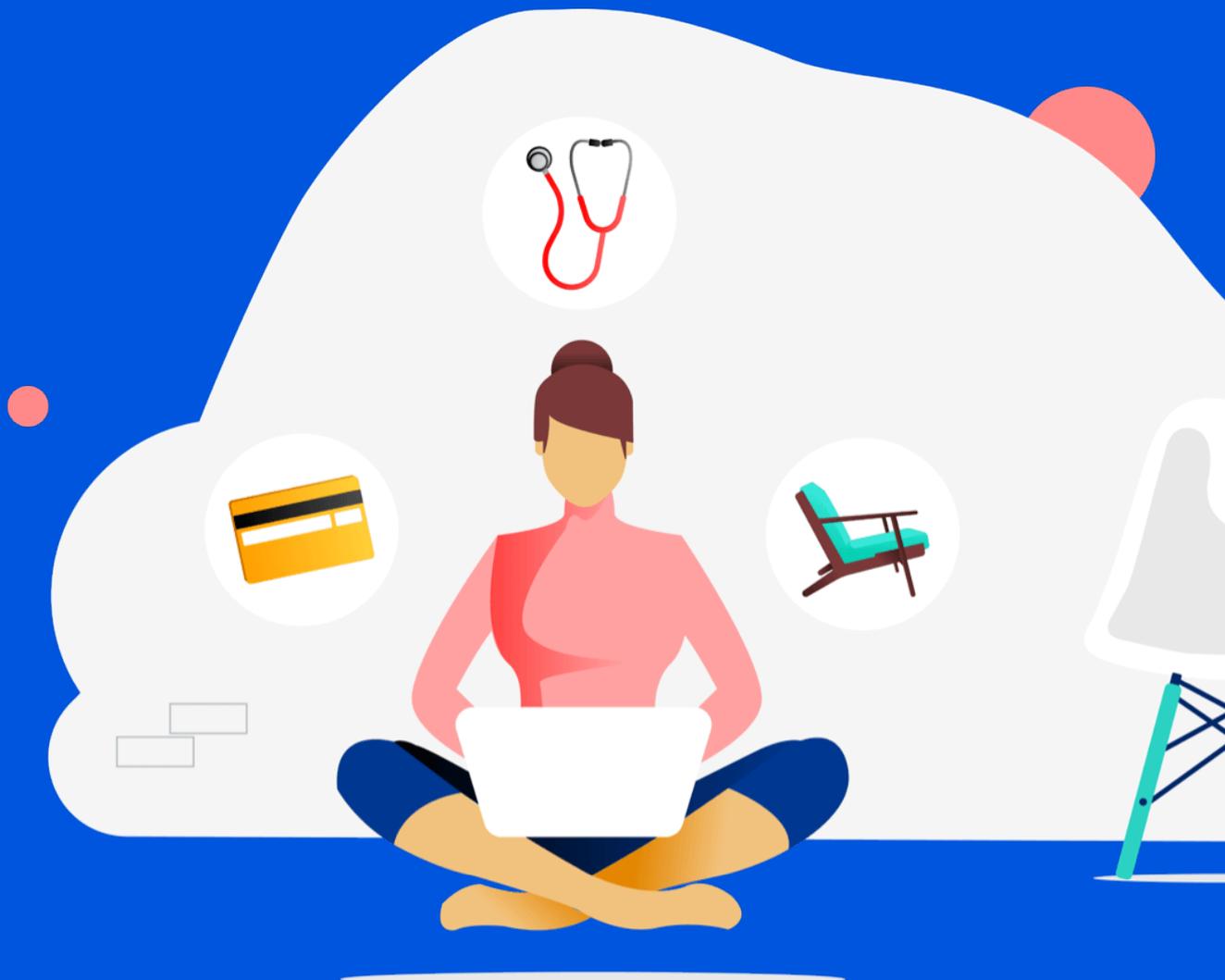


Workplace Well-being: A Summary of the 2018 Workplace Outcomes Suite Annual Report





Workplace Well-being in 2018-2019

Employees who are distressed or struggling with some aspect of their health or well-being spend more than one third of their working time being unproductive. These employees are also off sick for one full day per month, on average.

Workplace Well-being: A Summary of the 2018 Workplace Outcomes Suite Annual Report reveals that employees struggling with mental health or other well-being issues are unable to concentrate on their job, a symptom known as 'presenteeism'. They are at their job but not effective, distracted by anxieties caused by the workplace or by their personal circumstances.

