



Supporting a **Mentally Healthy Workplace** with an

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP)

EBOOK



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A Foreword: COVID-19 and Mental Health

Experts agree that the ongoing mental health crisis in Canada is projected to get much worse in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Canadians continue to grapple with social and physical distancing norms, isolation, and other disruptions to daily life. Likewise, the lines between home and work have become blurred as workplaces shift to remote and work-from-home policies.

Increasing anxiety and rising claims for antidepressants and anti-anxiety medications, combined with the impacts poor mental health can have on a workplace, make a compelling case for integrating an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) into an employee benefits program.

As an employer, you are responsible for providing a physically safe working environment for your employees. But what about providing a mentally safe working environment?

Supporting your employees' mental wellbeing can improve productivity, decrease absenteeism, and help with recruiting efforts. One way to show your support is by offering an EAP through your group benefits plan.

Have a question about anything you read in this e-book?

Contact us and we'll be happy to provide the answer.

What is an Employee Assistance Program? (EAP)?

An Employee Assistance Program (EAP), also known as an Employee Assistance Plan provides employees with access to accredited professionals to help work through some of life's challenges, including family difficulties, work-related difficulties, personal problems, addiction or dependency concerns, or eldercare issues.

These best-in-class services are available through a host of mediums to meet the demands of busy lives, including face-to-face counselling, e-counselling, and telephone counselling.



Sources

¹["Making the case for investing in mental health in Canada." Mental Health Commission of Canada \(2013\).](#)

EAP's can be an effective way to help employees manage stress and address personal problems to improve productivity and performance at work.

[Blog: What is an Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\)?](#)



Mental illness indirectly affects all Canadians at some time through a family member, friend, or colleague¹.

Good or Bad: Employee Mental Health has a Cost

You can think of a “good” cost as the cost to supply mental health resources or programs to employees or the premium cost in absenteeism of providing mental health days. It costs money, but it’s for a good reason. **The “bad” costs are a bit more involved – and significantly more costly.**

There is an established connection between poor mental health and costly disability claims.² A study by Arete HR Inc. showed that mentally healthy employees go on disability far less frequently, and there is plenty of evidence showing that poor mental health harms employee engagement, productivity, job satisfaction, and more.³



Sources

² [“The facts: “Mental Health & Disability Claims.” Benefits by Design \(BBD\)](#)

³ [“The Crisis is Real.” Centre for Addiction and Mental Health \(CAMH\)](#)

⁴ [“The Return on Investment for Employee and Family Assistance Programs”, Morneau Shepell \(2013\)](#)

Return on Investment (ROI) of an EAP

If you could turn \$1.00 into \$6.00 or even \$10.00 – wouldn’t you?

With an EAP, you can!

For every \$1.00 spent on an EAP, an organization sees **\$6.00 – \$10.00 return on investment.**⁴

Case Study: The Cost of Poor Mental Health

Let's take a closer look at the potential cost to a business using an example.

1.

Meet Alex

Alex is the Office Administrator at a small consulting firm. He is the main point of contact for clients and is responsible for much of the key day-to-day operations of the firm.

2.

Home Life

Recently, Alex's home life has changed drastically. His aging mother has moved into his home, and he spends much of his free time looking after her needs, causing additional stress, financial strain, and a significant change to his home life. Over time, these changes begin to chip away at his mental health and start to affect his work.

3.

Next Few Weeks

Over the next few weeks, Alex shows increased absenteeism and calls in sick more often. When he is at work, he's often distracted – thinking about what's happening at home and worrying about his mother. His productivity declines, his workload becomes more and more unmanageable, which only increases his overall stress.



4.

Extreme Case

In extreme cases, Alex might become so overwhelmed that he takes a leave of absence or decides to leave his position entirely to care for this mother. Either way, Alex's employer has lost a valuable employee at great cost to their business.

An EAP could provide Alex with the help and support he needs to manage his stress through counselling and shared resources.

