



AVANTE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Employee Assistance Program vs. Mental Health Plan Carve-out

Overview:

EAP (Employee Assistance Program) benefits differ from the traditional Mental Health Benefits in many ways but can work in tandem to provide the most effective mental health treatment. To begin to understand how the EAP and mental health benefit work together effectively, it is important to first understand the differences:

- EAP is for problem solving, not therapy. It is a benefit designed to assist an employee in identifying how to most effectively deal with an recent problem or stressor.
- EAP is extremely time limited, resolved in 3 visits or less. EAP's aim is to resolve a crisis within a matter of 4 to 6 weeks. During that time the intervention is specifically focused on diffusing the situation by utilizing problem-solving skills, resource referral, practical advice, and limited provision of emotional support
- Using the EAP does not necessarily mean that the underlying problem will be resolved. It is only intended to diffuse the situation, and the client is expected to then use the resources identified and/or the problem solving skill developed to independently resolve the underlying stressor after completing the EAP sessions. This is where the EAP and integrated mental health benefit can be combined most effectively, transitioning patients from problem-solving to longer-term therapy for issues of an enduring nature.
- Mental Health benefits are intended to provide psychotherapy over a longer period of time. The goal of treatment is to address persistent problems compared to the immediate problem-solving focus of EAP programs. Typically patients in psychotherapy will be seen for at least six visits, but are often seen for longer periods of time.
- Mental Health treatment is appropriate for long-lasting or intense stressors, for ongoing emotional conditions/mental disorders, and for evaluation and treatment with psychotropic medications. Additionally, serious traumatic stressors (victim of violent crime, major motor vehicle accident, etc...) are more appropriately suited to Mental Health treatment (as opposed to EAP intervention) due to the high risk of prolonged psychological effects of trauma.

EXAMPLES OF HOW TO CHOOSE BETWEEN YOUR EAP (EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM) AND MENTAL HEALTH BENEFIT

DEPRESSED MOOD, SADNESS

EAP Referral

- Recently experienced a single loss (such as death of parent, spouse, end of relationship, etc...) and grief has lasted for less than six months
- No past history of taking medication for depression

Mental Health Referral

- Experienced multiple losses (such as death of parent, spouse, end of relationship, etc...), and grief has lasted for more than six months
- Past history of significant depression (has required mental health treatment and/or medication)

ANXIETY/NERVOUSNESS

EAP Referral

- Currently experiencing a stressful situation (i.e. financial debt, marital conflict, change in job responsibilities...) that happened before the feelings of anxiety began.
- Mild to moderate symptoms, which have been present less than six months.
- Absence of major traumatic stressor (i.e. violent crime victim, major motor vehicle accident, sexual assault, etc...)

Mental Health Referral

- Ongoing stressors or multiple stressors (i.e. financial debt, marital conflict, change in job responsibilities...) or inability to identify the stressor.
- Feelings or symptoms of anxiety are severe and/or have been present for more than six months.
- History of major traumatic stressor (i.e. violent crime victim, major motor vehicle accident, sexual assault, etc...) associated with current symptoms

ALCOHOL/SUBSTANCE USE

EAP Referral

- Recently began either using an illicit substance or having problem alcohol consumption.
- Acknowledges problem and is motivated for treatment.

Mental Health Referral

- Ongoing illegal substance use or problem alcohol consumption.
- Questionable or weak motivation for treatment.
- Presence of other medical or mental health problems.