



## Distance Counseling Frequently Asked Questions

### What is the Distance Counseling option?

The Optima EAP recognizes that it is not always possible or convenient for an employee to get to a face-to-face counseling appointment. The Distance Counseling program makes use of a HIPAA compliant platform that allows for the counseling to be done using a smart phone, tablet or desk top computer.

### How many counseling sessions do I get if I use the Distance Counseling option?

The Distance Counseling option provides the same number of sessions as you would receive if you were seeing a counselor in his or her office.

### Will there be any co-payments or costs to me?

The Optima EAP is paid by your employer and there is no cost to access EAP services.

### My manager has told me I must attend EAP counseling sessions; can I use the Distance Counseling option?

The Distance Counseling option is only available to individuals who are accessing EAP services on a voluntary basis. Formal or mandatory EAP referrals require additional services not available through the Distance Counseling option.

### How do I schedule a Distance Counseling appointment?

Appointments are made by calling Optima EAP at 800-899-8174. The Intake Coordinator will confirm that your company allows the use of the Distance Counseling program. She will then schedule your appointment and will get your email information. Encrypted emails will be sent to you with instructions on how to complete your pre-appointment paperwork and how to access your counseling session.

### Where should I be located when using my Distance Counseling appointment?

The regulations of the Commonwealth of Virginia require that you must be physically present in Virginia to receive Distance Counseling. You need to arrange a location that is free from distractions and ensures your personal privacy.

### What if after my first session I decide that I do not want to continue with Distance Counseling?

If either you or your counselor determines that you would be better served by another form of therapeutic services, you will then be referred to a licensed mental health provider in your area. The number of EAP counseling sessions available will be determined by a review of your case records.

### What happens if my Distance Counseling session is interrupted due to a technical failure?

If a session is cut short by technical issues a determination as to whether the session will count against the allotted number of sessions will be based upon the duration of the session.

### Is my Distance Counseling session confidential?

The Distance Counseling platform is encrypted and meets HIPAA regulations for the protection of your Personal Health Information (PHI). Your counselor will maintain the same level of confidentiality as if he or she were seeing you in person. It is your responsibility to make sure that the location you chose to conduct your Distance Counseling session is private. If the counselor perceives that you are in an inappropriate location, they will ask you to reschedule your session and will work with you to determine an appropriate location.

**Optima Employee Assistance Program**

1-800-899-8174 or 757-363-6777

OptimaEAP.com