

# Employee and Family Assistance Program

## Frequently Asked Questions



For confidential assistance, contact your EFAP by phoning 1.800.668.2055.  
This number is answered 24 hours a day, seven days a week.  
Visit us at our website: [www.brown-crawshaw.com](http://www.brown-crawshaw.com)

The following Newsletter will tell you about the Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) that is available to employees and members of their family. To familiarize you with what the services of the EFAP are and how the program works, we have prepared a Newsletter in the format of answering what we believe to be the most "frequently asked questions".

Remember, at the end of the day, the EFAP is a benefit to you and your family. It's voluntary and it's confidential. And, most importantly, there is no cost to you other than your time.

### ***How does the employee contact the EFAP?***

The employee can contact the EFAP 24 hours a day; their call is not restricted to general office hours. They can choose their most convenient time to contact the program.

**Brown Crawshaw** will return every phone call within 24 hours of receiving the call. When a call is returned, an appointment can usually be booked within a few days. If the situation is extremely urgent, we will respond appropriately within the same day, or the following day.

Appointments are available evenings as well as during the day to allow the employee the opportunity to schedule their appointment outside of their working hours.

### ***Who is eligible to use an EFAP?***

Programs are usually available to employees, their spouses and dependent children. For purposes of the EFAP solely, a family member is usually defined as a relative who normally resides with the employee. This person could be someone other than dependent children.

### ***Are employees required to use the EFAP?***

**No.** The EFAP is a voluntary program. The employee decides if they want to take advantage of the services offered. They, or an interested family member, can initiate the referral by directly contacting the program.

At times a concerned coworker or supervisor may suggest the EFAP to another employee; but it is the employee who makes the decision whether or not to access the resources offered by the program and this decision is a private one. Nobody else in the workplace needs to know of their involvement.

### ***Who will find out if the employee accesses the EFAP?***

The names and identities of those individuals who use the program are confidential. The employer will not know who has contacted the program unless the employee chooses to tell them. Discussions that occur between clients and the EFAP Counsellor will not be revealed to others.

Information regarding the content of a client's session with the counsellor, or their referral, will not be available to the employer, or any other party, without the client's informed and written consent. If, at some point the employee wants their counsellor to release information to someone else (eg. their physician, or a referral source), they will be asked to sign a consent form where they specifically indicate the information they want released, and to whom.

There are a few special cases where confidentiality may be outweighed by other concerns: eg the need to protect a child at risk or a life at risk. Counsellors, like other professionals: eg clergy, physicians, and personnel managers, are required to comply with court orders regarding release of information.

If the employee has any questions or particular concerns about confidentiality, one of the EFAP counsellors with **Brown Crawshaw** would be pleased to provide them with further information.

***Can the employee choose their own counsellor and the EFAP pay the counsellor or reimburse the employee?***

**Brown Crawshaw** EFAP counsellors are highly qualified to deal with a variety of presenting concerns and work well with individuals, couples and families. Sessions with these counsellors are covered by the EFAP at no cost to the employee. If the employee wishes to see a counsellor other than a **Brown Crawshaw** counsellor, they will be responsible for any costs associated with their visits to that individual.

While employees are free to enter into private contractual arrangements with any individuals who call themselves counsellors or therapists, these employees do so at their own expense and, as the case may be, to their own benefit or risk.

In rare cases a client's special needs may justify contracting out services but approval is required before they arrange for those services.

Personal preference for a certain counsellor in the community is not sufficient grounds for consideration by **Brown Crawshaw**.

**Brown Crawshaw** has contracted with employers to provide a limited but reasonable choice of qualified counsellors to provide EFAP services for employees and family members. In order for a counsellor to be considered by **Brown Crawshaw** they must:

- have a minimum of a Master's degree usually in social work or psychology from an accredited university. Equivalencies are sometimes considered.
- be registered (in the province where they are providing service) with an appropriate professional association, preferably a licensing body (eg College of Psychologists, B.C. Board of Registration for Social Workers), that requires proof of supervised practice, references, adherence to an ethical code, a criminal record check, and has a form of practice review.
- carry malpractice and general liability insurance.
- be willing to work within the EFAP's parameters which emphasize brief, solution-focused therapy techniques that have been demonstrated to have reasonably significant impact on issue resolution in less than six clinical hours. Problems requiring longer term interventions or other therapeutic modalities will be referred to a community resource (locally or regionally). Referrals that cost money are the sole responsibility of the employee and not the employer or the EFAP.

In summary, employees are not free to engage any counsellor in the community whom they deem appropriate with the expectation that the EFAP will cover the costs of that counsellor's services.

***What can the employee talk to a counsellor about?***

EFAP programs are designed to help the employee deal with a variety of difficulties that can be handled using a brief therapy approach. If the employee requires longer term, more in-depth therapies, their counsellor can help make a referral to an appropriate resource or practitioner outside the program. Similarly, in-depth formal psychological assessments (which usually involve testing by a registered psychologist), and particular specialized treatment approaches (eg. body work, biofeedback, drama, music or art therapies, etc.) may not be covered by the program. The EFAP counsellor can assist the employee with a referral.

Employees are welcome to discuss stressful or difficult work situations and to explore techniques that can help them to better manage these difficulties. However, vocational and career counselling are not usually available as part of an EFAP.

An employee may find it helpful to talk to a counsellor about difficult relationships in the workplace. Their counsellor can help them to discover helpful ways to deal with difficult people. The EFAP does not, however, directly mediate between the employee and someone else in the workplace.

***How many sessions (hours) can an employee have?***

The EFAP has been designed around a 'case model'. Each employee and his / her eligible family members represent one case per program year. Each year an employee can access the EFAP up to six one-hour counselling visits. There are up to four additional visits available for family members who may wish to access the program on their own. No single family member will be seen more than six times unless there are serious mitigating circumstances.

***What if the employee wants access to other services?***

The EFAP counsellor can provide the employee with a variety of helpful referral possibilities and resources located in their community. Their counsellor will try to match their particular needs with his or her knowledge of the referral resource network. If the employee wants to access services beyond, or in addition to, the services offered by the program, they will be responsible for any expenses incurred.

There are many non-profit or low cost services outside the program that employees can use as a resource. In addition, they may choose to take advantage of their extended health benefits.