For more than a third of their total scheduled work time (34 per cent) – or about eight total days per month, these employees are operating at significantly reduced productivity. For context, this level of reduced productivity is more than twice as much as the typical "healthy" employee. In addition, these employees are also absent from work for an average of 7.36 hours per month, almost one full working day.

Workplace Well-being: A Summary of the 2018 Workplace Outcomes Suite Annual Report is based on the Workplace Outcomes Suite Report, an annual study of data contributed by multiple employee assistance providers worldwide and over 24,363 employee cases, produced in partnership with the International Employee Assistance Professionals Association (EAPA). The r looks at the utilization and effectiveness of Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) with regards to five specific outcomes: Work Presenteeism; Life Satisfaction; Work Absenteeism; Work Engagement; and Workplace Distress, analyzing the level of each both before and after intervention through EAP.

Why Employee Assistance?

Research from the World Health Organization (WHO) shows that one in five people worldwide are living with mental health issues. Modern workplaces are increasingly challenging and personal lives are rife with isolation and loneliness. Almost a quarter of adults are not physically active enough to prevent illness and one in three people are distracted by their finances at work. In short, the majority of any workforce is suffering from one or more wellness issues at any one time, affecting productivity to a greater or lesser degree and potentially leading to short or long-term absence, high employee turnover and reduced productivity.

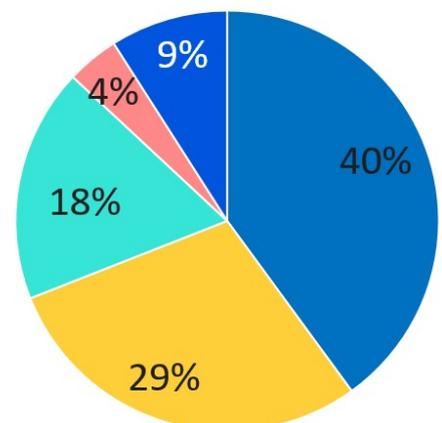
For nearly a century, the go-to response for organizations has been an Employee Assistance Program (EAP), which provides effective short-term resources to address an employee's specific situation. EAP clinicians and counselors provide each participant with individualized care by using evidence-based strategies to help employees achieve positive change in their lives and work.

How it works

During an initial assessment, the EAP clinician assesses the participant's concerns, screens for risky habits and assesses for depression, anxiety, and other mental health issues that may significantly impact well-being, personal relationships and work productivity.

EAP counselors are immediately accessible through live chat, text and email, with confidential and secure virtual counseling sessions available in person and through video, tele-counseling, and online group, providing emotional support to employees who experience issues with anxiety, depression, stress management, bereavement, personal relationship issues, addictive behaviors, anger management, sleep hygiene, and more.

Reason for use of EAP



- Mental Health & Stress
- Marriage & Family
- Occupational / work
- Alcohol & drugs
- Other



Mental health challenges on the rise

The most commonly reported clinical issues behind reduced productivity among employees in the study were related to mental health (i.e., depression, anxiety) or personal stress. Together, these accounted for around 40 per cent of cases. The second biggest challenge was relationship problems of marriage or family life (29 per cent), followed by work and occupational issues (18 per cent), and alcohol misuse and drug problems (four per cent).

Research shows that the average person who engages with the EAP is only operating at 64 per cent productivity at the start of counseling. What's encouraging however, is that about eight out of every 10 people who were recommended for counseling were self-referrals, which shows that troubled employees are actively seeking help and there is a demand for employer-sponsored EAPs.

Referrals from a family or other source stood at seven per cent, with supervisor referrals at five per cent, and a mandatory referral from HR or the employer at only two per cent. Thus, 98 per cent of cases were people voluntarily using the EAP for counseling.

The impact of EAP

The results of the research demonstrate there is a good reason for employers to use an EAP to reduce unproductive time as well as other symptoms affecting employee well-being, which may lead to absenteeism or employee churn further down the line.

When measured before and after EAP-based interventions, the biggest individual improvements on employee well-being were found for Work Presenteeism and Life Satisfaction. But from a business impact perspective, the biggest gains were to be found in reducing the amount of Lost Productive Time (LPT) per month.

