

Group Benefits Coverage of Social Work Counselling Makes Sense

Social workers are often the primary providers of Employee Assistance Program (EAP) services offered and covered by employers and their insurance companies. Surprisingly, many employers do not provide the option of individual counselling with a social worker in their group benefits. Learn more about the benefits of social work counselling and ask your employer or union for coverage.

Social workers focus on the person.

Social workers **help people deal with day-to-day problems** and get their lives back on track. Social workers help people cope with issues, navigate relationships, and solve personal and family problems. When an employee is in crisis, counselling by a social worker can be the key to sorting out issues and resolving problems.

Social Workers are health care professionals.

Social workers are one the largest groups of practising counsellors and psychotherapists in North America and are included in the *Ontario Psychotherapy Act, 2007*.

Social Workers are accessible across Ontario and their services are cost-effective.

Fees charged by social workers are generally lower than those charged by other professionals. This means more counselling sessions with a social worker are possible under the annual amount of coverage.

Ask to add social work counselling to your group benefits plan.

Many group plans already cover the services of a social worker. If your plan does not, ask your employer, human resources department or union leaders to have social work included in your group benefits plan. Use the sample letter in the sidebar to start.

ASKING FOR COVERAGE A SAMPLE LETTER

RE: INCLUSION OF SOCIAL WORK SERVICES IN GROUP BENEFITS PLANS

Letter to Employer/
Human Resources Department or Union:

Dear _____;

I am writing to request that the employee group benefits plan for our organization be expanded to include counselling services provided by social workers.

Adding coverage for social work counselling as part of our health plan makes economic sense for our organization and gives employees (or union members) greater choice when seeking counselling services.

The escalating workplace costs related to increased usage of disability and drug plans, lost productivity due to workplace stress and absenteeism, as well as the expense of finding and training replacement staff are well known. Social work services can help keep employees productive and healthy by dealing with the underlying causes of these issues.

Social work practice is both affordable and accessible across the province. Social workers are one of the largest groups of practising counsellors and psychotherapists in North America and are included in the *Ontario Psychotherapy Act, 2007*.

I look forward to hearing from you regarding the addition of social work services to our group benefits plan. For more information about the social work profession, you can visit www.oasw.org or www.ocswssw.org.

Sincerely,