



Healthy Dialogues^{LTD}

Maximising Your Mental Health Offers Workbook



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Introduction

Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs) and mental health offers are vital for ensuring the health and wellbeing of employees, increasing the culture and productivity within teams and organisations.

EAPs are a benefit that organisations can provide for their employees, giving free access to support for health and wellbeing. The support that is available through these differ between programmes but often includes perks such as free counselling, self-help tools, occupational health assessments and gym memberships, etc.

Despite their benefits, uptake in EAPs is low in many organisations. For organisations to reap the full rewards from providing these offers, action may be needed to boost employees' participation. This action could be taken on an individual level, through 1:1 meetings, but also through team or organisation-wide approaches.

The following workbook provides you with information and tools to help you to encourage the uptake of EAPs and mental health offers through contact with individuals as well as across teams and the whole organisation.

Encouraging individuals

The following is an adaptable guide for having conversations about EAPs and mental health offers.

Starting the conversation

1. Hello, my name is... and my role is...
2. I was hoping that we could talk about... Would that be alright with you?
3. What would you like to make sure that we cover?

Continuing the conversation

Throughout the conversation, remain empathetic and try to understand their experience. Some skills that you might use for this include:

- **Open Discovery Questions:** Open questions beginning with ‘what’ and ‘how’. For example:

“How are you feeling?”

“What support would help you?”

“What would you like to do next?”

- **Reflections:** Giving accurate feedback to the speaker about what it is you think they are saying and meaning. For example:

“It sounds like...”

“What I’m hearing is...”

- **Normalising:** Acknowledging that the feeling, process, symptom is normal and other people experience similar experiences. For example:

“It is normal to feel...”

“Many people experience...”

Closing the conversation

To signpost to an EAP or mental health offer whilst still showing the individual that they are safe and respected, you can use the PAPA tool:

- **Permission:** ask permission to share information. *“Would you like to talk about...?”* Or, *“Would it be OK for me to give you some information about...?”*
- **Ask:** the person what they already know about the topic. *“What do you already know about...?”*
- **Provide:** tailored information, signpost or referral based on what you heard. *“Here is some information you may find useful...”*
- **Ask:** what they think about the information you provided or how they might use the information. Ask the person if more information is needed. *“Is there any other information you would find useful?”*

If you feel that the individual needs additional support to help them access the EAP or mental health offer, you could give them the option of having help in contacting them.

When closing the conversation, it can be helpful to give a summary of what you have discussed:

“I’m going give a quick summary of what we have discussed so far... Is that correct?”

“Just to summarise... Have I missed anything?”

You might find it helpful to clarify what the next steps will be, making sure that the individual has agreed to this. Some individuals might find it helpful to have written or printed information that they can take away with them.

Raising awareness

The EAST framework (Behavioural Insights Team, 2024) provides a guide to simplifying strategies to change people's behaviour. It argues that behaviour change interventions should aim to be:

- **Easy:** we like to take the path of least resistance. We can use default options (e.g., opt out systems), reduce or increase difficulty in accessing EAPs and simplify messages. For example, helping employees to find clear information for how to engage with EAPs is likely to be more effective than expecting them to do it themselves.
- **Attractive:** interventions are more effective when they are something we enjoy. We could try to attract attention using bold colours or messaging, provide incentives (or highlight the benefits of using EAPs) to make engaging with EAPs more attractive.
- **Social:** we like to do things that most people do, or that most people consider to be socially acceptable. For example, sharing how many people in the organisation have used the EAP or providing case studies framing how socially acceptable it is to engage with EAPs. Also, behaviour can often spread through social networks, so if one person does it, others around them may be more likely to as well.
- **Timely:** timing is important in encouraging changes in people's behaviour. Think about raising awareness at the time of day and/or week that is likely to have the biggest impact. For example, some organisations put posters for their EAPs in the toilet cubicles, to be read when employees are unlikely to be distracted by other things. We can also think about any particular life events or transitions that could encourage engagement. For example, coming back from maternity leave or getting a new promotion. It can be helpful to encourage employees to create clear plans with start and end dates for when they are going to engage with EAPs.

Activity

Use the table below to plan how you are going to encourage use of EAPs in line with the EAST framework.

How are you going to raise awareness of EAPs? E.g., posters, presenting in meetings, through emails	
How is it easy?	How is it attractive?
How is it social?	How is it timely?

You might need to put together some materials to help you promote an EAP. This could include:

- Posters
- Leaflets
- Slide deck
- Webpages

It can be helpful to get feedback from others on your materials, being willing to make revisions as needed.

Activity

Use the table below to create a list of the materials you need to develop and how they will be used. There is no correct number of materials that you need, it will depend on what you plan to do.

Material	How will you use this material?

Conclusion

This workbook has been designed to help you plan how you will encourage employees in your team and/or organisation to participate in EAPs and mental health offers. You may need to come back to this workbook and revise your plan over time, making changes in response to feedback or changing contexts.