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The following is an article from Benefits Canada on employee mental health support tools. It's worth noting that in most cases employees have access to two levels of assistance if the need arises. The first level is your plan's Emergency Assistance Plan (E.A.P.), which frankly many employees don't even know about. It's included in most plans, and the cost is usually a flat, per employee monthly fee. There is no additional charge for use of this plan, so employees should consider this first. The second, and larger level of assistance is in the social-worker, psychologist type sectors of your plan. There are often limits to the claims that can be made here, but the limits can be fairly generous.

Our recommendation is that employers or H.R. managers simply send out a reminder that these assistance levels are available, so that employees can take advantage if the need comes up. And you may want to additionally advise employees that the use of either of these assistance programs is entirely confidential. The only reporting to their employers is the total number of uses of the plan over a given plan year, so employers know whether or not they are getting any value from the coverage provided; and in most cases they never ask.

60% of Canadians with mental-health concerns not using workplace support tools

Staff | September 25, 2019

Canadian employees suffering from mental-health issues aren't accessing support through their workplace benefits, according to new data from Sun Life Canada.

The data found 59 per cent of working Canadians said they've experienced a mental-health issue, an increase from 52 per cent in 2017. Among this group, 60 per cent said they aren't accessing support through their workplace benefits and 78 per cent also haven't used government-funded services.

"We all have a role to play in supporting mental health in Canada," said Jacques Goulet, president of Sun Life Canada, in a press release. "As an employer, it's about creating a safe environment for your employees and ensuring they feel supported throughout their mental-health journey. Together, we can break down barriers and open the door for communication for someone experiencing a mental-health condition. Help is out there. No one should face these challenges on their own."

The data also found two out of three millennials have reported dealing with a mental-health issue at some point in their life. Three-quarters (76 per cent) of that group said they spoke to loved ones about it.

However, when it comes to finding mental-health support, millennials are the least likely (39 per cent) to seek help from health professionals; 61 per cent haven't used their workplace mental-health benefits and 76 per cent also haven't used government-funded services.

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“Taking the first step is never easy, but with mental-health issues on the rise, it’s crucial for Canadians to maximize the tools offered by their workplace,” said Dave Jones, senior vice-president of group benefits at Sun Life Canada. “Employees often don’t realize that their employer has resources available to help them, whether it be to maintain their mental health on a day-to-day basis or during a difficult time.”