

Keeping In Touch

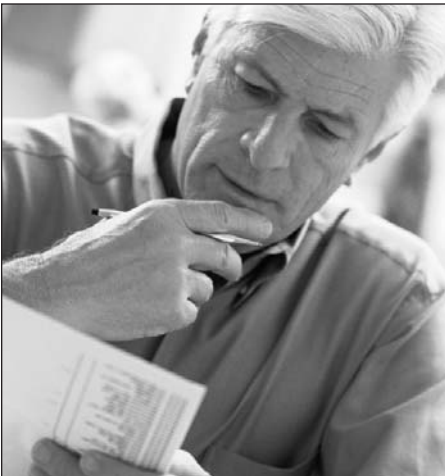
April 2005

The Village Employee Assistance Program

It's Easy as 1, 2, 3!

1. Make the Call

When you decide you would like to see a counselor using The Village EAP, or you simply would like more information about services available, call us at 1-800-627-8220. Calling The Village EAP gives you one-point access to appointments wherever you are located, after-hours crisis counselors, and management consultation for supervisors.



2. Schedule an Appointment

When you call The Village EAP during regular business hours, an operator will answer your call. After you identify yourself as a member of The Village EAP, the operator will direct you to an EAP staff person. This person will gather the information necessary to schedule an appointment. In some cases, we will be able to schedule your appointment immediately. In other cases, we will end the call and contact appropriate providers to find an available appointment that best meets your needs. We will then call you back with the date, time and location of your session.

3. Visit with Counselor

Please get to your first appointment 10-15 minutes early to fill out some paperwork. When you've completed the paperwork you'll meet with a counselor. If you decide you want to continue, you can schedule appointments directly with your counselor as long as you have available benefits and have seen them, through The Village EAP, in the last 90 days.

"Smart, successful people rarely hesitate to go to the experts. We depend on teachers to learn, on doctors for medical treatment, on specially-trained professionals in any field we are trying to master. Why shouldn't we depend on a counselor for emotional support and help in sorting out our feelings?"

-Abbey Press, CareNotes

After Business Hours

Our regular office hours are 8 A.M.–9 P.M., Central Standard Time (CST), Monday, Tuesday and Thursday and 8 A.M.–5 P.M. CST Wednesday and Friday. After these hours, an automated system answers calls to The Village EAP. You can leave a message and we'll return your call the next business day. If you have an urgent need to speak to a counselor, call the same number, 1-800-627-8220, and stay on the line. The system will automatically connect you with a counseling professional. These counselors are specially trained to address the critical needs that sometimes occur after the regular workday.

"Keeping in Touch" is a monthly publication provided to employees covered by The Village Employee Assistance Program (EAP) through their employer's benefit package. If you have questions about your EAP benefit, or if you would like to access services, call

1-800-627-8220

TTY ACCESS for the deaf and hard of hearing, call toll free 1-888-510-7433



Back issues of "Keeping in Touch" are online at www.VillageEAP.com. You no longer need a password to access the newsletters.



Gary Wolsky

*President,
The Village
Family Service
Center*

Question: *I've decided to come in and talk about some things that are bothering me. Who else will know about my problems? How confidential is the counseling, really?*

Gary Wolsky: When you see an EAP counselor, our policy is that Village employees will not discuss any information (including identity) about our clients, with any non-Village staff, unless we have your written authorization. It is in our best interest to abide by the highest possible standards. Our success hinges on your confidence

that The Village respects individual privacy and adheres to the highest possible standards of confidentiality.

In addition to our own internal policies, your EAP counselor is bound by ethical and legal standards set by the professional organizations they belong to, and their licensing bodies. Whether they are in private practice, group practice or at a medical center, they are obligated to provide the same level of confidentiality as we do at The Village.

The only information we share with your employer is "utilization reports" showing total numbers of people seeking services through the EAP benefit. Those reports do not indicate who is seeking services — all the data is grouped together as a total for all employees.

The following are the only circumstances under which we will share any information you discuss with your EAP counselor.

- If you authorize us to verify that we have seen you or are working with you, we can arrange to pass that information on to whomever you designate. You will have to sign a release of information before we will communicate the information.
- Counselors and health care professionals are obligated, by state and federal law, to break confidentiality if there is a clear threat of harm to you or someone else, if we become aware of child abuse or neglect, or if we have to comply with a court order.

That's it. Under no other circumstances will we provide information about you to anyone else. Your counseling sessions are truly a safe place for you to talk and work toward solutions for your personal problems.

Life Doesn't Come With an Instruction Book

In our society we tend to believe that we should just know how to create and maintain healthy relationships — we should just know how to raise children, and when our life is out of control, we should just know it and ask for help. This is a myth. None of us instinctively know how to build relationships or raise children, but we can learn.

What is counseling? Counseling can be a very wise and courageous way of learning these skills, and a way of handling our problems. Asking for help is a sign of strength, not weakness. A counseling professional can help us discover our strengths and skills, and help identify behaviors, thoughts and feelings that can change in order to reach our goals.

Will it hurt? Anytime we do a self-examination or commit to major changes, we experience pain. At times we may wonder if it is worth it. Stay committed and work through the pain. It will be worth it.

What do I need to start? Counseling is a process and requires several pieces to be successful. If you decide to see a counselor:

- Keep an open mind.
- Make a commitment to take a look inside yourself and try new skills.
- Be willing to step into the other person's shoes if you are seeing a counselor for relationship issues.
- Be willing to maintain boundaries. A counselor can help figure out who owns each part of the problem and how much of it you are responsible for.

Counseling can help us learn who we are and figure out who we want to be in life. It is a process and if we work hard at the process, it will work for us.

Technology and Confidentiality

If you ever reach voice mail during business hours and do not want to leave a message, you can push "0" to return to our operator. Any crisis, message or concern can be redirected by the operator. If you are comfortable leaving a message, please do so and we'll get back to you. You may not be aware we are trying to reach you because we will not leave a message on an answering machine or voice mail unless you have told us it is okay to do so. We also have a block on our phone so The Village will not come up on Caller I.D. Confidentiality is the key to all the work we do here at The Village.

The Village EAP ...

- Is strictly confidential. Unless you authorize us to, or to comply with the law, we won't tell anyone what is discussed in the counseling session or release your name. (See counselor column above.)
- Offers a wide variety of counseling services and locations. Through Village counselors and affiliate providers, services are available across the county. Unlike many other employee assistance programs, The Village includes financial counseling as a part of its benefit.
- Is easy to use. Call 1-800-627-8220 to schedule an appointment at any location. Just identify yourself as a member of The Village EAP and give the name of your employer.

If you have questions about The Village EAP, don't hesitate to call. We are happy to answer your questions or to set up an appointment for you with a counselor. Call The Village EAP at 1-800-627-8220.