

1. Introduction

Altaira recognises that an individual’s effectiveness at home or work can be affected by challenges and problems in their personal life and / or work environment and is committed to assisting employees in dealing with these issues.

In supporting this commitment, an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) has been established. The EAP offers professional problem assessment and short-term counselling services (including a 24 hour telephone counselling service) to provide assistance to individuals encountering personal or work related difficulties, such as:

- Marital / partnership problems
- Family issues
- Other interpersonal relationships
- Grief and loss
- Emotional stress and trauma
- Alcohol and drug dependency
- Struggling with personal identity
- Financial and legal problems
- Work related problems, eg workplace conflict, outplacement
- Gambling problems
- Coping with change
- Mediation
- Health problems.

2. Scope

The service is provided by a contracted, external provider called Converge International. Their contact number is 1300 687 327, their website address is: www.convergeinternational.com.au. Converge have highly qualified and skilled staff (such as registered psychologists, social workers and other therapists), with extensive experience working with employees from a wide cross section of industries.

2.1 This policy applies to all staff

2.2 The EAP is designed to provide short to medium term assistance. Altaira will pay for up to three visits for an employee or a member of their household or immediate family and depending upon the issue(s) may approve extension of this support.

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For the purposes of this policy, ‘immediate family or household’ means an employee’s:

- Spouse (including a de facto spouse); and
- The employee’s (or their spouse’s) child or an adult child (including an adopted child, a stepchild or an ex-nuptial child), parent, grandparent, grandchild or sibling of the team member.
- A de facto spouse means a person who lives with the employee as their partner on a bona fide domestic basis, including same sex relationships.

3. Policy

3.1 Participation in the EAP:

- Is entirely voluntary by the employee;
- In no way relieves the employees’ responsibility to meet the standards of work performance and attendance, which are applicable to all employees;
- Attendance may be encouraged by an employee’s Line Manager, if they deem this could assist an employee to work through an issue. However, attendance at an EAP session will not be enforced and the responsibility for following any course of action rests entirely with the employee even if their Line Manager has offered assistance via the program;
- Attendance is strongly encouraged when personal issues adversely affect employees’ lives.

The EAP also emphasises a positive approach and allows employees to overcome their issues without adverse consequences to their status of employment, job security or promotional opportunities.

3.2 Access to the EAP can be arranged by:

- **Self-referral** - Employees may voluntarily and confidentially seek counselling assistance.
- **Other referral** - There may be occasions where a Line Manager or co-worker, recognising that a colleague may be experiencing some personal / work related difficulty, suggests the EAP service to the employee. It is important to note, however that an employee cannot be compelled to participate in the EAP.

3.3 Due to the nature of the program, employees should make use of the EAP services in their own personal time.

3.4 Any request for time off from work should be handled in accordance with usual guidelines for authorising time off for personal reasons, in accordance with the Leave Policy – 3. Personal

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(Sick/Carer’s). Employees are not required to discuss any aspects of their personal problems with their Line Manager.

- 3.5 An important feature of this program is the high level of confidentiality and respect for employees’ privacy. Information shared will not be communicated unless expressly authorised by the employee in writing. Any other EAP reports supplied to Altaira by the provider are of a purely statistical nature or contain feedback about work themes only. These reports do not contain any references to names, or other identifying information.

The following pages provide some Frequently Asked Questions about EAP, together with information on our Provider and how to contact them.

EAP Frequently Asked Questions

Q What is an Employee Assistance Program (EAP)?

A An EAP provides independent, professional and confidential counselling services provided as an employee benefit.

Q What are the benefits of having an EAP?

A The breadth and scope of challenges and issues that we experience both within and outside of the workplace are far reaching. These services may be work related (e.g. how to handle conflict, organisational change, coping with work pressures) or personal in nature (e.g. depression, relationship problems, family issues). If not resolved, these issues can greatly affect our work performance, personal relationships etc. Through effective, short term counselling, an EAP provides innovative, flexible solutions to meet these individual and organisational needs.

Q What is counselling?

A Counselling provides the opportunity to talk with a qualified, professional counsellor who can offer support, advice and new perspectives on issues. Counselling may help you to make sense of difficult situations and assist you in developing ways of handling them.

Counselling has proven to be effective in assisting people to deal with a wide range of issues, for example, emotional and relationship difficulties, concern for family members, alcohol and other drug problems, grief and work related issues etc.

Q How does EAP counselling work?

A Issues and concerns, whether of a work-related or personal nature, can affect an employee’s work, safety and quality of life. By helping you deal with these issues, work performance and quality of life can be improved. Counselling can assist you in:

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- clarifying the problem;
- identifying and confirming realistic goals;
- identifying options available to achieve goals;
- developing new ways of looking at and dealing with issues or challenges.

EAP counsellors use accredited short term counselling model, which is resolution focused. This means you will not need to present for counselling over a long period of time.

Q Who can attend EAP counselling?

A All Altaira employees or a member of their household or immediate family can access the EAP.

Q What if I need long term counselling?

A Should you require long term counselling the service provider, Converge, is able to refer you to a wide range of specialist services.

Q How much does it cost?

A Initial short term counselling costs (for up to three face-to-face counselling sessions) are met by Altaira . In the event a referral for long term support is required, the costs (if any) would be borne by the individual concerned.

Q What can be discussed with a counsellor?

A Basically anything. The issue you may want to discuss can be work or non-work related.

More information is available about Altaira’s EAP at <https://convergeinternational.com.au/>

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