



# Case study summary

## The impact of EAP formal management referrals

Formal Management Referrals Compared to Self Referrals to Counseling from an External Employee Assistance Program in the United States 2017-2023  
(Source: International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications [Volume 13, Issue 5, May 2023])

$$(b+b^2)$$

$$\frac{8}{x+6} =$$

$$\frac{16}{x^2+8x+6}$$

$$=8^6 \quad c^2$$

$$+\cos^2 y = 1$$

$$\left(\frac{a}{b}\right)^c = \frac{a^c}{b^c}$$


$$y^k$$

$$C = 2\pi r$$


$$r$$
$$h$$



# Case study: Formal management referrals

## About CuraLinc Healthcare

CuraLinc Healthcare provides a comprehensive array of employee assistance (EAP) and mental wellbeing programs to over 3,400 clients with more than 6 million employees worldwide. CuraLinc delivers **transformative mental health care fueled by connectivity** – marrying technology and personalized advocacy to engage, empower and support employees with programs that have a measurable impact on health, wellbeing and productivity.

## Introduction

In addition to employees seeking help for themselves or receiving referrals from family, friends, or coworkers, most comprehensive EAPs also encourage supervisors at work to refer employees who may be facing personal or work-related challenges.

Supervisors play a crucial role in supporting workers, often providing informal support by talking with employees, listening to their concerns and offering emotional support. However, some situations require corrective action, like when an employee violates the company's substance use policy or exhibits behavioral concerns that impact performance. When this happens, a [formal management referral](#) (FMR) through the EAP may be the best way to keep a valued employee on the job and productive.

In most cases, managers formally refer employees to the EAP after taking other disciplinary steps. This referral classification differs from an 'informal' or 'voluntary' referral when a supervisor or an employer's HR department simply recommends EAP services to an employee.

## Methodology

For this study, we gathered health and productivity data from 41,986 employees working at over 1,750 different U.S. employers to study the impact of formal management referrals on client outcomes and how they compare to outcomes for clients who voluntarily seek counseling through the EAP. The study spanned seven years, from January 2017 until March 2023.

To quantify the true impact of an EAP and its treatment options, including mandated treatment through a formal management referral, CuraLinc developed a proprietary assessment and follow-up process for care planning and measuring baselines and outcomes from evidence-based treatment through the program utilizing the following clinically validated instruments:

## Case study: Formal management referrals

- **Productivity** Stanford Presenteeism Scale (SPS-6)
- **Absenteeism** Workplace Outcomes Suite (WOS)
- **Alcohol use** Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT)
- **Mental health risk** Patient Health Questionnaire-2 (PHQ-2) and General Anxiety Disorder-2 (GAD-2)

This report presents empirical findings from an applied real-world evaluation study conducted by CuraLinc in partnership with Dr. Mark Attridge, an expert in workplace mental health, who has authored more than 250 papers and presentations on health care, psychology and communication topics.

### By the numbers



**Headquarters/location**

Chicago, Illinois



**EAP clients**

3,468



**Employees in the study**

41,986



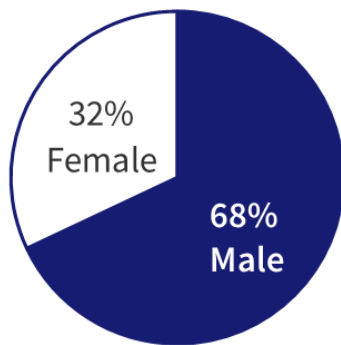
**EAP session model**

Three to twelve sessions per issue

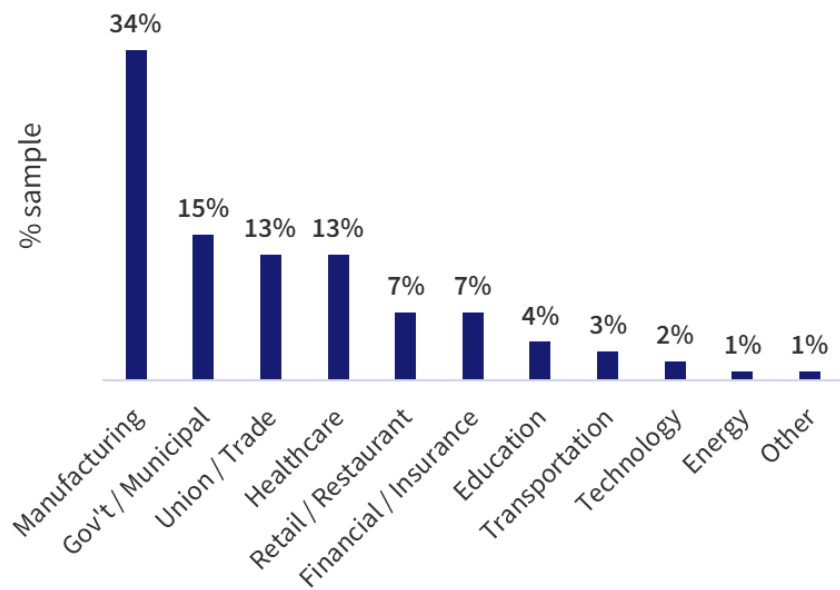
## Case study: Formal management referrals

