

(NOTE: This Q&A document provided by the Public Services Agency)
BC Public Service Employee and Family Assistance Services

Questions related to the service provider

Q. What are the Employee and Family Assistance Services?

- A.** Employee and Family Assistance Services (which has sometimes been referred to as the Employee and Family Assistance Program, EFAP, or Health and Well-Being Services) is a range of services offered by a third party contractor that provides professional assistance to employees and their families to address a range of concerns or scenarios.

This includes family support services, legal and financial guidance, healthy living support, career counselling, and more. There is also a suite of services for managers and supervisors seeking critical incident response support, workplace intervention services, or just in time telephonic support through the Manager Advice Line.

Participation is voluntary, confidential and is free of charge to employees and their eligible family members.

Q. I heard that the service provider is changing, is this true?

- A.** Yes. The contract with Homewood Health, our previous Employee and Family Assistance Services provider, will expire on March 31, 2017. As the result of a competitive procurement process, conducted by a panel of employees and a BCGEU representative, a new provider was awarded the contract. Starting April 1, we will begin using the new provider: Morneau Shepell. Morneau Shepell is a well-respected Employee and Family Assistance Services provider and has been a leader in the field since 1966.

Q. Has eligibility for services changed?

- A.** No. Eligibility remains the same. All employees, including auxiliary employees, co-op students, and employees who are not yet eligible to receive other workplace benefits, such as extended health and dental, are eligible to receive Employee and Family Assistance Services. As before, family members who normally reside with an employee may also access these services.

Q. Do employees still have access to counselling?

- A.** Yes. Professional short-term counselling remains a core component of the program. As before, counselling services are intended to be short-term and solutions-focused in nature.

Q. Do I still access counselling services in the same way?

- A.** Yes. The **1-800-655-5004** contact number remains the same, and is open 24 hours per day, seven days per week.

Q. Are there any changes to the number of counselling sessions I can have?

- A.** No. There will continue to be no cap on the number of counselling sessions an employee can receive.

That being said, counselling services continue to be focussed on a short-term, solutions-focused model. This means that a typical counselling case runs from two to five sessions (some are shorter, some run longer), and is focused on resolving a specific concern(s). This ensures that users receive the appropriate level of service as determined by a professional counsellor. Additionally, this flexible model means that users can re-access services at a later date to address a different concern.

If an employee needs more intensive, longer-term counselling support, counsellors can also provide advice and referral services. For example: employees who are in receipt of [extended health benefits](#) may claim up to \$500 per family per calendar year for registered clinical counselling or psychologist services.

Q. What happens if I am in the middle of receiving short-term counselling with Homewood Health on April 1, 2017?

A. If you accessed counselling services prior to April 1, 2017, you will continue to see your Homewood Health counsellor through to counselling case completion.

Q. I have previously accessed counselling services through Homewood Health. I really liked my counsellor and wish to see him/her again. Will I be able to use the same counsellor with the new service provider?

A. Morneau Shepell has an extensive roster of counsellors available in communities throughout the province. Some counsellors may work for both Homewood Health and Morneau Shepell, although it is not guaranteed.

Q. Will there be any other changes to the Employee and Family Assistance Services with the new provider?

A. In addition to short-term counselling, the Employee and Family Assistance Services has also included pro-active lifestyle services since 2010. In transitioning to Morneau Shepell, some of the names of services may change, and some of the services may be delivered through different formats, but the majority of topics that pro-active lifestyle services can address will remain the same.

Further information will be available on MyHR starting April 1st.

Q. As a manager, will I still have access to the Manager Advice Line?

A. Yes. Just in time telephone-based advisory services for managers/supervisors/union representatives who are dealing with issues in the workplace will continue to be available by calling 1-800-655-5004, selecting Option 2 and requesting a “Manager Consultation”. Critical Incident Response and Workplace Intervention Services will also continue to be available on a fee-for-service basis.

Q. What happens to my access to the Homewood Health website after April 1st? If I am in the middle of an e-course, will I still be able to access and complete it?

A. Homewood Health’s website, [Homeweb](#), will not be available after March 31, 2017. If you are in the middle of an e-course on the site, please complete it prior to April 1st.

Q. What happens to my personal information that was collected by Homewood Health?

- A. Per the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA), Homewood Health is responsible for securely retaining the personal information contained in case records for a period of at least 10 years from the date of last entry.

When the case record retention period has expired, Homewood Health will ensure the record and all corresponding personal information is destroyed by confidential means.

Q. Where can I get more information?

- A. Information about the Employee and Family Assistance Services will be located on the [Health and Well-Being Services](#) pages on MyHR starting April 1st. Employees are also encouraged to join our [Health Where You Work @Work](#) group as this is where we regularly post information and promote different health and well-being programs and services.

Questions related to the program

Q. Can I access Employee and Family Assistance services during pregnancy, during a medical absence or when I'm on Long Term Disability?

- A. Yes. All employees in these circumstances are eligible to access services.

Q. Are the Employee and Family Assistance Services confidential?

- A. Strict confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained. No personal information will be released to anyone by Morneau Shepell unless an employee provides written permission.

Q. What information does the employer receive from the provider of the Employee and Family Assistance Services?

- A. The BC Public Service Agency manages the program and only receives high level aggregate usage data. No names or any identifying information are ever provided to the employer.

Q. How likely am I to run into a fellow employee at a counsellor's office?

- A. Morneau Shepell does not book two people from the same organization back-to-back at the same office, ensuring that an employee will not see a co-worker when attending a counselling session.