Based on an employee with a typical eight hour working day, along with almost one day of missed work per month, a further 54.95 hours are spent being unproductive (based on a 36 per cent loss in productivity applied to the 152.64 hours worked in the past month).

EAP counseling was shown to reduce the hours of missed work by 49 per cent, from 7.36 hours to 3.86 hours per month, gaining back half a day in the workplace. When combined with the positive impact on presenteeism, the difference in the total hours of Lost Productive Time (LPT) per month from before to after counseling changed from 62.31 hours to 45.46 hours – a difference of 16.85 hours.

This amount of hours corresponds to a total of 2.1 full days of productivity restored per month after use of EAP counseling, based on a mix of 21 per cent from absenteeism and 79 per cent from presenteeism.

This is the primary outcome of interest to the ROI question. Assuming a three-month episode of distress and 16.85 hours of restored lost productive time for each month is a total of 50.56 hours per case. However, to be conservative, the study removed 23 per cent of this result to account for improvement that may have occurred anyway if the employee had not used the EAP (based on findings from the study with a matched control group of employees who did not use the EAP). Thus, only 12.97 of the full 16.85 hour effect is attributed to the EAP impact.

Still, over the three month period of distress, changes in the outcomes revealed that almost five days of productive work time were restored per case due to the use of EAP counseling.

This result was worth an estimated \$1,731 USD per case. With typical annual levels of program use and cost, the ROI for EAP counseling was estimated at \$3.37:1.



Findings

Interestingly, the positive impact of short-term counseling on workplace outcomes was found to be consistent across different types of client (age, sex, and country), and clinical (sources of referral into the EAP and type of clinical issue). Finding so few differences across these factors is important as it demonstrates the cross-industry general effectiveness of EAP counseling.

The individual focused outcomes in the study improved more than the outcomes reflecting larger workplace and organizational influences, and this is reflected in the 'SuperScore', which determines the larger potential impact of EAP counseling across the set of five outcomes.

It's worth noting that although EAP use also moved Work Engagement and Workplace Distress outcomes in positive directions, these outcomes both had much smaller effect sizes than the other three WOS measures. This demonstrates that although EAP interventions delivered at the individual level by counselors in private sessions are largely effective, they cannot directly impact the larger workplace and managerial conditions operating at the organizational level that strongly influence Work Engagement and Workplace Distress. These issues must be tackled at an organizational level with more broad reaching well-being initiatives and company culture.

The results revealed that having a "problem" with the different factors measured at the start of EAP counseling ranged from 56 per cent (Presenteeism) to 22 per cent (Workplace Distress). The most defining problem for employees who use counseling was presenteeism at work. After use of the counseling, these problem rates were reduced for all five measured outcomes, supporting the impact of EAPs when used to reduce the risks associated with well-being problems.

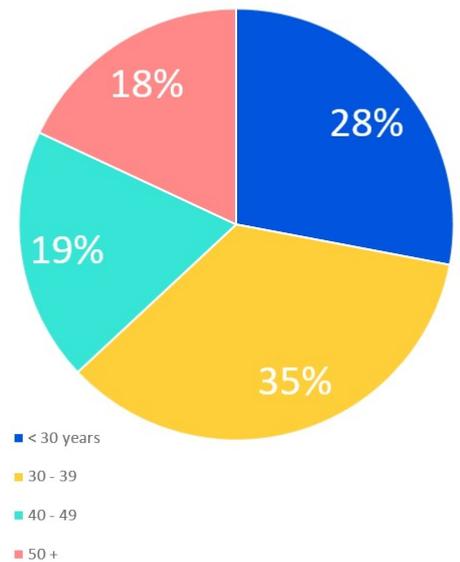
Impact on outcomes measured

After use of EAP-provided counselling, problem rates were reduced for the five outcomes measured in the study.

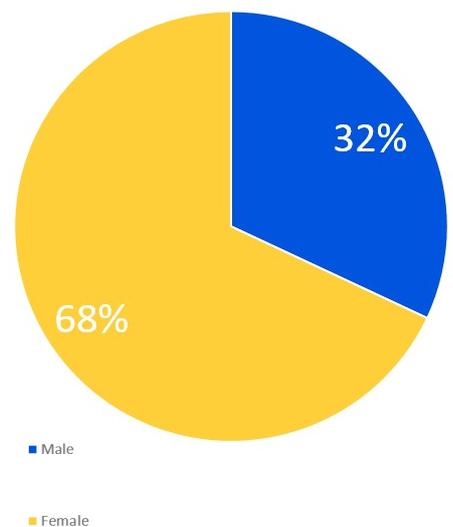
- Having a "problem" with Work Presenteeism was reduced from 56% to 28% of all cases.
- Having a "problem" with Life Satisfaction was reduced from 38% to 17% of all cases.
- Having a "problem" with Work Absenteeism was reduced from 34% to 14% of all cases.
- Having a "problem" with Work Engagement was reduced from 31% to 21% of all cases.
- Having a "problem" with Workplace Distress was reduced from 22% to 13% of all cases.

