



# Frequently Asked Questions

... about your Employee & Family Assistance Program

Your Employee & Family Assistance Program (EFAP) is a confidential, voluntary counselling and referral service available to employees and their immediate family members. The program is designed to help with personal or work-related issues before they become more serious. To take advantage of support in person, by telephone or through online resources, contact your EFAP toll-free, 24 hours a day, seven days a week at:

1 800 387-4765 (English)

1 800 361-5676 (French)

Shepell fgi.com

## **Employee & Family Assistance Program (EFAP)**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

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#### **1. What is an Employee & Family Assistance Program (EFAP), and who is eligible to use it?**

EFAP is a **confidential** counselling and information service that allows people to discuss personal problems and concerns in an understanding and professional environment away from the workplace. The GNWT's EFAP is available to all employees and their immediate family members.

#### **2. What kinds or types of problems or concerns can I bring to this service?**

Many people may feel that their problems may not be suitable for EFAP. Some may feel that their problems are too small or minor to use the service. It is important to realize and remember that using EFAP to address what may be a more minor issue can help keep that issue from developing into something much more significant and potentially unmanageable. Similarly, others may feel that their problems are too large or severe for EFAP. While EFAP cannot address each and every problem, it is often an extremely good place to start as people work towards problem resolution.

The following are some examples of types of problems or concerns that often lead people to seek some information and support from EFAP:

##### **Family**

- Communication problems
- Concerns regarding child rearing
- School concerns
- Single parenting issues
- Caring for aging parents
- Access to child care and elder care consultants

##### **Marital & Relationship**

- Relationship enhancement
- Problem-solving
- Communication breakdown

##### **Personal & Emotional**

- Feeling anxious or upset and not knowing the source of these feelings
- Feeling impatient and frustrated with life challenges
- Goal-setting and decision-making
- Dealing with depression

## **Interpersonal Relating**

- Relationships at work, at home, and in the community
- Development of specific skills such as assertiveness, problem-solving, and anger management

## **Stress (including Job-related)**

- Dealing with diverse life demands
- Learn specific techniques or skills to manage stress more effectively
- Balancing career and family
- Assessment of stress levels, goal setting, and coping strategies to help keep normal stress levels from developing into *distress*.

## **Vocational and Career**

- Teenagers who are finishing high school and are planning for the future
- Professional and career development—it is important to note that counsellors will not intervene in the personnel policies and practices of the company, but rather they will support an individual's efforts to develop, grow, and effectively deal with challenge and change.
- Career transition, family move.

## **Alcohol & Drug Concerns**

- Concerns regarding use (and potential abuse) of alcohol/drugs (including prescription medication)
- Support for individuals who are dealing with a family member who is misusing alcohol or drugs
- In the event an individual requires the support of a substance abuse recovery program, EFAP counselor will assist him or her in selecting the most appropriate type of program. Fees are the responsibility of the individual, however the counsellor can identify publicly supported alternatives.
- One-year follow-up service through Relapse Prevention Program

## **Financial/Legal**

- An individual facing financial or legal problems is often experiencing problems in other areas such as stress, marital and the like. EFAP can support the individual in dealing with these concerns.
- **Legal assessment and information.** Legal issues addressed by EFAP include, but are not limited to:
  - Bankruptcy
  - Separation and divorce
  - Contract problems
  - Motor vehicle
  - Wills and trusts
  - Real estate

- Landlord/tenant

The legal service provides information and consultation only and does not cover legal activities beyond consultation. Access is not allowed for employment, work-related or employer-directed issues.

- **Financial assessment and consultation.** Urgent financial issues addressed include, but are not limited to:
  - Bankruptcy
  - Credit/debt management
  - Disability income management
  - Financial/investment planning

Immediate needs are addressed by a qualified financial advisor, such as a Chartered Accountant (CA), or a Certified General Accountant (CGA).

### 3. **How can employees and their family members be assured of complete confidentiality?**

The entire *Shepell.fgi* organization takes a great deal of care to maintain the **confidentiality** of those who choose to turn to EFAP for support. A number of things are done to maintain this confidentiality:

- No two persons from the GNWT will have back-to-back appointments with the same counsellor, ensuring that they will not accidentally meet each other at the counselling office.
- Identifying telephone messages are never left at home or at work.
- *Shepell.fgi* is paid on an annual fee; there is no direct invoicing for service.
- Counsellors work within a strict code of professional ethics, within the limits of the law.
- Reports made to the GNWT contain only non-identifying information; individuals must provide proper legal consent in order for the GNWT to be informed of their participation in the EFAP.

### 4. **What type of information does GNWT receive about the use of EFAP?**

The only type of information that is provided to the GNWT by *Shepell.fgi* is a summary of the numerical and statistical information associated with program participants. This information is ‘numbers only’, and will in no way identify any individual who has used the service.

*Shepell.fgi* realizes the importance of confidentiality to those who use EFAP; confidentiality is respected and maintained by each and every individual within the *Shepell.fgi* organization.

**5. Does an employee have to make the initial contact for a family member?**

No. In fact, a family member must access the service on their own behalf since appointment requests from a third party are not accepted. EFAP is a voluntary service that is available for those that choose to use it.

