

ASSISTANT PROGRAM IN THE WORKPLACE-2026

1. INTRODUCTION

An Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a confidential, employer-funded benefit that helps workers navigate personal or work-related challenges. Its primary role is to support employee mental health and well-being, which in turn reduces absenteeism, lowers turnover, and boosts overall workplace productivity.

It is a voluntary, work-based intervention and employee benefit offered by employers. Designed to address unique socio-economic and workplace stressors, the program helps workers resolve personal or work-related issues that might negatively affect their mental health, well-being, or job performance

By rendering the services without an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) in place, academic authors highlight severe Operational and human capital consequences. Key effects include elevated absenteeism, pervasive presenteeism (reduced output despite being present), higher turnover rates, diminished overall productivity, and increased psychological distress among staff.

In the modern world, stress is a common issue, especially in the workplace where it is widespread (Altindag, 2020; Ozkan & Ozdevecioğlu, 2012; Rath & Kumar, 2022; Sharma et al., 2021). Stress can be described as feelings of anxiety, nervousness or changes in one's mental and physical state that disrupt 'normal' functioning (Makhbul et al., 2015; Mayer & Oosthuizen, 2021; Patil & Shahapure, 2021). Daniel 2019 and Altindag 2020) emphasized that stress is now one of the biggest challenges for mental, physical and organizational health in the workplace.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANT PROGRAM MANUAL-2021

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Stress has become a burning issue, especially for individuals pursuing careers in the accounting field (**NeuroLaunch Editorial Team, 2024; Ozkan & Ozdevecioğlu, 2012**). **Molina-Sanchez et al. 20219** argued that accounting professionals experience high stress levels mainly because of the emotional demands of the consulting aspect of their roles.

This often involves navigating complex interpersonal dynamics, managing client expectations and handling sensitive financial matters, all of which contribute to increased emotional strain and stress. Moreover, the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) has introduced significant changes that require accountants to be adaptable. Failure to adapt to these evolving technological and industry shifts can exacerbate stress levels (**Mayer & Oosthuizen, 2021**).

Smith et al. 2017 found that many who start in the accounting field experience burnout quickly because of the significant amount of stress, while **Kelly and Barrett (2012)** found that stress affects accountants' mental and physical well-being, leading to higher resignation rates.

According to **Atai and Özyaral (2021)**, accounting is a crucial profession in any country, playing a significant role in economic stability. This importance became particularly visible during the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, when accountants were essential for maintaining business operations (**Atai & Özyaral, (2021)**).

Owing to the nature of this profession with the constant demand for accuracy, accounting can be stressful and impact professionals' mental health (**Atai & Özyaral (2021)**). Workplace stress has reached endemic proportions, affecting mental, physical and organizational health. Research indicates that trainee accountants experience higher levels of stress compared to other accounting professionals. Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs) have been developed to assist trainees in managing workplace stress.

2. COMMON SERVICES PROVIDED UNDER AN EAP INCLUDE:

- **Confidential Counselling:** Short-term support for stress, trauma, grief, or depression.
- **Addiction Support:** Resources and guidance for substance abuse.
- **Financial and Legal Advice:** Professional assistance for managing debt or navigating legal concerns.
- **Family Support:** Guidance for relationship conflicts or parenting challenges.

3.EAPS PROVIDE A WIDE ARRAY OF RESOURCES, WHICH ARE TYPICALLY FREE FOR THE EMPLOYEE TO ACCESS:

- **Mental Health Support:** Short-term counseling, stress management, and access to licensed professionals for issues like anxiety or depression.
- **Financial & Legal Guidance:** Consultations for debt management, tax planning, divorce, or estate planning
- **Work-Life Balance:** Resources for childcare, eldercare, and wellness coaching.
- **Substance Abuse Assistance:** Initial assessments and referrals for drug or alcohol rehabilitation.

4. THE FACTORS OF NON-EMPLOYEE ASSISTANT PROGRAMS IN THE COMPANY

4.1 Productivity Decline and Presenteeism

Authors like Makhbul et al. (2015) and later scholars emphasize that unmanaged personal and work-related stress such as burnout, financial anxiety, or relationship conflicts leads to loss of concentration, decreased motivation, and lower-quality work. Employees are physically on the

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clock but disengaged, which significantly impacts the company's bottom line.

4.2 Crippling Absenteeism

Absenteeism in the organisations is a major problem for many South African organisations and it is a financially crippling factor. Unaddressed psychosocial stressors frequently result in frequent unplanned absences. Literature on South African workplaces notes that absenteeism is financially crippling.

When companies lack interventionist mechanisms like an EAP, they suffer from direct losses (e.g., overtime, replacement worker costs) and indirect losses (lost time of supervisors).

Dissatisfaction were the major causes of absenteeism. Secondly, the study found that high job stress and low job satisfaction had a significant influence on abs.

4.3 Increased Employee Turnover

Without accessible counseling and emotional support, chronic stress escalates into mental illness or severe job dissatisfaction. This causes valuable talent to leave the company. High employee turnover drains organizational resources and disrupts service delivery. Stress in organisations is becoming an increasing concern, with its effects proving particularly detrimental in developing nations (**Altindag, 2020; Rajgopal,**).

4.4 Poor Workplace Culture

The absence of an EAP deprives a company of a critical "job resource". **Authors like Xanthopoulou (2007)** and recent studies point out that without this support, employees are less resilient to organizational changes. This frequently breeds workplace conflicts, relational tension, and poor psychological.

4.5 The Hidden Costs of Ignoring Employee Wellbeing in Modern

The biggest hidden costs include reduced productivity, increased absenteeism, higher turnover rates, and rising healthcare expenses. These don't always show up.

4.6 The Effect of Employee Assistance Services on Reductions in Employee

Stress, Well- being. Work life issues. Depression, anxiety, substance use, chronic illness, and other. psychological stressors, both personal and professional.

5. BENEFITS FOR THE ORGANIZATION

Beyond helping individual employees, EAPs serve as a strategic tool for the business:

- **Decreased Absenteeism:** Employees miss fewer work days when they have access to resources that prevent minor personal issues from escalating.
- **Reduced Presenteeism:** EAPs help employees address distractions, allowing them to remain focused and engaged while on the job.
- **Enhanced Work Culture:** By providing robust support, companies foster a safer, healthier workplace and reduce the stigma surrounding mental health

6. MOTTO FOR EAP

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- **e.g.,** It is the responsibilities of the farmer to prepare the soil with all the necessary ingredients for the plantation that he or she is planting. The employer responsibilities to provide the employees with all necessary resources.
- First you must get the soil that is fertile and if it not then adds the fertilization to the soil. Training and providing wellness to the employees is vital.
- Enough water is required for proper plantation Employees must be reimbursement by the correct and necessary allowances .
- The environment must be in line of what is to be planted e.g., if you are plant the Grapes then Cape town is the relevant region for that. The employees must only deal on what is hired for and not given the scope that it is not in line of the qualifications.
- The skilled human resource is vital as it will require the ones who are already understanding the nature of that plantation unlike getting someone whom you still need more time to can Train how to plant in the farm. The Employees must be managed and directorate by the relevant Professionals in the workplace as they understand better unlike visa versa.