What is Covered Under an Employee Assistance Program (EAP)?

Through an EAP, employees have access to trained counsellors to help them navigate some of life's issues. These may include:

- ✓ **Counselling** for all emotional aspects of an individual's personal and professional challenges;
- ✓ **Drug and alcohol rehabilitation counselling,** referral and treatment and relapse prevention;
- ✓ **Work-life and wellness services** related to parenting, childcare, elder care, caregiving,
- ✓ **Management consultations** on difficult employee situations.
- ✓ **Anxiety and Depression** for virtually any major stressors.

Any sessions carried out through the EAP are done so with complete confidentiality. Your employees can trust that nothing from their sessions will be relayed back to you as their employer.

[Blog: How an Employee Assistance Plan \(EAP\) Improves Mental Health](#)



What are the Benefits of an Employee Assistance Program (EAP)?

An EAP offers the following benefits:

✓ Expert assistance in the form of trained professionals

Managers and HR departments can assist employees with many issues, but sometimes, employees are navigating issues they are not qualified to provide advice on. Trained professionals are available to walk employees through any personal issue they are navigating.

✓ Access to trained professionals anytime, anywhere

Most EAP services are available through multiple mediums. Face-to-face counselling, telephone counselling, and e-counselling, allowing employees to choose which service works best for them. In addition, most EAP services offer a crisis line for emergencies.

✓ Improves productivity

By having an EAP, employees can utilize the service to talk confidentially about their problems and receive coping strategies, creating a more satisfied, happy, loyal, and productive working environment. In turn, an EAP can reduce absenteeism and increase employee productivity in the workplace.

✓ Lowers the cost of other benefits on your plan

EAPs can also help reduce the cost of your business's health insurance.⁶ Since EAPs focus on addressing issues and improving an employee's mental health, it means fewer visits to the doctor's office. It also means reduced likelihood of disability claims, since mental health claims account for 70% of total disability costs.⁷

✓ Shows that you care for your employee's mental wellbeing

EAPs are not too expensive¹. For the cost of a coffee per day/per employee, you can show your employees that you care about their mental wellbeing and provide them with real help and support in difficult times.