**6. How does the hotline work?**

The EFAP hotline is staffed by *Shepell.fgi* professional service coordinators and counsellors 24 hours per day, 365 days per year. The hotline numbers are:

English Service	-	1-800-387-4765
French Service	-	1-800-361-5676

**7. How quickly can an individual have an appointment with an EFAP counselor?**

For most situations, program participants will be offered an appointment with a counsellor within 3 to 5 business days of their call to *Shepell.fgi*. Situations that are more pressing will result in a first appointment time closer to the initial call, with same-day appointments being reserved for the most urgent situations.

**8. What happens during a counselling session?**

The counsellor will work to establish a comfortable environment so that the individual will feel less anxious about sitting in the office with his/her particular problem. Through active listening and questioning, the counsellor will work to understand a person's concerns, explore their hopes and expectations of the counselling process, and help facilitate a process that will allow the person to identify and ultimately resolve these concerns.

As the counselling proceeds, the counsellor will work as a sort of 'coach' to help maintain the focus of each session as work continues on the goals that had been identified at the outset of the counselling relationship. The majority of problems can be addressed within a handful of sessions with an EFAP counselor, and the counsellor will provide feedback and help with a strategy as the person continues to work towards problem resolution.

**9. What are the qualifications of the EFAP counselors?**

*Shepell.fgi*'s EFAP counselors are highly skilled and qualified professionals. They all have a minimum of a master's degree in the counselling discipline (i.e., Social Work, Counselling, Psychology, etc.), and they have several years of experience in a variety of counselling settings, which means they are equipped to deal with a diverse group of people and a wide range of problems.

**10. How many counselling sessions are available to the employee?**

EFAP provides short-term, solution-focused counselling to individuals who choose to access the service. During the counselling process, the counsellor will assess individuals' concerns, and help facilitate a process designed to help work towards problem resolution. Most problems can be addressed within a handful of sessions with a counsellor. There is a maximum of six sessions per issue for each employee and each of their dependants. There is no limit on the number of issues a person can have during the year. The key here is to remember that EFAP provides short-term counselling; if a problem requires a longer-term or more specialized approach than EFAP was designed to deliver, the counsellor will help provide the program participant with a referral to an appropriate resource within the community.

**11. If the individual is referred to another resource, will he or she have contact with the counselor from *Shepell.fgi*?**

Yes. The EFAP counselor will continue to be available as they will help provide follow-up to ensure that the individual's concern has been addressed, and that the referral to the community resource was (and perhaps continues to be) appropriate.

**12. How does *Shepell.fgi* select a resource counsellor to whom they would refer an employee?**

Resources are carefully selected through interview by *Shepell.fgi* counselors. Only those resources that have extensive preparation and experience in the field are selected. The interview is conducted in the offices of the resource counsellors to ensure that a comfortable, professional environment is provided to the employee (or eligible family member).

**13. Who pays for the EFAP?**

There is no charge to the employee for service rendered by *Shepell.fgi*. EFAP fees are paid by the GNWT, and participants in EFAP do not need to pay and then submit for reimbursement. If, however, an EFAP counselor refers an employee to a resource in the community, the responsibility for the fees for those services are the employee's. The counsellor will provide a number of referral options and will take into consideration the employee's ability to pay for this service. In most cases, there are a number of social services available that can provide the necessary assistance for a fee that is based on one's ability to pay and, in some instances, service may be covered by existing GNWT group benefits.

**14. Is participation in the EFAP mandatory if personal problems interfere with work performance?**

No. Participation in EFAP is **always** voluntary. There are no mandatory referrals. It is understood, however, that the employee's manager or supervisor can suggest use of the program should the employee's performance decline or deteriorate.

It should be noted that participation in EFAP does not relieve:

- Supervisor of the responsibility to manage performance; or
- Employee of the responsibility to meet job requirements and expectations.

**15. If I decide to use the EFAP, will my manager or co-workers know about it?**

Not unless you tell them. EFAP counselors will deal only with you, not with GNWT management.

**16. I have more than one personal problem. Will this program deal with all of them?**

If you want to discuss them together, you are free to do so. You can talk over as many problems with your counsellor as you think appropriate.

**17. I'm already seeing a professional counsellor (i.e. psychologist, social worker, psychiatrist) for treatment of emotional problems. Can I use the EAP as well?**

Possibly, depending on the situation. Individuals may wish to review the treatment they are currently receiving, and contact an EFAP to help consider some options. For example, an individual can certainly use EFAP when a completely different problem or concern has arisen. However, an EFAP counselor cannot provide treatment for emotional problems for which you are currently receiving treatment from someone else. Individuals should always tell the EFAP counselor about current or previous medical or psychological treatment.

**18. Will the EAP provide service to minor dependents without parental knowledge?**

Most of the time, minor dependents will access the EFAP with their parents or legal guardians. However, there may be situations where dependent children access services on their own. In most instances, the successful resolution of a minor's problem depends on active support from the parent or legal guardian. The EFAP counselor will encourage the minor to involve the parent or legal guardian, however the right or obligation to inform or involve them depends on the situation within the limits of the law. For further information, please do not hesitate to contact *Shepell.fgi*.

**19. How many counselors does *Shepell.fgi* have?**

*Shepell.fgi* has more than 1,000 counselors in its network of EFAP counselors; they are located in offices all across Canada.

**20. How long is each counseling session?**

A typical counseling session lasts for approximately 50 to 60 minutes.