guide to Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs)

Purpose:

To educate HR professionals, managers, and employees about what EAPs are, when they are useful, and when additional support beyond the EAP may be needed.

1. What is an EAP?

An **Employee Assistance Program (EAP)** is a confidential workplace benefit that provides employees with support for personal, mental health, or work-related challenges.

Typical Services Include:

- Short-term counseling (stress, anxiety, depression, substance use)
 - Work-life support (childcare, eldercare, legal or financial guidance)
 - Crisis intervention and referrals to specialized treatment
 - Resources for coping with trauma or major life changes
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2. When EAPs Are Useful

EAPs are particularly beneficial for:

- Employees experiencing **mild to moderate stress or mental health concerns**
- Early support for **behavioral health or substance use concerns**
- Guidance for **work-life balance or personal challenges**
- Short-term interventions that may prevent escalation of issues

3. When to Go Beyond the EAP

Sometimes, employees need **more intensive or specialized care** than an EAP can provide. Consider additional referral when:

- Substance use is **severe or chronic**
- There are **co-occurring mental health disorders** requiring specialized treatment
- Safety or productivity concerns in the workplace persist despite EAP involvement
- Long-term therapy, residential, or outpatient programs are needed
- The employee requires structured care for recovery and return-to-work planning

Tip: EAPs can serve as a **first step**, but HR and managers should know when to escalate to licensed treatment providers, such as Bridging the Gaps, for comprehensive care.

4. Best Practices for HR and Managers

- Maintain **confidentiality** in all EAP communications.
 - Encourage early utilization to **prevent escalation** of workplace or personal challenges.
 - Keep **clear documentation** of interventions and referrals (without disclosing personal details).
 - Ensure **follow-up** and support during and after treatment for employee reintegration.
 - Educate staff on **available EAP resources** and how to access them.
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Key Takeaway:

EAPs are valuable tools for **early intervention and short-term support**, but complex or high-risk cases require **professional treatment beyond the EAP** to ensure employee well-being and workplace safety.