### Participant profile

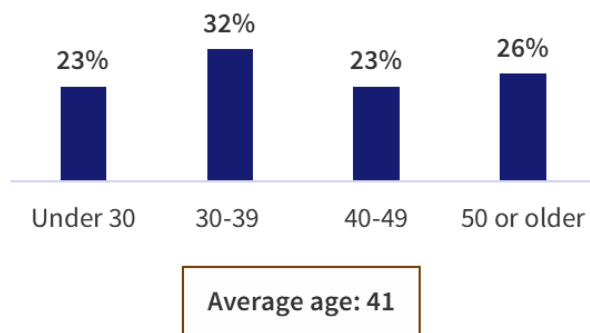
Gender



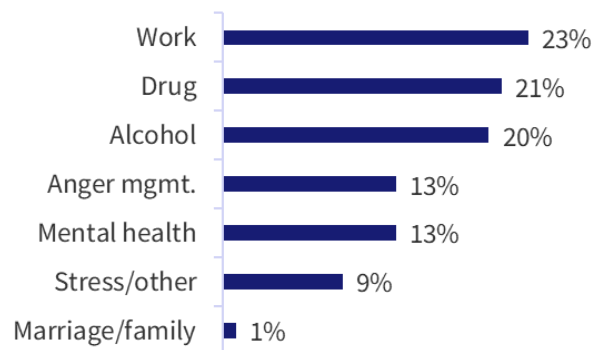
Industry



Age



Reason for referral



## Case study: Formal management referrals

### Results

#### Productivity

CuraLinc used the Stanford Presenteeism Scale-6 (SPS-6) to evaluate the extent of productivity loss due to presenteeism. The SPS-6 measures an employee's perception of their ability to overcome the distraction of current physical and/or psychological problems in order to handle job stress, complete tasks, achieve goals and maintain sufficient focus and energy levels.

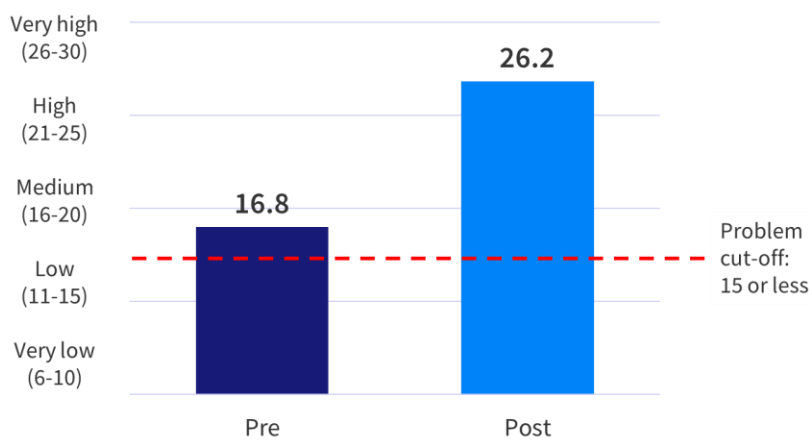


The average FMR client reported a 56% increase in productivity after counseling.

#### Results

- The average SPS-6 score for FMR clients improved from 16.8 (moderate productivity) to 26.2 (high productivity) after counseling
- 98% of FMR clients with a productivity problem recovered to no longer have this problem after counseling
- FMR clients had significantly greater productivity improvement than self/other referral clients after counseling

#### Work productivity: change in average score



## Case study: Formal management referrals

### Absenteeism

The Workplace Outcome Suite (WOS) is a psychometrically-tested and validated five-scale questionnaire used to measure the impact of EAP interventions. It assesses changes in work-related outcomes over time and includes a scale for measuring absenteeism, which CuraLinc uses to track work time lost in the past 30 days due to personal problems.

