

Information for State Employees: Family Member Participation in Counseling Sessions



COLORADO
**State Employee Assistance
Program**
CSEAP

State of Colorado personnel rules and state statute indicate that state employees “may request the participation of other persons [in EAP sessions] if [their participation is] necessary to provide effective assistance to the employee” and that participation of others is appropriate if “such assistance is necessary to provide effective counseling to a state employee” (Colorado State Personnel Board Rules and Personnel Director’s Administrative Procedures, 4CCR 801-1, 11-27 A., page 83; Colorado Revised Statute 2018, 24-50-604, III, page 1290). With personnel rules and state statute in mind, CSEAP is able to serve your loved ones or significant others as listed below.

Limits to Service & Referrals

CSEAP works with family members of state employees, **including children age 15 and over**, by including these family members in family or couple sessions as appropriate and/or as requested by the state employee.

EAP counseling, by design, is short-term and brief in time frame. This counseling model may not provide ample time for children and adolescents to develop trust and connection with a mental health provider.

CSEAP is also able to include your adult family member(s) in couple or family sessions if this could support improved outcomes for the state employee client. However, CSEAP must preserve availability of individual sessions for state employees only.

CSEAP works with state employees to identify appropriate mental health referrals¹ and other resources for their family members. These resources can be helpful when the employee is seeking individual counseling exclusively for their child or adult family member (when the state employee does not intend to participate in counseling). Please schedule a consultation with an CSEAP EAP Specialist for assistance in identifying available services for your family member. In addition, your health insurance provider can provide referrals for any family members covered on your plan. Your family may also find that they have access to an EAP service through their employer.

Family Sessions and Parent/Child Sessions

Family sessions include the state employee, their child/ren (**age 15 or older**), and often an additional family member including a co-parent, step-parent, spouse or partner, step-siblings, etc. Family sessions may also include the state employee and *their* parent/parents.

Family sessions are focused on improving family communication and connection, and are offered in situations when the state employee is identifying family or parenting concerns as the primary stressor causing impact to their work or personal life. Parent/child sessions may also focus on improving communication and understanding between parent(s) and child (adolescent 15+ or young adult) to include identifying resources and strategies to support the child when child mental health is the primary concern.

¹ ‘Referral’ for the purposes of this document includes suggested resources or service providers. CSEAP does not seek approval from your health insurance provider for referrals; CSEAP does not contact providers to seek specific services for you. Employees are responsible for fully vetting suggested resources and ensuring that providers are covered, if necessary, on their health insurance plan. CSEAP cannot recommend any specific provider or validate credentials.

When clinically appropriate, your CSEAP counselor may request to speak to one or more family member(s) individually, outside of a family session; these individual sessions count toward the available 6 counseling sessions per rolling year. Family sessions are available in-person (or via video at the counselor's discretion) at all CSEAP locations.

Couple Sessions

Couple sessions include the state employee and their partner including spouse, co-parent, dating partner, or long-term intimate partner. Couple sessions are available to state employees identifying stress in their adult relationship as the primary stressor causing impact in their work or personal life.

Couple sessions aim to improve understanding, communication, and connection between partners. In addition, couple sessions may include focus on strategies that the couple can implement to support one or the other (or each other) in managing mental health or physical health concerns.

Couple sessions can also be helpful when stress of one partner is impacting the relationship; caregiving commitments create stress for the relationship; or substance use or addiction is a concern for the couple. Finally, couple sessions may also be focused on amicable separation or divorce and/or co-parenting. CSEAP is able to work with 2 adult parties involved in the intimate relationship.

When clinically appropriate, your CSEAP counselor may request to speak to one or both relationship parties individually, outside of a couple session; these individual sessions count toward the available 6 counseling sessions per rolling year. Couple sessions are available in-person at most CSEAP locations and, as appropriate, via video. CSEAP subscribes to a 'no secrets' policy when engaged in couple counseling which means that the couple is seen as the client and any information shared - even if in individual sessions that are part of couple counseling - may be addressed in couple sessions. However, when domestic violence is a concern, CSEAP therapists will apply discretion in an effort to address risks and increase safety. Finally, CSEAP does not provide couple counseling when the presenting concern is domestic or intimate partner violence and/or when the providing therapist is concerned that violence is being perpetrated in the relationship during the timeframe of couple counseling.

Reports

CSEAP employees must abide by mandatory reporting requirements. Regardless of the type of counseling provided - individual, couple, or family - CSEAP therapists must report suspected [abuse of children](#) and/or [vulnerable adults](#) as outlined in reporting laws.

[State Personnel Policies](#)

[Colorado Revised Statute 2018](#)