Once a month, this Keeping in Touch newsletter shows up in your paycheck or inbox. Its goal is to provide you with helpful information related to your wellbeing. But it’s only one small slice of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) benefit provided by your employer.

An EAP is a work-based program that helps employees identify and resolve personal concerns that affect job performance and satisfaction. The services are provided at no additional cost to you, and they are completely confidential. The majority of companies offer EAPs to their employees, according to the International Employee Assistance Professional Association.

“Face-to-face counseling, either in person or online, is a key component of The Village Business Institute EAP. Our counselors offer professional guidance for a wide variety of issues that affect employees. Some common topics are relationship issues, including marriage, family, and parent-child counseling; emotional health, such as stress, anxiety, depression and grief; and workplace issues, like coping with change, handling conflict or dealing with difficult people. Counselors are also available to you in times of crisis.

The Village EAP believes all members of an employee’s household are important, and they all can access services, based on how many sessions are available. Sessions are approved in Benefits, on Back.
blocks of four, which can be utilized by one or multiple members of the household, up to the maximum allowed for the benefit year.

The total number of sessions available is based on the number of people in your household. For example, a household of four would have 16 total sessions per benefit year, a household of five would have 20, and so on. Households of one receive up to eight sessions per benefit year. EAP counselors will assist household members in accessing services.

Zaundra Bina, The Village Business Institute account executive, explains some of the EAP benefits you may not be aware of:

**Legal counseling**

Your EAP entitles you to a half-hour phone consultation with an attorney, for family law or civil law matters, such as divorce, custody, wills, harassment or neighbor disputes. You also receive a 25 percent discount on further legal services with that attorney. “It’s a great place to start with any legal questions,” says Bina.

**Financial counseling**

A financial counselor can help you proactively manage your money, including budgeting, student loan planning and retirement, and talk to you about money crises, such as bankruptcy, a debt management program, gambling addiction or foreclosure. This may be done in person, over the phone or online.

**Drug and alcohol assessments**

While your EAP benefit does not include treatment, you can receive a chemical dependency evaluation and education on drug and alcohol issues.

**Wellness education**

With the exception of fitness classes, your EAP may pay for community wellness-themed classes, on topics such as parenting, self-esteem, anger management and mindfulness. Call 1-800-627-8220 before you register to see if the class fee can be covered.

**Health-risk assessment**

This online tool can provide a baseline, and concrete recommendations for improving your overall wellbeing.

**Nutrition counseling**

Once you’ve completed a health assessment, you can receive education and recommendations from a nutrition counselor, including information to help with weight management, online or over the phone.

In addition, your EAP provides you with unlimited access to many online resources, including archives of this newsletter, at www.VillageEAP.com. Login using your organization’s username. Your company HR department can give that to you, or call us at 1-800-627-8220.

Bina stresses that it doesn’t need to be a crisis situation to take advantage of your EAP.

“As humans, issues pop up in our lives,” Bina says. “If you could walk out of a counselor’s office feeling better, why wouldn’t you make an appointment?”

To access your EAP benefits, call 1-800-627-8220.

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**Counselor Column, From Front**

you, or arrange for a web-based appointment. If you’re dealing with financial hardships, they can work to get you connected to one of our certified financial counselors. Maybe drugs and alcohol have begun to cause problems in your personal and work life; your EAP also provides a chemical dependency evaluation. All of these benefits are provided to you free of charge through the EAP benefit provided by your employer.

**What happens next?**

Once you have contacted the intake department and set up services, you come in for your appointment. You will want to arrive about 15 minutes before your initial appointment to complete paperwork. If your appointment is for a chemical dependency evaluation, you may need to provide information after your evaluation, as any additional services or treatment would not be covered by your EAP.

Life can be wonderful but it can also be challenging. Your employer has made an investment in the Employee Assistance Program to provide you with the tools and resources you need to help you get through the tough times. No matter how difficult things may seem, you can reach out to get help. You don’t have to go it alone.

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**WORRIED ABOUT MONEY?**

We can help! Financial counseling is part of your EAP. Call 1-800-627-8220 for more info.

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