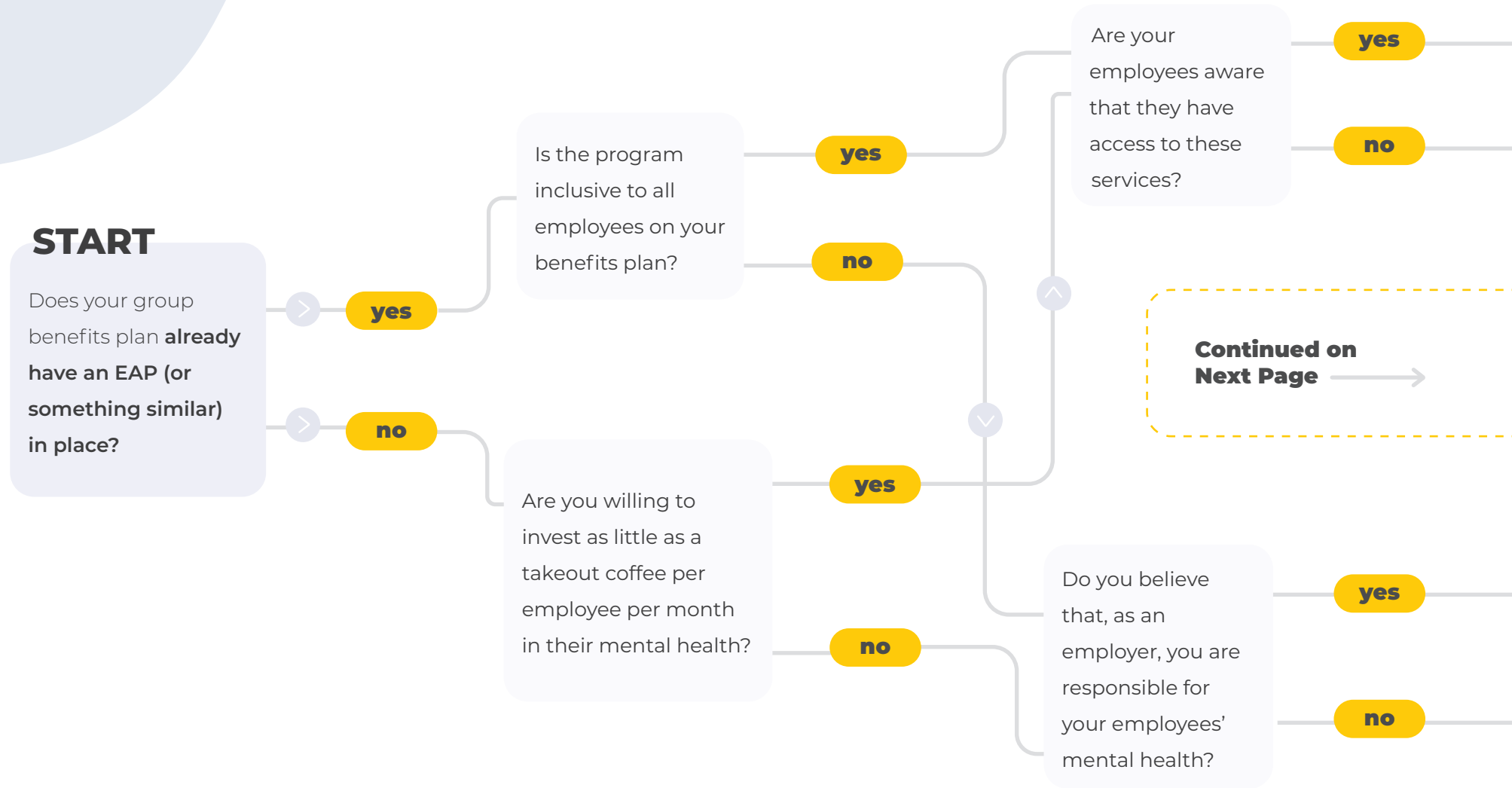
Sources

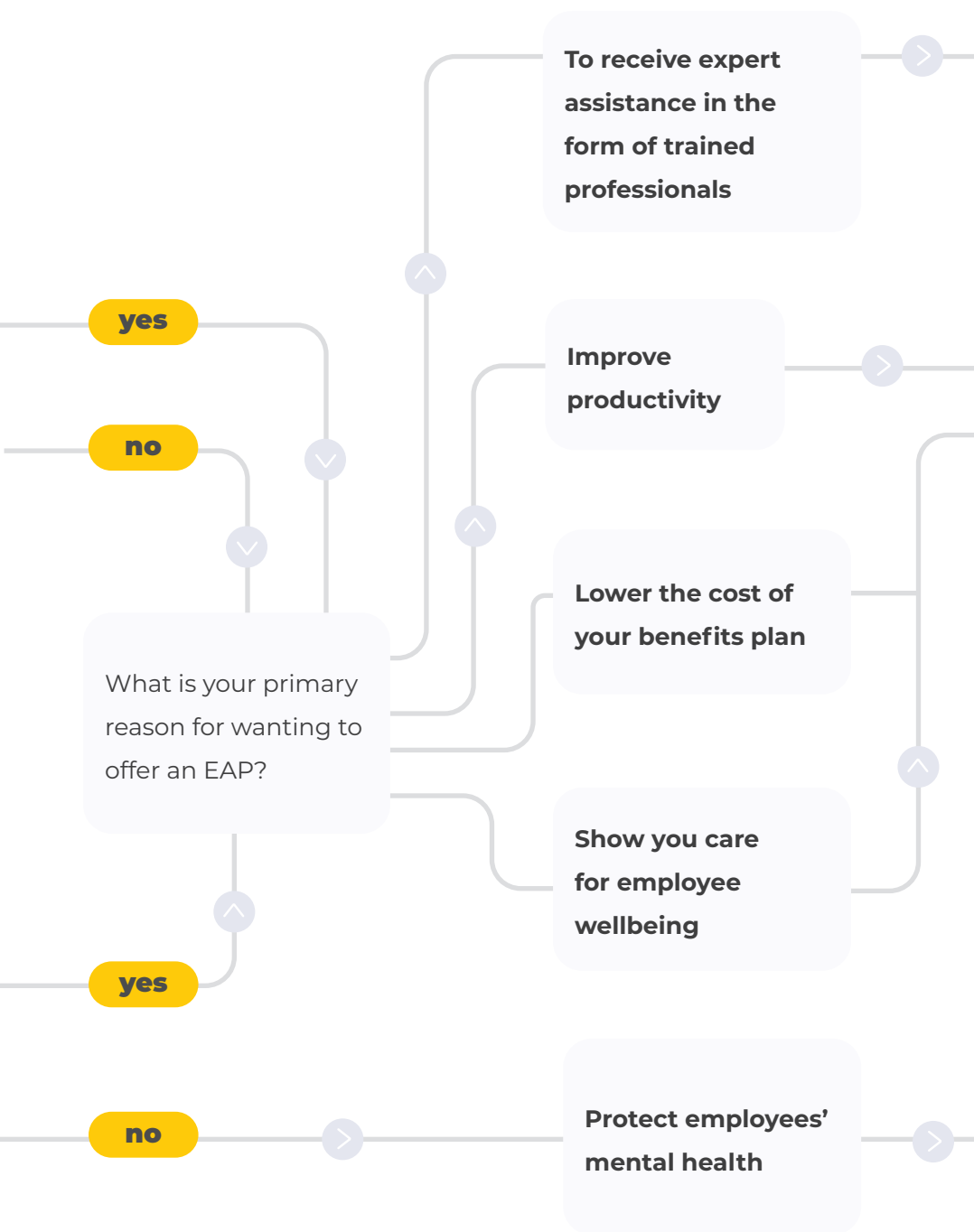
⁶ [Gabrielle Pickard -Whitehead "What is an Employee Assistance Program and Does Your Company Need one? Small Business Trends November 12, 2018](#)

⁷ [Center for Addiction and Mental Health \(CAMH\) "Workplace Mental Health: A Review and Recommendations", January, 2020](#)

Does my Organization need an Employee Assistance Program (EAP)?

Let's find out.





FINISH

An EAP makes sense to me

Whether you're looking to improve productivity, lower the cost of your benefits plan, receive expert assistance, protect employees' mental health, or show your employees you care, an EAP is for you.

EAP's provide employees with a resource to help them through life's ups and downs and manage their stress levels. And with today's rising mental health issues, EAPs are more crucial than ever.

If you already have an EAP in place, congratulations — you're ahead of the game! If not, **take the next step in supporting your employees' mental health by talking to your Advisor.**

Continue to investigate an EAP

You may not feel you're ready for an EAP in your workplace right now, **but we encourage you to continue to explore the merits of an EAP.**

Employees' mental health has a significant impact on their productivity and the quality of their work. When employees are stressed and unhappy, this can negatively impact your business.

EAP's provide employees with a resource to help them through life's ups and downs and manage their stress levels. And with today's rising mental health issues, EAPs are more crucial than ever.

If you're interested in having a conversation about the merits of an EAP, contact your Advisor.

Supporting a **Mentally Healthy Workplace** with an

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Employee Assistance Programs (EAP)'s provide added protection for you and your employees, particularly with rising incidence rates of mental health issues in Canada. Talk to your Group Insurance Advisor about the merits of an EAP to see if it's right for you and your business.

Don't have an Advisor? Contact us.



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