



UK EAPA Research Summary: the effectiveness of EAP counselling interventions

The UK Employee Assistance Professionals Association commissioned research from CORE-IMS in 2012 to assess the effectiveness of counselling through EAPs to support and promote employee health and wellbeing and to reduce levels of psychological distress in the workplace.

John Mellor-Clark, Elspeth Twigg, Eugene Farrell & Andrew Kinder (2012) *Benchmarking key service quality indicators in UK Employee Assistance Programme Counselling: A CORE System data profile* (Counselling & Psychotherapy Research: Linking research with practice)

The results of this research is summarised in this document, but for more information on the study or to access a full copy of the paper, go to <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14733145.2012.728235#.VGy6GsmLONE>.

The recent economic downturn put significant pressure on employees, leading to increased sickness absence, presenteeism and stress in the workplace. And with mental health problems being the largest single source of disability in the UK at 23% of the burden of disease (Department of Health (2011), the financial impact of employee mental ill health is a strong incentive for organisations to tackle this problem. As a result, organisations are keen to explore and source ways to minimise this and workplace counselling is one of the most popular solutions currently in the marketplace.

The findings from this study indicate the success of EAPs when it comes to engaging with and matching client problems with relevant and appropriate counsellors, as well as offering speedy interventions that minimise the time that employees are required to wait for professional support.

- **Recovery and improvement rates** – 70% of EAP clients are demonstrably shown to recover or improve following their counselling intervention. This level of recovery and improvement is on a par with interventions in primary care settings.
- **Access to therapy services** – 92% of EAP clients were accepted for treatment in just nine days, on average. In a primary care setting, waiting times for treatment average two months (or 64 days).
- **Clinical distress** – 88% of clients presenting to EAPs scored above clinical cut-off level, which means they were similar to NHS out-patients. It demonstrates EAPs are seeing and supporting clinical cases.
- **EAP treatment completion** – 80% of EAP clients were estimated to have completed their counselling intervention.
- **Number of counselling sessions attended** – on average, EAP clients attended four treatment sessions. 95% of clients attended six sessions which compares notably with NHS primary care services where 23% of patients attend four treatments or less.

About the research sample: As part of the study, clean data as collected from 28,476 clients seen by 1786 practitioners associated with 6 EAPs. Clients averaged 39.6 years of age and 14,466 were male. Problems presented included anxiety / stress (76%), depression (48%), relationship problems (42%), low self-esteem (38%), work problems (36%), bereavement / loss (25%), physical problems (13%) and trauma / abuse (10%).