

Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) are internationally defined as **work-based early intervention programs** with the main objective of early identification and/or resolution of problems that may be negatively affecting the performance and wellbeing of employees. These problems may derive from both **workplace or personal issues**, including difficulties surrounding health, relationships, finances, emotional concerns, and a variety of other potential problem.

EAP's have typically been seen as a reactive service, supporting those individuals with identified issues towards resolution. Now, with a renewed focus on workplace wellbeing, EAPs have developed into an organisation partnership model, providing **proactive and preventative support**. Through targeted, individual programs, the EAP can assist resolution of specific issues, as well as improving employee's day to day behaviours that drive positive wellbeing, **assisting organisations to achieve their mental health and wellbeing goals**.

WHAT SERVICES DO EAPS PROVIDE?

EAP services support both workplace and personal wellbeing concerns, including nutrition, legal, financial, sleep and health advice. EAPs also offer a variety of services outside self-referred counselling;

- Critical Incident services
- Training and education
- Conflict Management
- Individual and organisational psychological risk assessment
- Coaching
- Manager referred counselling
- Digital platforms via portals and apps
- Wellbeing services
- Proactive onsite services

WHAT ABOUT CONFIDENTIALITY?

Confidentiality is a central tenet of an EAP service and must be maintained. As such EAPAA has specific guidelines that need to be adhered to around this area;

- An EAP will explain confidentiality to purchasers and individual clients
- An EAP will have a written statement that fully informs clients about their rights regarding the scope and limitations of confidentiality. This statement will be communicated and made available to every client before assistance is offered, including in cases of online/telephone counselling via website or app.
- Every employee of an EAP must personally contract to a confidentiality agreement.
- An EAP will have clear guidelines and procedures if confidentiality will be breached, such as threat to life or others and child protection.
- An EAP will have clear consent to disclose information about a client, for example as part of a management referral.
- An EAP will protect client information from disclosure with appropriate levels of security. Access levels for different staff within an EAP shall be clearly defined.
- All offices from which EAP services are provided shall be located and designed to ensure client privacy
- All provider members should create a secure service to protect user privacy

The **Employee Assistance Professional Association of Australasia** (EAPAA) is a national professional association with international affiliations, which aims to **ensure the highest professional and ethical standards in EAP provision in Australasia.**

EAPAA oversees the provision of the core activities of EAPs:

1. Expert consultation and training in the identification and resolution of job-performance issues related to the aforementioned employee personal concerns;
2. Confidential and timely problem-assessment, diagnosis, treatment or referral to an appropriate community resource;
3. The formation of internal and external linkages between the workplace and community resources not available within the scope of the EAP.

The role and responsibility of EAPAA is to:

- Provide guidance for quality control for EAPs in Australasia
- Define professional and ethical standards in EAP provision
- To provide recommendations for qualifications and issues of accreditation in service provision
- To provide information and advice to organisations with regards to standards of program design and operations
- To promote the concept and implementation of EAPs throughout Australasian organisations
- To support, provide research, development and training within the EAP profession to provide a forum for networking within the EAP community

HOW DO I FIND OUT WHO MY EAP PROVIDER IS?

EAP information is generally available through your intranet or any internal platform you use. You can also find this information often in induction packs or if in doubt can contact your HR or WHS department or even your line manager and they should have the details. Most often workplaces will display this information on posters in shared spaces like kitchens or central employee areas too.

For more information on EAPAA or any general guidelines, you can visit us at <https://eapaa.org.au/site/> or connect with us on <https://www.linkedin.com/company/employee-assistance-professional-association-of-australasia/>