

DEDICATED TO EXCELLENCE

EAP: Frequently Asked Questions
Contributed by the EAP Customer Service Team



The question most frequently received by the EAP Customer Service Team is this: *How do I make an appointment?* The answer to that question and to a handful of other frequently asked questions can be found in this article. If you have a question about EAP services that isn't covered here, please contact us at (800) 777-4114 or by email at info@firstchoiceeap.com.

How do I make an appointment? Contact us by phone or by email. We'll ask about your needs and preferences. The EAP will identify a provider close to where you work or live. The provider will contact you directly by phone to discuss your concerns, their background and experience, and to offer dates and times for an initial appointment. It's that easy. You can expect to hear from an EAP provider within 48 hours of contacting the EAP.

What are EAP services all about? In two words: *Convenience* and *Confidentiality*. EAP services help employee families respond to the conflicts and demands that add to the stress of contemporary life. The EAP helps people resolve distractions, tackle problems, make changes, connect with useful community resources and develop new skills - whether the distractions or concerns exist at work, at home, at school, in rest or at play. Your contacts with the EAP are very confidential.

What services are available? We'll connect you to a licensed counseling professional for assessment & referral in response to emotional, behavioral, family, relationship, or mental health concerns. *Assessment & referral* means that your provider will work with you to determine the nature of the concern and, if possible, to resolve the issue within the available EAP visits. The provider will also make recommendations about the value of treatment (beyond the EAP appointments) in response to your situation.

Depending on the program options selected by your employer, the EAP offers a range of *Work/Life* services: Legal Consultation & Referral, Eldercare Consultation, and Childcare Referral. If you're not sure which *Work/Life* options are available to you, check with your employer's Human Resources Department or call the EAP.

Which people in my family are eligible to use EAP services? The spouse/partner with whom you reside and dependent children up to the age of 18. If your child is 18 years of age or older and attends college or a trade school, contact us to discuss their eligibility for EAP services.

What does confidentiality really mean? Confidentiality means the EAP and our providers release no information without a signed form of consent. Your employer receives no information about your contact with the EAP unless you request it (in writing). As with all behavioral healthcare services, the rule of confidentiality is temporarily suspended (in the interest of public safety) if it is determined that a client presents a realistic and imminent threat of harm to self or others - including the abuse of a child or an elderly person.

**I keep six honest serving persons
They taught me all I knew
Their names are What and Why and When
And How and Where and Who**

- Rudyard Kipling

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WELCOME NEW GROUPS

- Callison Architecture
- City of Kent
- City of Puyallup
- Elk Grove Adult Community Training
- Horizon Bank
- Industrial Credit Union
- J.R. Hayes & Sons
- Kayano Design/Write, Inc.
- Nastech Pharmaceutical
- Northwest Office Installations
- Ocean Beauty Seafood
- Point B
- SP Holdings
- Startouch
- Stevens Healthcare
- SODO Pizza
- Tacoma Humane Society
- Safflink
- Alexander Global Promotions
- Bellevue Internal Medicine Associates
- Colaizzo Opticians
- Goodell Wood Furnishings
- The Polyclinic
- Seattle Publishing
- The Food Co-Op
- Balance Physical Therapy
- Brad Larsen Design
- Cindy's Home Services
- Emmanuel's Rug & Upholstery
- H3 Consulting
- R.H. Brown Company
- R.L. Allen, Inc.

QUALITY, CONVENIENCE, & RELIABILITY

This publication is designed to provide accurate and authoritative information in regard to the subject matter covered. If specific health or medical advice or assistance is desired, the services of a licensed healthcare professional should be sought. The information in the First Choice Health EAP Quarterly Newsletter is not meant to replace the advice or expertise of your physician or healthcare provider. If you are experiencing health problems or contemplating lifestyle changes such as diet or exercise, consult your healthcare provider ahead of time to ensure your well being.

The EAP Quarterly Newsletter is published by
First Choice Health Employee Assistance Program

Majid Mohadjer, Web Developer - <http://www.1stchoiceeap.com>
Amanda Engel, Desktop Publisher



**Bringing Balance to
Work, Home, and Life**

EAP - FAQ's continued

Who are the providers in the EAP network and where are they located? The providers in our network are *licensed mental health counselors, psychologists, clinical social workers, marriage & family counselors, and chemical dependency professionals*. Providers are invited into the EAP network based on rigorous standards for education, training, experience, and state licensure. To meet the needs of our clients, First Choice Health EAP has providers across the United States and in countries around the world.

Does the provider I want to see participate in your EAP Network? If a qualified provider is not already in the First Choice Health EAP network, the EAP will gladly consider their application for preferred provider status in our network in order to respond to your preferences and needs.

Will I be able to use my health insurance or managed care coverage with the EAP provider? Yes. The EAP developed and uses *Right Referral, First Time* technology to ensure that your EAP provider is eligible to deliver post-EAP services using your healthcare insurance or managed care coverage.

Your questions and comments are welcome! We look forward to meeting your needs and exceeding your expectations for client care and customer service.

