



“THE EAP TURNED MY LIFE AROUND”

MIKE'S STORY

“Admitting you need help is not a sign of weakness. It's a sign of strength. And choosing to get help is the smartest thing you can do.”

Mike, a Kansas City native and law firm employee, proves that one phone call can truly be life-changing.

Several years ago, my marriage was crumbling. My thoughts took a downward spiral pretty fast. I began to experience full-blown panic attacks. I could barely work. I felt paralyzed. The only way to get better, I thought, was to be dead.

It was then that I realized I was in an abusive marriage and needed to get out. But I didn't know how. Two things happened that changed my life: I talked to my supervisor, who said I should use my employee assistance program (EAP). Then, I acted on his advice.

When people ask me today why I seem so content and energized - so different from before - I tell the short version or the long version. But either way, I begin with the EAP.

To protect confidentiality, Mike's last name has been withheld. Mike chose to share his story as a reminder that you are not alone in your challenges, and that getting help is the smartest thing you can do.

Q| Lots of people struggle with issues they don't want to talk about at work, like marital problems, depression and substance abuse, among others. How did you know where to turn for help?

I found out about the EAP through my supervisor. He and I had a good relationship, and I felt like I could talk to him about issues I was

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struggling with. Through his own experience, my supervisor understood the value of the EAP and encouraged me to use it.

Q| Many employees don't know what the EAP is, yet it's one of the most valuable benefits a company offers. What's so helpful about it?

One of the best things about the EAP is that it's free. I didn't have to use my insurance to get the help I needed. The EAP allowed me to talk to someone I could trust – in this case, a licensed clinician – and address my issues without stacking up medical bills. Another great thing is that it's completely confidential. My employer never knew I reached out for counseling.

Q| Making that first call to the EAP wasn't easy for you. What happened on the call?

I'll completely admit I was scared to make the call. That's because I was struggling to say out loud how I was really feeling and admit I was in an abusive relationship. But the person who answered the phone with New Directions was sympathetic and understanding. She asked me about the issues I was experiencing and then gave me a list of providers who fit my needs with offices convenient to me.

Q| You found a provider you really trusted. What was the most helpful thing about counseling?

Having someone listen to me carefully and validate that I was not weak or wrong to seek help provided a huge rush of relief. As a male, we often feel if we need help we're not man enough, and that we need to act stronger.

My therapist normalized my feelings and made me realize I wasn't crazy – that this wasn't just in

my 'head.' I knew I had an ally in her, which made it easier to keep going.

Q| What's the biggest lesson you learned from this experience?

I learned that it's hard to do my best at work when I feel my life is coming apart. Confronting my issues when they come up is critical – otherwise, they just fester and grow worse.

Q| Your advice for someone going through tough times?

Admitting you need help is not a sign of weakness. It's a sign of strength. Get the help that's out there. It's the smartest thing you can do. The more you talk about things out loud, the easier it becomes to see solutions.

If you're struggling with a personal or workplace issue, contact the EAP. Remember the EAP is a service that costs you nothing and is completely confidential.

More than 95 percent of employees who seek help about their personal issues report significant improvements in their lives at home and work.

HOW TO CONTACT THE EAP

Call the Help Line at 800-624-5544

-or-

Visit [ndbh.com](https://www.ndbh.com) to request counseling or download thousands of resources

- 1. Click "For Individuals and Families"**
- 2. Select "EAP" in the drop-down menu**
- 3. Enter or request your company passcode**