



# The Next Generation of Employee Assistance and Wellness Programs are Here

White Paper

This white paper will discuss the obstacles associated with traditional EAPs and offer a revolutionary solution.



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# Introduction

Employee assistance programs (EAP) are voluntary programs that help employees and their family members obtain professional support in dealing with personal, emotional, family, or health problems.<sup>1</sup>

This program is offered through many employers, although most employees have no idea what this program consists of or that it exists. As stated by the Connecticut state website, "The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is designed to assist people who are facing such complex issues as a marital crisis, drug or alcohol dependency, single parenting, stress, financial uncertainty, or emotional distress."<sup>2</sup> The top three EAP concerns in North America, are marital issues (16.4%), stress (16.2%), and anxiety (14.4%).<sup>3</sup> The lack of utilization of this program is a nationwide phenomenon. Employee assistance programs are currently not being taken advantage of by employees or their families, which is an issue for employers and individuals. The following paper will discuss the obstacles associated with traditional EAPs and offer a revolutionary solution.



**The top three EAP concerns in North America are:**

- Marital Issues (16.4%).
- Stress (16.2%).
- Anxiety (14.4%).

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<sup>1</sup> Employee Assistance Program. CT.gov. Accessed August 05, 2019. [portal.ct.gov/DSS/Affirmative-Action/Employee-Assistance-Program](http://portal.ct.gov/DSS/Affirmative-Action/Employee-Assistance-Program)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> T. Trends Report 17: An Analysis of What Is Occurring in the Fields of Employee Assistance, Organizational Health and Workplace Productivity Industries. Chestnut Global Partner. [chestnutglobalpartners.org/Portals/cgp/Publications/Trends-Report-April2017.pdf](http://chestnutglobalpartners.org/Portals/cgp/Publications/Trends-Report-April2017.pdf)

# The Challenge With EAPs

There is a certain stigma around the idea of asking for help.

As human beings, we feel as though we are an outlier if we need help. Often the only way EAP is promoted is by placing magnets around the workplace, in hopes, one will take that magnet seriously and call. A significant explanation for the lack of utilization is that many of employees do not trust their boss, upper management, or supervisor; this results in employees not confiding in their superiors about how they are struggling. And, most employees are not sure where to turn for help. If much of the employee population does not trust their superiors, then why would they ever have the confidence to call the number on a magnet, food for thought. As stated by a source, "A Harvard Business Review survey reveals 58 percent of people say they trust strangers more than their boss."<sup>4</sup> In the last 30 years, employee stress levels have risen by 20%, and EAP programs are still not being utilized as a resource for assistance. This alarming statistic is why EAPs should be altered to benefit both employees and employers.<sup>5</sup> Stress is a physical, chemical, or emotional factor that causes bodily or mental tension and may be a factor in disease causation.<sup>6</sup> The significant stress factors for many employees are family and work-life stress.

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<sup>4</sup>David Sturt and Todd Nordstrom. 10 Shocking Workplace Stats You Need to Know. Forbes (March 08, 2018). Accessed August 05, 2019. [www.forbes.com/sites/davidsturt/2018/03/08/10-shocking-workplace-stats-you-need-to-know/#70eeac01f3af](http://www.forbes.com/sites/davidsturt/2018/03/08/10-shocking-workplace-stats-you-need-to-know/#70eeac01f3af)

<sup>5</sup>Victor Lipman. Workplace Trend: Stress Is on The Rise. Forbes (January 10, 2019). Accessed August 05, 2019. [www.forbes.com/sites/victorlipman/2019/01/09/workplace-trend-stress-is-on-the-rise/#7a40a9826e1b](http://www.forbes.com/sites/victorlipman/2019/01/09/workplace-trend-stress-is-on-the-rise/#7a40a9826e1b)

<sup>6</sup>Stress. Merriam-Webster. Accessed August 05, 2019. [www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/stress](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/stress)

## Family Stress

Family stress is the disruption in the steady-state of the family system. The disturbance can emerge from the outside world (causes: war, unemployment, etc.), from inside the family (examples: death, divorce, sickness, financial burden), or both simultaneously.<sup>7</sup> Work-life stress is the harmful physical and emotional responses that can happen when there is a conflict between job demands on the employee and the amount of control an employee has over meeting these demands.<sup>8</sup> The typical workplace stressors are the following: fear of unemployment, excessive overtime, management pressures for high performance with no expectation of an increase in pay or a promotion, very little control over work environment and pay, and the fear and distrust of a superior(s). As stated by a source, "35% of employees claimed the number one stressor at work is their boss."<sup>9</sup>