The combined 'SuperScore' measure had a 16% level of improvement.

Age of EAP client



Sex of EAP client





Beyond EAP

The findings of the study with regards to the impact of EAP are very conservative, as they don't take into account the precursor to an onset of presenteeism or absenteeism. If people are not relating to others at work in the best possible way, they may be causing errors at work and putting more work on others. This may cause disruption in the workplace and may even be a contributing factor to people leaving the organization.

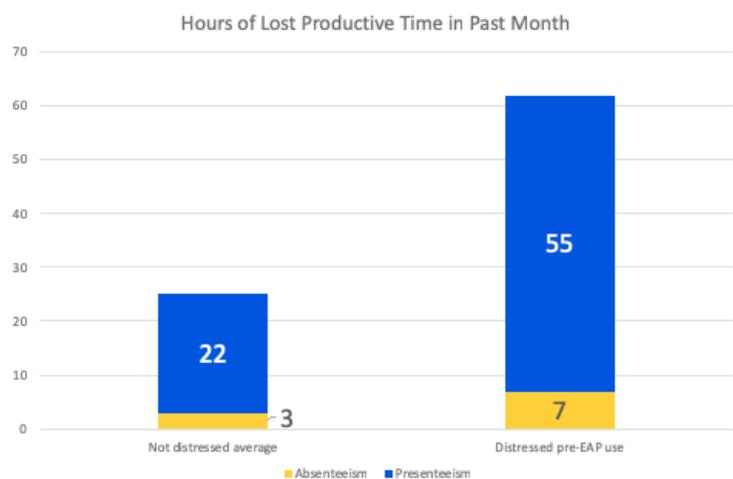
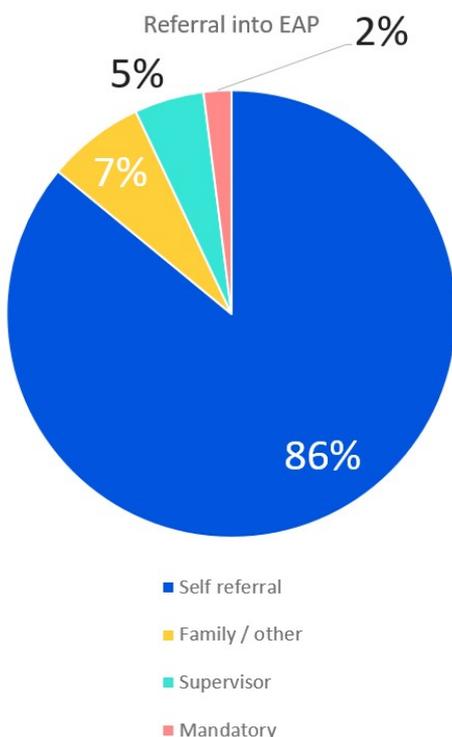
The findings also don't address the fact that while EAP is certainly effective, it's not an appropriate mechanism for everyone. Research by LifeWorks in 2018 found that 63 per cent of new users that engaged with a clinical counselor through 24/7 instant chat would not have reached out through traditional methods such as telephone. This suggests there is a pent up demand for the benefits delivered by an EAP through different delivery mechanisms.

For a well-being initiative to be successful, it needs to drive persistent engagement. That's not just how often the tool is used, but how it's used – whether people are enjoying the experience and seeing outcomes from their interaction. Research by LifeWorks found that tech-driven well-being delivers a best-in-class user experience, with a mobile-first platform able to give employees a set of powerful wellness tools that they can access anytime, anywhere, encouraging them to make small, daily improvements, creating interventions further upstream and in many cases, preventing people from getting to crisis point and reaching out to the EAP.

By supporting 100% of your people 100% of the time you can build a more resilient workforce that's not just proactive about maintaining their mental, physical, financial and social well-being but is also more engaged, loyal and productive.

