

## Assessing your Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

The Australian Government's 2020 Commission into Mental Health highlighted the widespread use of EAPs as a wellness promotion strategy by employers. However, they also noted that there are no universal standards for Australian EAPs.

This checklist has been designed to help you ensure that your EAP is qualified, experienced and meeting the needs of your organisation. This will help you ensure that the implementation of an EAP is a valuable tool for supporting employee wellness and productivity rather than a box ticking exercise. Where you tick No (X) consider how you might address this using the Possible actions box as a guide and then add your own.

Assessment	✓	X	Possible actions
<input type="checkbox"/> Your EAP provider is available when your employees need them, especially in urgent or emergency situations			If your EAP is only on-site a few days a week, ensure that there is a phone service available.
<input type="checkbox"/> Your EAP has a phone services that is available for employees 24 hours a day, 7 days a week			This is a non-negotiable. Services need to be monitored by experienced staff. If your EAP cannot provide this service or sends employees to a Suicide Prevention line after hours, they are not providing the service you are paying them for.
<input type="checkbox"/> There is open communication and promotion of the EAP in the organisation			Reminders about your EAP should be easily accessible e.g on posters, at pre-starts, in induction, on a computer share space or intranet.
<input type="checkbox"/> It is easy for employees to confidentially access these services			Having your EAP in a glass fronted office in the middle of a busy head office may not be conducive to encouraging staff to take up these services until there are high levels of trust and transparency. Assess whether or not you are providing the best possible confidentiality at all levels.
<input type="checkbox"/> Senior leaders support the use of EAP using things like personal stories where appropriate to help reduce the stigma that prevents employees engaging with EAP providers			There is nothing that reduces stigma more than having senior leaders endorse or support different wellbeing activities and the use of EAP is certainly one of those. All of us have struggled at times in our lives and having a senior leader show vulnerability by talking about it can be particularly valuable for all staff.
<input type="checkbox"/> There is a strong partnership between the organisation and the EAP provider to ensure that the program is effective			Your EAP provider needs to work in partnership with representatives of your organisation to ensure that they remain up-to-date with organisation change, project life cycles, high-risk activities and the challenges experienced by market forces. Schedule a regular partnership meeting.
<input type="checkbox"/> There is a regular review process based on reports and evaluative data to ensure that the services are accessed, valued and valuable			Have an agreed evaluation process with your EAP provider that reports on attendance at and access to services as a minimum. A continuous improvement lens needs to be applied to all services.