

# REDUCING OPIOID ABUSE WITH MORE EAP ENGAGEMENT

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A properly installed EAP program is the “silver bullet” to increase all engagement, reduce abuse of opioids, and reduce absenteeism. You can increase productivity and revenue. It’s your employee’s EAP.

You must engage by showing your employees how they can deal with opioid abuse.

“Seventy-one percent of industry leaders today find less than 50% of their workforce are engaged”. Nearly 50% of employers report being negatively affected by opioid abuse.”

## So how do we solve these problems?

You must work with your EAP provider to properly install your program. You can take EAP utilization of 3% to 30-50% and make it a real defense against haunting, unsolved, unspoken employee issues (possibly opioids and mental illness).

You must be proactive with your EAP program. When employers properly utilize EAP and wellness programs, they improve employee retention by 39%. Employers properly using EAP are 49% less likely to experience low employee innovation for their company, and 56% of employers not offering a properly installed EAP fail to meet budget expectations.

Healthy, engaged employees produce healthy business results. These employees produce more revenue per fulltime employee, more productivity and are less likely to leave employment.

Here are bullet points so your EAP program can get more engagement and you get healthier employees.

- 1) Do the Proper Installation or You Lose!
- 2) Your employees don’t use your EAP because of the fear of the unknown. Or they don’t believe they need it or are already under treatment.
- 3) Employers preaching about services of the EAP provider does not work. The EAP provider and you must interact with employees regarding what will happen when they need help. You must show them how to use the EAP.
  - a) Making that first call is scary. Employees want to know exactly what to expect when they dial the EAP number. Here are some questions employees would like precise answers to before they reach out. You must tell employees or have groups know by demonstration.
    - Who will answer if I call? A live person or a recording?
    - If a live person answers, how will they help me? Will they give me advice on my issue right then? Will they refer me to someone else? If so, will I have to make an in-person appointment? How soon will I be able to talk to someone who can directly help me with my issue?
    - What information will they ask for? Name, social security number, insurance number? Can you tell me one more time exactly where I can find my insurance number?

- Will my call be recorded? If so, who has access to the recording?
  - If my spouse or dependent needs help, can they call the EAP themselves? Or do I need to call for them?
  - What information does the EAP send my employer (no PHI)? Do they report how many people called per year and the conditions they called about?
  - When can I call?
- b) Give them a dry run. You must make a “sample call”, or two or three, to your EAP provider on speaker phone while your employees listen in during a group meeting. This could greatly increase their comfort level.
- c) Get honest feedback. After your EAP has been in place a while, consider asking for anonymous feedback from all employees. If they used the EAP, how was the experience? What could have made it better? Then meet with your EAP provider to talk about what’s working and what’s not. Take the mystery out of your EAP.
- 4) **Here are the insurance take-aways.** Make sure your employer liability coverage attached to your Worker’s Compensation coverage is at the maximum amount you can buy, and you have at least a following umbrella and your EPI in at the maximum limits.
- a) If you don’t listen and have your EAP intervene, small mental illness, drug and health issues will turn into large claims that will consume your health plan.
- b) Your worker’s compensation coverage imperative to “providing a safe workplace”. “A 2017 NSC survey found 7 in 10 employers have prescription abuse and 48% can identify a negative business impact of drugs. One-third of workers have a family member in crisis, and 1 in 10 employers reported an employee overdose. One in five companies reported employees selling medications or were involved in a drug arrest.”
- c) Wrongful death suits involving employee’s drug use and violence are nothing new in the workplace. They can be stopped.

**You can do proactive wellness with EAP. Don’t wait!**

*Sources: HR Daily Advisor 3/13/18 and Aberdeen Group Seminar 05/17 and International Foundation of Employees Benefit Plan Headlines 3/06/18.*

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