

5th Annual Report on Workplace Outcome Suite© Supports EAP Counseling's Positive Impact on Employee Work Outcomes

EAPs found to deliver improvements in work presenteeism, hours of missed work, distress over the workplace, employee engagement, life satisfaction.



ARLINGTON, VA, UNITED STATES, April 28,

2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [The Employee Assistance Professionals Association](#) (EAPA) in partnership with [LifeWorks](#), today announced the publication of the 2021 [Workplace Outcome Suite](#) (WOS) Annual Report. The results identified work presenteeism – before and especially during the COVID-19 period – as the number one employee issue, both in terms of its negative

impact on the workforce, and the extent of improvement after counseling, which also translated into the greatest source of cost savings and ROI. During the pandemic, 62% of EAP counseling cases reported not being able to concentrate at work due to a personal problem (called "work presenteeism") in the month before seeking support; but after counseling, this rate was reduced to only 38% of cases.

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This report highlights the value and utility of employee assistance services, and underscores the growing demand for effective EAP counseling in serving today's changing workforce.”

Julie Fabsik-Swartz

The 2021 WOS Report is based on data shared by over 50 different EAP programs and vendors for their users of counseling and other individual EAP services across a wide

range of contexts. Among the over 45,000 cases with baseline profile data, most of the cases were living in the United States (77%), with another 13% from China, 6% from New Zealand, and 4% from 37 other countries. The reasons for seeking counseling from an EAP included: mental health issues (30% of all cases); personal life or stress issues (29%); marital or family relationship issues (19%); work problems or work-related stress (19%); with alcohol and substance use issues accounting for less than 3% of cases. The number of counseling sessions used averaged 3.3 sessions per case over a treatment period of about seven weeks.

“We know that people have been struggling, especially over the past couple of years, and that employers are looking for ways to help their employees feel their best,” said Barb Veder, chief

clinician, LifeWorks. “We have been measuring EAP users’ progress for many years and the data shows a clear cost savings for employers that offer an EAP. The costs associated with not having an EAP – paying for more staff to cover absences, additional long-term therapy and presenteeism for employees who are not able to focus on the task at hand – far outweigh the cost of offering an EAP. LifeWorks believes in measuring the impact of EAPs and will continue challenging the industry through validated, evidence-based methodologies like the Workplace Outcome Suite.”

Primary Findings

These findings are all statistically significant results obtained from comparing metrics at the start of an EAP case and at follow-up about three months after counseling ended for over 39,000 cases with longitudinal data:

-The analyses found significant improvements in all five WOS outcomes for the typical user of EAP counseling. Large size statistical effects were found for both reductions in work presenteeism and increases in overall life satisfaction, followed by a medium size effect for the reduction in hours of missed work, and small size effects for reducing the level of distress over the workplace and increases in employee work engagement. Importantly, all of these improvements in WOS measures were also found to similar extent in different subgroups of EAP users based on employee demographic, clinical use, business context, and COVID-19 pandemic time period factors. These industry-wide independent results provide research evidence for the general effectiveness of brief counseling provided by employee assistance programs.

-The return on investment (ROI) for EAP services was estimated using WOS outcome study averages in the United States. This was done for a typical large employer for the years 2019 and 2020. Most of the financial return (85%) came from changes in the work presenteeism outcome (restored hours of lost hours productivity while employees were at work) rather than reductions in hours of absence. Results for year 2019 – before the pandemic – showed an ROI of \$4.29:1. For year 2020 – during the COVID-19 pandemic – the ROI was \$5.04:1. This difference was largely because the clinical utilization rate was higher during the pandemic, at 9.5 EAP cases per every 100 covered employees than the 7.5 case rate in year 2019.

“This 2021 report clearly highlights the value and utility of employee assistance services, particularly during the ongoing pandemic, which underscores the growing demand for effective counseling provided by EAPs in serving today’s changing workforce” said the CEO of EAPA, Julie Fabsik-Swarts. “While only a fourth of EAPs use a research-validated tool to measure work-related outcomes from counseling, EAPA fully endorses the WOS as a best practice for our members.”

“The business case for EAPs is especially strong when considering the cost of the EAP benefit is only about one percent of how much employers typically spend for their total benefit budget”

said Dr. Mark Attridge, the author of the study. “Despite concerns about the desired overall utilization rate for EAPs, the ROI analysis results show that only about two in every 100 covered employees need to use the EAP for counseling per year to yield enough savings in work productivity and absenteeism outcomes to break even on the cost of the entire EAP program budget.”

The complete 2021 Workplace Outcome Suite Report (109 pages) and an Executive Summary (9 pages) both can be accessed here at no cost: www.eapassn.org/wos

Information on using the WOS is available here: <https://wellbeing.lifeworks.com/resources/wos/>

About the WOS

The Workplace Outcome Suite (WOS), developed through Chestnut Global Partners (a LifeWorks company), is a well-established outcomes measurement tool that continues to grow in popularity among providers of employee assistance. It was created in 2010 as a 25-item scale and later revised in 2014 to a five-item brief version. So far, the WOS has been used in English, Greek, Mandarin, Portuguese, and Spanish languages. It has been featured in over 50 research reports. All WOS-generated data is analyzed independently from LifeWorks and is not used by the company for market intelligence on competitors.

About the Author

The report was written by independent research scholar Mark Attridge, Ph.D., President of Attridge Consulting, Inc. He also was lead author on two previous annual WOS reports.

About LifeWorks

LifeWorks is a world leader in providing digital and in-person solutions that support the total wellbeing of individuals. We deliver a personalized continuum of care that helps our clients improve the lives of their people and by doing so, improve their business.

About EAPA

EAPA is the global leader in the certification, support, development and networking of Employee Assistance (EA) professionals with members in over 40 countries around the globe. EAPA is the global leader of information and support for and about the EA profession. EAPA publishes the Journal of Employee Assistance, EAP NewsBrief, hosts the annual EAPA Institute and EXPO, and offers training and other resources to fulfill its mission: to promote the highest standards of Employee Assistance practice and the continuing development of EA professionals, programs and services. EAPA is headquartered in Arlington, Virginia, USA. For more, visit www.eapassn.org.

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Charles Epstein

BackBone Inc.

+1 516-770-4926

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