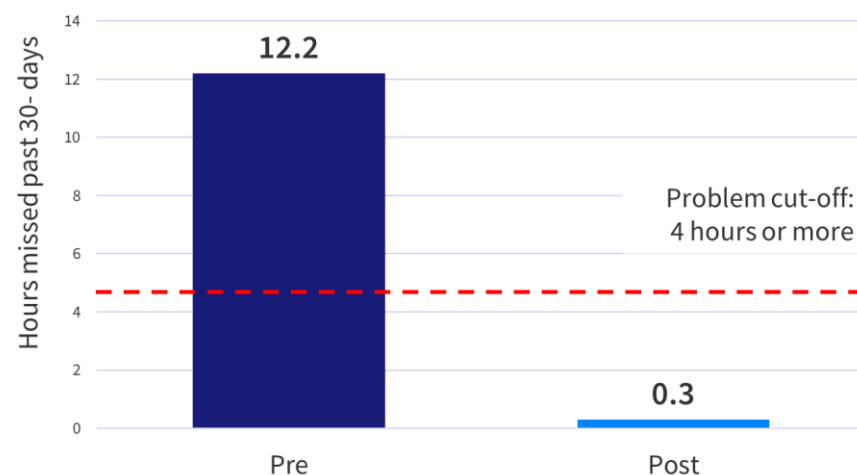


FMR clients missed 11.9 hours less work time after completing counseling.

### Results

- The average time missed from work for FMR clients (on average) dropped from 12.2 hours per month to 0.3 hours per month after counseling
- 98% of FMR clients with an absenteeism problem recovered to no longer have this problem after counseling
- FMR clients had a significantly better improvement in absenteeism compared to self/other referral clients after counseling
- For context, the typical FMR client had 4 times the amount of missed work than the average employee before counseling

### Work absenteeism: change in average



Formal Management Referral Cases

2017-2022 /  $n = 617$

# Case study: Formal management referrals

## Hours of lost productive time

CuraLinc used the combined data from the WOS work absenteeism measure and the SPS-6 summary score (after re-coding) to determine the total work productivity loss among participants due to absence and hours lost to work presenteeism before and after counseling.

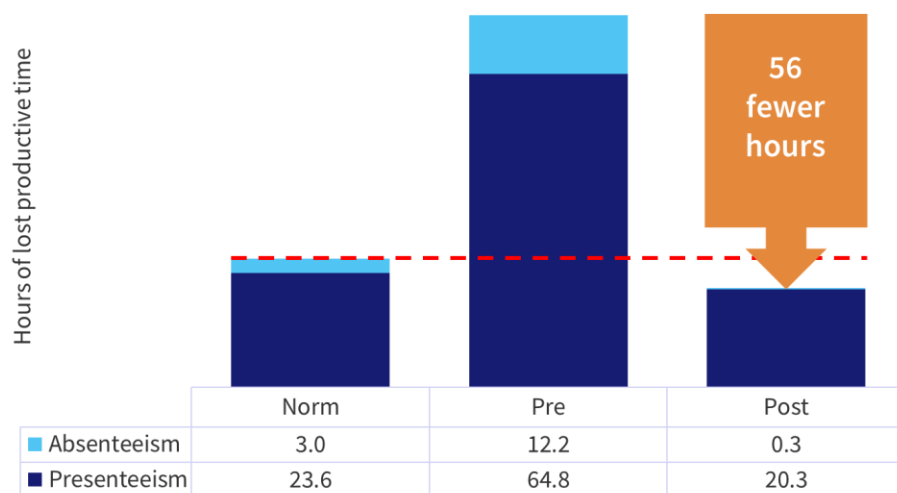


FMR clients reported 56 fewer hours in lost productive time after counseling.

### Results

- The average number of combined hours of absence and lost productivity per month for FMR clients decreased from 77 hours to ~20 hours after counseling
- For context, the typical FMR client had nearly 3 times the amount of LPT than normally experienced by most employees in general before counseling

## Hours of unproductive work time per 30-days



Formal Management Referrals

$n = 617$

## Case study: Formal management referrals

### Alcohol use

The Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT) is a 10-question screen developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a simple way to screen and identify people at risk of developing alcohol abuse concerns. The AUDIT was only offered to employees who presented with alcohol use or abuse during the initial clinical assessment.