Workplace stress is often caused by family stress; employees bring their personal issues to work with them and bring their work life issues home. It is a destructive cycle that is continuously reoccurring until an anomaly comes along to cause a positive intervention for change. In terms of which gender takes on the most stress, that would be women. Women are significantly more stressed than men; reporting symptoms of irritability, anger, fatigue, and depression.<sup>10</sup> As stated by the American Psychological Association, "Among parents of 8 to 17 year-olds, mothers reported higher levels of stress than fathers. On a scale of 1 to 10 (with 10 being the highest level), 15 percent of moms rated their stress as a 10, compared with only 3 percent of dads. Mothers were also more likely to report lying awake at night, eating unhealthy foods, overeating or skipping a meal because of stress."<sup>11</sup>



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- Women are significantly more stressed than men.
- Mothers reported higher levels of stress than fathers.

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<sup>7</sup>Ashley K. Randall and Guy Bodenmann. Family Stress. Springer Link (January 01, 1970). Accessed August 05, 2019. [link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007/978-1-4419-1005-9\\_17](https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007/978-1-4419-1005-9_17)

<sup>8</sup> Canadian Centre for Occupational Health, "(none)," Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (August 02, 2019). Accessed August 05, 2019. [www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/psychosocial/stress.html](http://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/psychosocial/stress.html)

<sup>9</sup> Victor Lipman. Workplace Trend: Stress Is on The Rise. Forbes (January 10, 2019). Accessed August 05, 2019. [www.forbes.com/sites/victorlipman/2019/01/09/workplace-trend-stress-is-on-the-rise/#7a40a9826e1b](http://www.forbes.com/sites/victorlipman/2019/01/09/workplace-trend-stress-is-on-the-rise/#7a40a9826e1b)

<sup>10</sup> Coping with Stress at Work. American Psychological Association. Accessed August 05, 2019. [www.apa.org/helpcenter/work-stress](http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/work-stress)

<sup>11</sup> Coping with Stress at Work. American Psychological Association. Accessed August 05, 2019. [www.apa.org/helpcenter/work-stress](http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/work-stress)

# Employer Impacts

For employers, the need for an effective and utilized employee assistance program is an urgent need.

The effects of employee stress on the employer include financial burden and its impact on the bottom line, reduced productivity, and negative impact to the company. Every time an employee doesn't show up for work, slacks in their daily duties, and presents with an unsuitable attitude, it has a negative impact on the employer. As stated by a source, "One estimate found the annual cost of unscheduled absenteeism- which can be a sick day, an unplanned personal day, or an unexplained absence- was \$660 per employee, and an estimated \$74 billion is lost every year in reduced work productivity due to alcohol consumption, from absences, reduced output, premature retirement or death, or reduced earning potential."<sup>12</sup>

## HOW ABSENTEEISM AND REDUCED PRODUCTIVITY IMPACTS AN EMPLOYER

**\$660**

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**\$74**

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Every time an employee doesn't show up for work, slacks in their daily duties, and presents with an unsuitable attitude, it has a negative impact on the employer.

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<sup>12</sup> At Work. Drug Use in the Workforce: Substances. Accessed August 05, 2019. [www.nsc.org/work-safety/safety-topics/drugs-at-work/substances](http://www.nsc.org/work-safety/safety-topics/drugs-at-work/substances)



## Mind-Body Connection

Vibrant, happy employees are immensely more productive when compared to those who are unhappy or discontent. As stated by a source, "Happy employees are up to 20% more productive than unhappy employees. When it comes to salespeople, happiness has an even greater impact, raising sales by 37%."<sup>13</sup> Many people are unaware of the impact of the mind-body connection; that mental health intertwines with physical health.

The mind-body connection is explained by the following source, "Through the mind-body health connection, our thoughts and emotions can play a central role in all aspects of our health. Research shows that by taking care of our psychological well-being, we can sometimes prevent medical illness and often speed our recovery when we do get sick."<sup>14</sup> In other words, our physical being responds to our mental state and brain functions; whatever is happening in our head, is affecting our body. As stated by a source, "The mind and body are closely linked, and their relationship can exert a positive influence on health and quality of life. Attitudes, beliefs and emotional states ranging from love and compassion to fear and anger can trigger chain reactions that affect blood chemistry, heart rate and the activity of every cell and organ in the body — from the stomach and digestive tract to the immune system. Emotions can also affect your body's reaction to stresses and strains, which can cause head and backaches and other physical problems."<sup>15</sup>



**"Happy employees are up to 20% more productive than unhappy employees. When it comes to salespeople, happiness has an even greater impact, raising sales by 37%, as stated by a source."**