1-800-777-4114

www.1stChoiceEAP.com

A Workout a Day Keeps Depression at Bay?

A study at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center (reported in the Journal of Preventive Medicine, January 2005) confirms what physicians and mental health professionals have been advising for many years: Exercise can be effective in reducing and managing the symptoms of depression. The research was funded by the National Institute of Mental Health.

Mild to moderate symptoms of depression were reduced almost 50 percent in adults aged 20 to 45 who engaged in 30 minutes of "moderately intense" aerobic exercise three to five times per week. The aerobic exercises in this study included treadmills and stationary bicycles.

Participants who exercised at lower levels of aerobic intensity (three to five times per week) also experienced relief, although at a lower level (30 percent symptom reduction). These

results suggest that activities like walking, running, swimming, biking, and using stair-stepper or elliptical machines are powerful tools for responding to and relieving the discomfort of depression.

Symptoms of depression typically include negative thoughts, decreased ability to make decisions or to tolerate frustration, lethargy, irritability, and a sense of hopelessness – sleep irregularities are not uncommon. While adults with symptoms of depression typically view exercising as a chore, this study makes clear the benefits of becoming an active participant. Consistent exercise can lead to consistently feeling better.

Because aerobic exercise involves increasing and sustaining the heart rate at levels higher than those required for basic daily activities, always consult your physician prior to beginning or significantly increasing an exercise program. Also be aware that exercise is not a replacement for medical treatment of moderate to severe

symptoms of depression. In general, symptoms of depression can be most effectively managed by a combination of counseling, medical treatment and making an investment in a healthy, physically active lifestyle.

Contact First Choice Health EAP for more information about the symptoms of depression or visit us online at www.1stChoiceEAP.com to make use of the Screening Tools for Depression, Anxiety, Assertiveness and Stress.



A Series: Managing The Stress Of Modern Living Logging Off, Shutting Down and Liking It!

David Burn, MS, NCC, CCMHC, LMHC
EAP Clinical & Operations Manager

In search of ways to combat the unexpected drawbacks of unlimited access to information and computing power? More and more individuals and families are making the decision to limit the amount of time spent in front of the computer monitor or using electronic conveniences.

The digital revolution has enabled people to do more and more (and more and more and more) in less and less time. Access to information, news, entertainment (games, music and movies) and virtual interactions with friends and family has become "all you can eat." While few people would dispute the benefits of fast access to information, the "always on" connection to work tools, cell phones, cable television, and the Internet also has a downside.

If the age of electronics enables people to accomplish more in less time, it can also lead us to disengage from the activities, hobbies, pursuits, and connections to friends & family that contribute to a balanced, satisfying lifestyle. People increasingly report being concerned and distracted about filling time doing "just a bit more" work or surfing the Internet out of habit rather than necessity. The abundance, speed, and efficiency of the modern age can lead human beings to feel uncomfortable with the prospect of unwinding and moving at a slower pace.

Can you imagine feeling great about doing little except relaxing or recreating on a day off? Many people cannot. Do you experience a vague but consistent need to be "connected" and productive at all times? Can you remember

what it feels like to be pleasantly tired from a day of physical activity or several hours of intentional relaxation?

It's important to know when to switch gears and log off. Give yourself permission to reconnect with activities, people and places that recharge your batteries and refresh your perspective. Enhance your balance and increase your overall productivity by protecting yourself from the subtle sources of stress in modern life.

Nature does not hurry, yet everything is accomplished.

- Lao Tzu

Speeding through life in the electronic passing lane can be detrimental – undermining your balance and diminishing your natural ability to get things done. Some people find it helpful to schedule "Technology Free" weekends or evenings. Others make it a point to break the cycle of working from home or having the cell phone or PDA with them at all times. You work hard. It's important and necessary to rest, relax, and play with the same level of enthusiasm and commitment to personal well being.

For more information about **Year Round Stress Reduction Strategies**, visit the First Choice Health EAP Internet site at www.1stChoiceEAP.com. In the EAP Newsletter archive, view the Winter 2003 Newsletter. Better yet, call us at **(800) 777-4114** and we'll gladly save you an extra trip to the Internet by mailing a copy of the article.

Changing the Rules of Change

In our work lives, in our personal and family lives, even at school or in the community, responding to change can be a stressful experience. Learning to recognize and embrace the opportunities that arrive on the wings of change is an important skill for navigating the contemporary (ever-changing) lifestyle.

Remember that it's NORMAL for people to have a range of feelings in response to change – large or small. Each one of us responds to change differently and uniquely. Some people have many feelings or reactions, while others do not. Since a person's perception of the impact of change is often more stress creating than the change itself, allow yourself (and others) ample opportunity to give and receive clarifying feedback. Information reduces uncertainty.

The EAP is a confidential, professional resource where you can get practical and effective ideas and strategies for doing change well. Contact the EAP by phone or online to consult or for access to a provider near where you live or work.

"All things are difficult before they are easy."

-Thomas Fuller