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Employee Assistance Programs can Improve Mental Health in the Workplace

By Christina A. Worthington

It is not easy for people with a mental health issue to come forward and talk about it, especially in a formal environment like the workplace. Though the stigma is wearing away, conditions like depression and anxiety are still perceived as signs of weakness. Luckily, the University of Illinois offers an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) in its package of benefits to employees. EAPs provide assessment and services for addressing a range of personal problems and concerns that interfere with employees' well-being and work performance. Utilizing the EAP is a good decision because it is not only cost effective but also available to family members of the employee.

Here are some resources available through the State of Illinois Employee Assistance Program.

Counseling. With recent changes to the way we work, educate and live, it's completely normal to experience feelings of apprehension. Licensed professionals are trained to help with common challenges such as stress, anxiety, grief, marital/family relationship concerns, parenting, addictions and more. Counseling sessions are solution-focused; they can help you better understand challenges and determine helpful next steps to move forward.

Coaching. There are times when we can all use a little help, encouragement and insight to keep us moving forward. Coaching is a confidential program designed to help you define goals, keep accountable and achieve your desired end state. Coaches can help you work on solutions for a variety of issues including handling work stress, parenting, weight loss, not getting enough sleep and more.

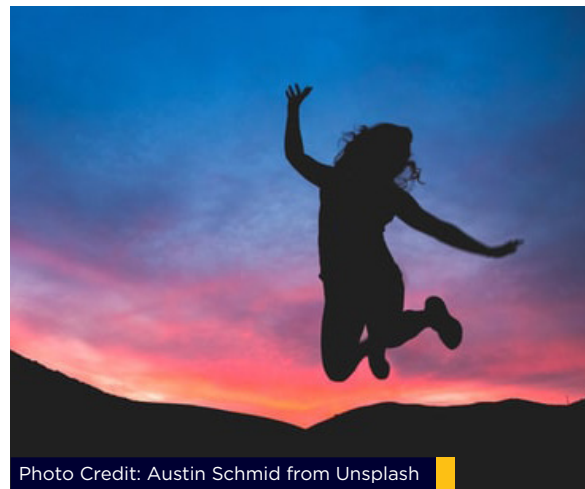


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Self-Care Programs. When it comes to your emotional health, finding the care and support you need can be hard. Online programs help you learn and practice skills so you can feel better on your own time. Programs are confidential and available to complete at your own pace, 24/7/365.

Financial Coaching. Whether you're planning for retirement, repaying student loans, buying a home, figuring out how to manage your debt, or dealing with any kind of financial issue, you can consult with a financial coach or take advantage of the financial resources library.

For more information on how you can access the University of Illinois' Employee Assistance Program, visit the [System Office Human Resources Employee Assistance Programs page](#). ■

Our Positive Experiences during this time of Uncertainty and Change

Being at home and not having to commute has allowed me more time to focus on my physical health. It's been a good thing for my family, too; I didn't realize until the shelter in place happened how much we were in a constant state of rush here, rush there.

- Jacqueline Bilhmer

I'm loving the impromptu hugs and cuddles from my kids and dogs throughout the day. It's been fun leading Zoom workout classes for my friends, too!

- Colleen Crawford

I love having the extra time in the mornings to get my workout in for the day. If the weather is nice, I can go for a walk on my lunch hour.

- Leana Coffey