



Ascension

Ascension EAP

The Benefits of Virtual Counseling and Online Resources

In the midst of necessity Ascension EAP shifted to virtual counseling and enhanced our online resources to meet the needs of our clients in a period of pandemic. We have found that both our clients, and our counselors have not only adapted well to that change, but enjoy meeting virtually and have found numerous benefits. In fact, it has been so well received, it is here to stay as a viable option for counseling going forward. This article highlights the benefits of virtual counseling, as well as the drawbacks, to help you decide if virtual counseling might be right for you.

Pros of virtual Counseling

- **Convenient.** No commute means less time away from work or home, and a comfortable environment of your choosing. Virtual sessions are a great option for individuals who live in remote areas, and greatly accessible for individuals with physical limitations.
- **Safe.** If you're concerned about possible exposure to COVID-19, this option reduces your risk of exposure while still providing a personalized experience with your counselor.
- **Personal.** You don't have to exercise social distancing or use a mask during a virtual appointment, as you would in an in person session. This allows you and your counselor to



- see important body language cues and facial expressions.
- **Many Barriers Eliminated.** Bad weather, dead car batteries, or a sick babysitter don't have to keep you from missing your counseling session.
- **Confidential.** Our counselors follow strict legal and ethical guidelines regarding confidentiality, even in virtual counseling.
 - We secure client data by using hospital-grade technology with firewall protection and security features.
 - During virtual sessions the counselor is in a secure environment where the client can feel safe to speak openly.
 - Our virtual platforms are HIPAA compliant.
- **Access to multiple counselors.** You are not bound by physical distance to access a counselor you'd like to meet with.
- **Multiple resources at your disposal.** The counselor can pull up any resource on the screen to share or educate in the session.

Cons of Virtual Counseling

- **Technology issues.** On occasion a client may struggle with a weak internet connection, or have a device that is outdated.

Fix: The counselor will also send you a phone number in addition to the virtual meeting link.

That number is for your own, private session.

The counselor can either help troubleshoot your meeting, or provide your session by phone.



- **You're not in an office.** While the counselor can assure that they are in a private location, sometimes it takes a little work to make sure that you can create a private space for yourself.
Fix: Meet in a room with a door that can close (and lock—bathrooms and cars sometimes work well) and let other household members know you are in an appointment and request not to be disturbed. Ask a family member or friend to watch smaller children during your appointment. Talk with your counselor at intake about any privacy concerns.

Additional EAP Resources and Access at

www.ascensionWIEAP.org

- Interactive articles on self care, coping, wellness, grief, addiction, anxiety, work conflict, moral injury, physician specific articles, leading through change, and an entire section on COVID- related articles.
- New and updated materials are added frequently to address current issues in our workplaces and the world.

- Staff bios
- EAP program information
- Resource library with links
- Community Resources
- Organizational Resources
- Schedule a counseling appointment right from the website
- **Spotify** access for relaxing music to inspire your self-care journey
- **Ascension WI EAP YouTube Channel** provides short focused clips of self-care videos from trauma to resiliency to compassion fatigue. The WeCare series provides 3, 20-minute segments on supporting each other through difficult circumstances.
- **Email** eap@ascension.org for direct access to our intake counselors who can help you locate resources, schedule an appointment, or consult about your needs.



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If you want to schedule a virtual appointment, contact your Employee Assistance Program today. Services are free and confidential.

800-540-3758 | eap@ascension.org
AscensionWIEAP.org
