



ALLEN
HOSPITAL

The heart of your healthcare

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

EAPWorks

3rd Quarter 2005

What does Allen EAP offer?

Allen Employee Assistance Program (EAP) services are a free benefit provided by your employer to help you and your family deal with life's problems and the stress caused by these problems.

You can talk to an EAP counselor about:

- Job stress
- Depression or anxiety
- Family or marital conflicts
- Alcohol or drug abuse
- Relationship difficulties
- Grief & loss issues
- Gambling concerns
- Parenting issues
- Financial problems



When should I call Allen EAP?

Does a problem occupy a lot of your time? Does it interfere with your normal activities at work or at home? Have symptoms persisted for more than two weeks? If the answer to any of these questions is yes, it's time to get help.



How do I make an appointment with Allen EAP?

To schedule a confidential appointment, call (319) 235-3550 or toll-free at 1-800-303-9996, Monday - Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Identify yourself as part of your company's Employee Assistance Program. We'll schedule an appointment to meet your needs. Evening appointments are available.



What if it's an Emergency?

If a personal crisis occurs when our office is closed, call (319) 235-HELP or toll-free at 1-800-303-9996. An EAP counselor will contact you within one hour of your call to help you stabilize the situation.



Prescription Drug Abuse: The Silent Epidemic

Over 6.3 million Americans aged 12 and older, use prescription drugs for nonmedical purposes. This level of use is second only to marijuana in the number of users. Pain relievers, which include Morphine, Oxycontin, and Demerol, are the most highly abused prescription drugs.

Prescription drug abuse occurs when a person uses a prescription drug outside of the normally accepted standard for its use, i.e. not used for its intended purpose. Prescription drug abuse can have very serious adverse effects, including respiratory depression and possible death.

Key Warning Signs of Prescription Painkiller Abuse:

- **Usage Increase.** Over time, it is common for a person taking prescription medications to build tolerance to the dose and thus need increased amounts for their desired effect.
- **Ongoing Use.** Person makes continued reports of pain despite several prescriptions used, makes excuses to obtain more medication, uses more medication than prescribed, makes continuous reports of lost or stolen prescriptions, reports spilling or losing the prescription bottle, complains about doctors who refuse to either write or rewrite prescriptions.
- **Going to Great Lengths to Obtain Prescriptions.** Person visits multiple doctors to obtain medications, has frequent emergency room visits at different hospitals, alters/changes the prescription, forges or steals medications, buys medications from drug dealers or off the Internet.
- **Change in Personality.** A person's normal behavior may change, including shifts in energy, mood, and concentration.
- **Social Withdrawal.** A person may withdraw from family, friends, and other social interaction.
- **Change in Appearance.** Personal hygiene may diminish. Significant weight loss may occur and glazed eyes may be evident.
- **Desensitized Emotions.** A person may exhibit an attitude of indifference, a lack of emotion, or demonstrate disinterest in things that previously brought them pleasure.
- **Increased Inactivity.** Hobbies and activities no longer provide the enjoyment they used to. People may feel lethargic and tend to stop engaging in athletic activities.
- **Blackouts and Forgetfulness.** The person regularly forgets events that have taken place and appears to be suffering frequent blackouts.
- **Defensiveness.** Persons who abuse medications will attempt to hide their use, become defensive when confronted, rationalize their use, and often deny that it is a problem. — Source: 2004 Carnevale Associates LLC

For more information regarding abuse of prescription pain medications, please call Allen EAP at 319-235-3550.

Eldercare — Being a Caregiver

If you've taken on the responsibility of caring for an elderly loved one, it might help to know that you're not alone. In the United States, over 25 million families are providing direct care for their aging family members, and over 80% of that care is being provided in the home. Approximately 47% of these caregivers are employed outside the home, so they are juggling job responsibilities with their care-giving responsibilities. How can you provide for someone else and care for yourself too? The following tips might offer some help:

Avoid Isolation

One of the biggest problems for the caregiver is the feeling of isolation. Fifty-eight percent of caregivers show classic symptoms of clinical depression — not eating, not sleeping, not able to concentrate, high anxiety. If a relative can provide some care each week, or if you can occasionally pay for a temporary healthcare worker, take the time to pursue outside interests. You need the time to regenerate, and you might feel more capable of coping after an outing to a mall or movie.



Be Assertive

Three-fifths of caregivers spend 40 or more hours each week providing care. It's very easy to get caught up in the caregiver role, then wonder why no one else will help out. Learn how to ask for specific help. Rather than saying, "I wish someone else would take mother to the doctor," say "Mother needs someone to take her to the doctor on Thursday at 1:00. I would appreciate it if you would take her."

Avoid Burnout

Many times you feel obligated to "do it all," but providing eldercare can easily sap your inner resources without your knowing it. The resulting stress can be uncomfortable for everyone. Make it a point to talk regularly with others outside the home and don't hesitate to get counseling if you begin to feel overwhelmed. Often, just one or two minor adjustments in your routine can make the difference.

Investigate Community Supports

— Source: 1997 Parley International

Some communities have services to assist both the elderly and the caregivers. One example of this is Hawkeye Valley Area Agency on Aging that covers a 10-county area. For more information, call 1-800-779-8707 or in the Waterloo area, call 272-2244.

Handling Criticism at Work

Criticism is easier to give than to take — especially if it happens at work. A supervisor's project critique or annual review can be a nerve-wracking experience that can bring on all sorts of emotions. The next time your work is critiqued, consider these tips to lessen the chance that you'll feel injured by the experience and increase the likelihood that you'll use the criticism wisely.

- So long as it's constructive and given by someone in a position to do so, hear out the critique, even if it is spontaneous or uninvited.
- Don't become defensive. This may only escalate the situation. If you feel like you're taking the criticism personally, keep silent.
- If you did something wrong, admit it. Honesty is always the best route. Doing so may also put an end to the criticism.
- If the criticism was given in good faith, accept it, even if you don't agree with it.

— Source: Complete Business Etiquette Handbook

Do you feel that as a parent you are going it alone?

If so, you have company. Fifty-three percent of parents surveyed responded that they don't seek much help or advice in raising their children. But don't be afraid to reach out. Being a parent is one of the toughest jobs in the world. If you had a question about a project at work you'd ask for clarification, wouldn't you? Your children are your most amazing accomplishment and most important responsibility. Why not ask others to help and support you?

Your Employee Assistance Program can also be a resource.
Call 235-3550 or
1-800-303-9996.