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<sup>13</sup> PhD Camille Preston. Promoting Employee Happiness Benefits Everyone. Forbes (December 13, 2017). Accessed August 05, 2019. [www.forbes.com/sites/forbescoachescouncil/2017/12/13/promoting-employee-happiness-benefits-everyone/#8b550b4581a1](http://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescoachescouncil/2017/12/13/promoting-employee-happiness-benefits-everyone/#8b550b4581a1)

<sup>14</sup> Mind-Body Health Connection. Mind-Body Health Connection - Michigan Psychological Association. Accessed August 05, 2019. [www.michiganpsychologicalassociation.org/mindbody\\_health\\_connection.php](http://www.michiganpsychologicalassociation.org/mindbody_health_connection.php)

<sup>15</sup> Ibid

# What EAP Does And Does not Provide

**EAP is not addressing the increasing issue of family and work life stress adequately.**

The services and resources that EAP does offer are vital if those in need use them, but they are not. EAPs offer services such as counseling, therapy, childcare, life coaching, stress management, and ways to maintain a healthy lifestyle. These resources are vital to employees and employers as well, if they are utilized. "Similar to the growth of EAPs, workplace health promotion and wellness programs have widely proliferated over the past few decades (Pelletier, 1999) and are considered beneficial approaches to reducing absenteeism, controlling health care costs, improving productivity and retaining workers (Heaney & Goetzel, 1997)."<sup>16</sup> The most significant factor that EAPs are missing is the mind-body connection and the ability to reach those most in need. With all that in mind, employers need a revolutionized program that integrates their EAP and wellness programs.



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<sup>16</sup> Vanessa Azzone et al. Workplace Stress, Organizational Factors and EAP Utilization. Journal of Workplace Behavioral Health (2009). Accessed August 05, 2019. [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3778910](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3778910)



# The Future Is Here

**Employee assistance programs are failing our society's needs, and without a positive effective solution, nothing will change.**

Wellness programs can be effective if well designed. EAP programs can be effective, if utilized. Why have two expensive programs that are providing marginal results at best. WellSpark Health is the new employer solution. With WellSpark, you can combine your wellness and employee assistance into one customized, impactful program. As an employer, why would you want to have two vendors, when you could have one? Combining these programs has the power to improve employee health, reduce employer costs and improve productivity.

The revolutionized solution to EAPs, is WellSpark, which includes all that EAPs have to offer and much more. "WellSpark is a wellness company that unlocks the psycho-social barriers keeping employees from taking care of their physical and mental health. Participants benefit from robust education to improve health literacy, promote early detection of diseases, and provide condition management through coaching, care coordination, social services, and more."<sup>17</sup> Some of the many resources offered include, webinars, life coaching, meditation sessions, stress management, childcare, therapy, counseling(single, marriage, family), wellness checkups, wellness incentives, and more. The services WellSpark offers are available to companies nationwide and are tailored to an employee's needs.

WellSpark is backed by the proven science from Silver Fern, a company that has engineered a new and improved approach to healthcare. Silver Fern uses advanced behavioral diagnostic tools, to identify and unlock barriers to health. The Silver Fern assessment consists of several modules, such as social functioning, poor sleep, physical pain, cognitive function, and more. The responses are analyzed, and specially trained health coaches and clinical staff work with employees to implement positive changes. As stated by a source, "16% of employees have quit jobs because stress became too overwhelming."<sup>18</sup> WellSpark, can help employees improve their mental and physical health creating a revolutionary EAP and a more productive workforce. WellSpark is a wellness program, that replaces your employee assistance program, so one program is in place, not two. WellSpark will not only replace your EAP but assist your employees from start to finish, identify the problem, work through barriers, and provide and implement solutions. Learn how WellSpark can make your employees and your company healthy by visiting [wellsparkhealth.com](http://wellsparkhealth.com).

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<sup>17</sup> WellSpark. LinkedIn. [www.linkedin.com/company/wellspark/](http://www.linkedin.com/company/wellspark/)

<sup>18</sup> Victor Lipman. Workplace Trend: Stress Is on The Rise. Forbes (January 10, 2019). Accessed August 05, 2019. [www.forbes.com/sites/victorlipman/2019/01/09/workplace-trend-stress-is-on-the-rise/#7a40a9826e1b](http://www.forbes.com/sites/victorlipman/2019/01/09/workplace-trend-stress-is-on-the-rise/#7a40a9826e1b)

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WellSpark. LinkedIn. [www.linkedin.com/company/wellspark/](http://www.linkedin.com/company/wellspark/).



# WellSpark Health

WellSpark Health delivers a full suite of well-being products and solutions for businesses, municipalities, and consumers. Participants benefit from robust education to improve health literacy, promote early detection of diseases and provide condition management through coaching, care coordination, social services and more. By identifying social determinants and biopsychosocial barriers preventing proper self-care, WellSpark programs can empower individuals to embrace healthier lifestyles.

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