

AT SOME POINT *Everyone* NEEDS A HELPING HAND

By Jara Enger | Account Executive | The Village Business Institute

When we think of an Employee Assistance Program, we often think of services that other people might need. We might even be comfortable encouraging these other people that we care about to call The Village EAP at 1-800-627-8220 for help. Perhaps they seem to be nearing “burnout,” have recently experienced a medical issue, are dealing with a life change, or have experienced some type of loss (financial, emotional, or the loss of a loved one). It’s often easy to suggest to others that they seek help, instead of prioritizing self-care for ourselves.

I WAS THAT PERSON WHO NEEDED HELP. YOU MIGHT BE, TOO.

I joined The Village EAP because I wanted to remove the stigma around seeking help during a difficult time. When I started, I decided that I was no longer going to keep my own struggles a secret. If I want to encourage others to get help for themselves, then I need to be willing to share that I’ve gotten help for myself.

When I host a Village EAP employee orientation session, I share a bit of my story: I’ve struggled with

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COUNSELOR COLUMN

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Q: How bad do things need to be for me to seek help?

A: Let’s face it, life tends to throw us curve balls every once in a while, and things can get complicated and challenging very quickly. Most of the time, with the help of a good support network and good self-care, we can move through the challenges on our own. However, regardless of how resilient and supported we are, most people can benefit from therapy at some point in their lives.

So, how do we know when to reach out?

First and foremost, **you don’t have to wait until things become severe to reach out for help.** Let’s look at this another way: When do you think it’s best to go to the dentist? When you have

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WHAT IS THE VILLAGE EAP?

Your Village Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a benefit that your employer has invested in to provide you and your household members (not just dependents!) **free access to strictly confidential wellness services.** These services offer help with a variety of concerns:

- Relationships, emotional health or workplace
- Financial
- Chemical dependency
- Legal (family/civil law)
- Nutritional
- Educational classes around wellness
- Supervisor resources
- 24/7 crisis counseling

Because YOU matter. And we – The Village EAP and your employer – don't want you to have to go it alone.

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anxiety and depression my entire life. I couldn't identify that as a little girl, but, looking back, signs of anxiety were prevalent. I would hide behind my mom if someone talked to me and once ran out of a gas station (with candy still in my hand) when a clerk tried talking to me. My mom recently shared with me that I would even tremble when people talked to me.

In my early 30s, I worked as a marketing coordinator. I was meeting deadlines, exercising regularly, eating healthy, connecting with supportive family and friends. From an outside perspective, everything probably looked fine. The inside was a different story. I was struggling – big time. I felt like I could suffer from a heart attack every moment of every day. My chest was heavy. My breathing was short (yet my blood pressure and physical health were great). I thought, "I can't do this any longer." I finally decided to get myself some help. Counseling sessions taught me how to process my emotions and anxiety.

Several years later, a day at the trampoline park with my daughter ended with me rupturing my ACL.

I hobbled into my first day of work at The Village on crutches, with surgery soon to follow. Later that year, a family member was re-diagnosed with breast cancer, and we needed to help them move. As I visited with clients and encouraged employees (just like you!) to use their EAP, I realized that I could benefit from processing through some of the guilt and anxiety that I was feeling from the recent events. **I called my EAP** and saw a counselor several times. I'm so grateful that I could benefit from the help that someone "outside my circle" offered me during a hard time in my life.

At The Village Business Institute, we understand how the stressors in life can affect our ability to be the healthiest that we can be, and we know how to help people manage these stressors. Whether you're ready to schedule an appointment or just have some questions about your Village EAP benefits, **call 1-800-627-8220**. Identify yourself as a member of The Village EAP. **It's that simple!**

For more information, visit www.VillageEAP.com and enter username VillageEAP.

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a minor toothache or when you've waited so long you have a constant throbbing pain that gets in the way of your functioning? When is it best to take your car to the mechanic? When you notice a little issue, or when the car is broken down on the side of the road? The myth that we "should" be able to deal with everything life throws at us on our own is simply that, a myth! We have come to accept that there are times in life when, despite our best efforts, we need a dentist, a doctor, or a mechanic. We also know that it's best to reach out sooner rather than later once we've noticed an issue. It's the same for counseling.

To explore this a little more, here are some common reasons for seeking counseling:

- Noticing that you just don't feel like yourself anymore. This could include mood issues, sleep disturbances, social withdrawal, or lack of interest in things that used to give you joy.
- Increased stress or symptoms of anxiety
- Grief/loss
- Symptoms of depression
- Relationship issues
- Major life transitions
- Trauma
- Work-related difficulties such as issues with coworkers, not feeling as engaged or satisfied at work as you used to, or experiencing increased stress

Also keep in mind, there doesn't have to be a specific reason to schedule an appointment with a counselor. Just as people schedule wellness checks with their doctor, or a tune-up for their car, many people benefit from having a safe, compassionate, confidential place to simply process their thoughts and feelings, and gain perspective and support.

If you are wondering if counseling could benefit you, give us a call at 1-800-627-8220.



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