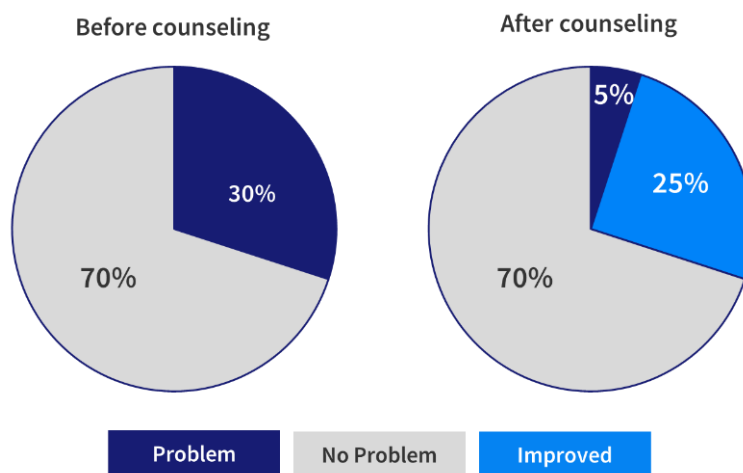


83% of FMR clients with an alcohol risk recovered after counseling to no longer have a risk.

### Results

- The percentage of FMR clients who were at risk for harmful alcohol use changed from 30% of clients to only 5% of clients after counseling
- 83% of FMR clients who initially had an alcohol use risk experienced recovery and were no longer considered at-risk after counseling
- The improvements in alcohol use risk after counseling were more noticeable in FMR clients than self/other referral clients because the FMR clients initially had more severe problems with work and health, mainly related to alcohol

### Reduction in percentage of cases at-risk for alcohol misuse disorder



Formal Management Referral Cases

Phase 2 /  $n = 101$



## Case study: Formal management referrals

### Mental health risk

CuraLinc measured counseling's impact on employees' mental health risk using the Patient Health Questionnaire-2 (PHQ-2) and the General Anxiety Disorder-2 (GAD-2). They used two depression questions and two anxiety questions to assess common symptoms like low mood, loss of interest, excessive worry, restlessness, and difficulty concentrating. These questions were given only to employees who presented with depression or anxiety during the initial clinical assessment.

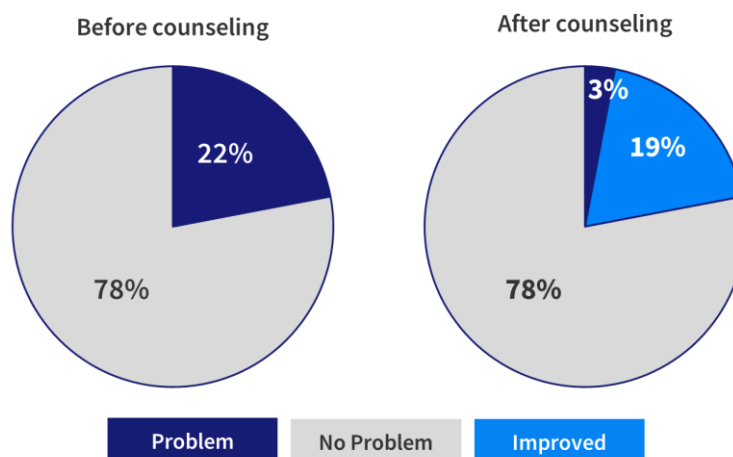


FMR clients experienced an 82% reduction in the severity of depression symptoms after counseling.

### Results

- The prevalence of mental health risk among FMR clients decreased significantly from 22% to only 3% after counseling
- 82% of FMR clients who initially presented with mental health risk experienced recovery and no longer faced this risk after counseling
- FMR clients had significantly stronger relative improvement in reducing mental health risk compared to the self/other referral clients after counseling

### Reduction in percentage of cases at-risk for mental health disorder



Formal Management Referral Cases

Phase 2 /  $n = 101$



## Case study: Formal management referrals

### Conclusion

CuraLinc Healthcare's counseling positively impacted the health and wellbeing of employees who completed formal management referrals through the program.

- FMR clients reported a 56% increase in productivity after counseling, on average
- FMR clients missed 11.9 fewer work hours per month after counseling, on average
- FMR clients encountered a significantly greater loss of unproductive time, resulting in a total reduction of 56 hours in lost productivity per month, on average
- 83% of FMR clients with an alcohol risk recovered after counseling to no longer have a risk
- FMR clients experienced an 82% reduction in the severity of mental health risk (anxiety and/or depression) after counseling

For additional information regarding this study, visit [EAPOutcomes.com](http://EAPOutcomes.com) to review the complete analysis published in the [International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications \(IJSRP\)](#).