



Why is ESI EAP utilization triple that of other EAPs?

Jim Walter, Chief Executive Officer
ESI Employee Assistance Group

When measuring an EAP's effectiveness, utilization is a key metric.

It's simple. If your employees aren't getting the help they need to resolve problems and issues that sap their productivity, you just aren't getting your money's worth.

Each month, we meet with Client HR Directors to talk about their EAP. One question that is often asked is why ESI's utilization is so much higher than that of their prior EAP vendor.

There are several reasons why.

One reason relates to how we deliver counseling services. Most traditional EAPs have a phone operator answer calls and schedule an appointment for a later counseling session. We don't think that is good enough. When employees call,

they often need "in-the-moment" help. We ensure that every single call – even on late nights, weekends, and holidays – is answered directly by a Clinical Counselor with a Master's degree and years of experience. An experienced counselor can address immediate needs and then work with the caller to resolve his or her issue. In-the-moment telephonic help and follow-through from skilled counselors sets us apart and results in a more than 98% satisfaction rate year in and year out.

But that is only one part of the story.

Much of the high utilization is a function of basic arithmetic. At ESI, we offer many more services and benefits than other EAPs.

Benefit Development History

Years ago, we recognized that a large percentage of calls stemmed from several key areas:

- **Financial problems** – debt, budgeting, saving, and other money issues.

- **Health and wellness issues** – chronic illness, weight, smoking, fitness, and more.
- **Work-life issues** – balancing responsibilities at work and home, conflicts in the workplace, and work stress.

We saw that these three key issues required additional services if we were to truly serve our Client Employers and their employees in the most comprehensive way.

Expanded Benefits to Meet Employee Needs

We developed a new set of benefits: **ESI Peak Performance Coaching, Training, and Employee Development** benefits designed for employees who want to develop and succeed in their personal and professional lives.

Today we offer 18 coaching programs delivered by Certified Clinical Coaches.

To bolster these benefits, we also launched an entire online library with over 8,000 video trainings that employees can complete at their own pace.

The purpose is to help them resolve issues and improve skills and overall performance.

Plus, employees can access our expanded online Self-Help Center with over 25,000 resources – videos, articles, calculators, web links, and more.

ESI Coaching Example

Our Certified Coaching programs are a key way that we differ from other EAPs. Personal financial coaching is one our most requested benefits. For example, an employee who is struggling with budget issues, calls for assistance. An initial coaching session is scheduled with a certified financial coach who is also a clinician. The employee will then get one-on-one coaching from the coach over several sessions, be assigned several personal finance trainings, and often be directed to Self-Help Resources tools, such as our budgeting templates and interest and savings calculators. The coach continues working with the employee until he or she has the budget under control.

Expanded Services Drive Extraordinary Results—98% Satisfaction and over 300% greater utilization

The most important news about these expanded benefits are the results. As substantive benefits increased, so too did utilization. Today, our utilization is more than triple that of the EAP industry average. Increased utilization also results in more problems being resolved and higher employee satisfaction. Satisfaction is contagious. Every month, as employees learn about expanded benefits, including related trainings and self-help resources, more and more employees and their family members are utilizing these important services.