This forms part of a wider organizational initiative to create a culture where employee assistance services can address people's issues in a preventative, rather than a reactionary way, integrated into the total employee experience, and tied to other HR programs supporting the employee's well-being.

For all the organizations out there that say it's their people that make the difference, they really do, and the health of an organization is highly dependent on the well-being of its people.





Editor's notes and references

The data used in the Workplace Well-being: A Summary of the 2018 Workplace Outcomes Suite Annual Report is taken from the annual report on the Workplace Outcome Suite, which made up of data contributed by multiple employee assistance providers worldwide. The study looks at the utilization and effectiveness of Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) with regards to five specific outcomes: (1) Work Presenteeism (2) Life Satisfaction (3) Work Absenteeism (4) Work Engagement, (5) Workplace Distress, and analyzes the level of each, both before and after intervention through an EAP.

The 2018 Workplace Outcome Suite Report updates Employee Assistance Professionals Association (EAPA) members and other stakeholders in the field of EAP regarding the latest Workplace Outcome Suite data from 24,363 cases. It documents positive results for employee users of employee assistance counseling all over the world. This is the third in a series of annual reports from Chestnut Global Partners (a Morneau Shepell company), which started in 2016.

A total of 28 countries were represented in the Workplace Outcomes Suite study, with 79 per cent from the United States, 15 per cent from China, and six per cent from 26 other countries, including UK. Employers in four different industries were represented: health care (40 per cent), manufacturing (25 per cent), government (23 per cent), and technology (12 per cent).

Why EAPs Collect WOS Data

To better understand the kinds of EAPs who provided WOS data, a dozen providers and large employers are also profiled for how and why they collect WOS data from their counseling cases. These include a mix of vendor and internal delivery models from the United States and four other countries. Knowing how leading EAPs collect WOS data can inform best practices for practical aspects of outcomes for other EAPs. External EAP Vendors – United States included: Cascade Centers, Concern EAP, Empathia, KGA; External EAP Vendors – International included: Benestar (New Zealand), Chestnut Global Partners – China, and Hellas EAP (Greece); Internal EAPs – United States included: Caterpillar Co. (U.S.-based multi-national employer with Hybrid model), Federal Occupational Health (U.S. government with Hybrid model), Life Solutions – University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, and Partners HealthCare System EAP (Boston, MA); Special Projects with WOS included: DuPont Corp. (U.S.-based multi-national employer with Hybrid model of an internal EAP director and staff and external vendors) and Homewood Health (Canada – Depression Care Specialty Clinical Management Program).

On the acquisition of Chestnut Global Partners by Morneau Shepell

The Workplace Outcome Suite (WOS), developed through Chestnut Global Partners, and endorsed by EAPA, is a well-established outcomes measurement tool that continues to grow in EA service provider use, popularity, and available data for reporting. WOS data/reports have been used as the basis for several EAPA conference presentations and will continue to be.

In December 2017, Chestnut was acquired by Morneau Shepell and the WOS, WOS questionnaires/forms, related WOS IP, and all data changed ownership from Chestnut to Morneau Shepell. Post acquisition, Morneau Shepell is continuing the WOS, expanding the scope of WOS-related measurement tools, and is committed to continuing to make WOS and WOS generated reports available to the EA field at no cost; continuing to work closely with EAPA on the promotion of WOS.

Following the acquisition of Chestnut by Morneau Shepell, there have been questions raised as to the collection of WOS past/current/future data, and how Morneau Shepell might use that data when it had been collected from a potential competitor. Both Chestnut and MS anticipated those questions being raised and took steps to ensure the continued independent storage of the WOS generated data (as had already been the case when ownership of WOS was held by Chestnut). This was an important step to take to reassure users of the WOS that their data is not to be used by Morneau Shepell for market intelligence on competitors.

It is essential that the field of Employee Assistance has objective data to report regarding the outcomes of our many efforts in the delivery of EA services.

WOS Users who signed license agreements also have written assurances regarding confidentiality, such that neither party is permitted to usurp, misappropriate, or effect confidential or proprietary information without the prior consent of the other party. Data submitted to Chestnut/Morneau Shepell never identifies an individual employee and specific EA provider or client customer information WOS data will never be shared – only data that is generally aggregated or pooled across all providers will be released in a report form.



LifeWorks

by Morneau Shepell

