



Investing in Workplace Mental Health: A Buyer's Guide



How to Evaluate and Choose Vendors	4
How to Determine if You Should Replace or Augment Your EAP	9
Your Mental Healthcare Buyer's Checklist	10
Headspace Overview	11



For organizations, mental health care is no longer a perk, it's a must-have. Companies are incorporating mental health offerings into their benefit packages because they see how addressing and improving employee mental health is crucial to creating stronger teams, cultivating a more supportive culture, and improving business outcomes on a larger, collective scale.

"While it can seem challenging to invest in employee benefits with limited resources, the data shows that investing in mental health pays dividends when it comes to productivity and engagement – and as a result, business outcomes. Leaders must recognize how showing up for their people to help them prioritize their wellbeing enables employees to show up more for their customers and teams. It's a win-win."

Lisa Mulrooney Gross
Chief People Officer, Headspace

Even as budgets shrink, the demand for mental health support is growing. More than half of employees have considered quitting their jobs due to mental health challenges. In response, forward-thinking benefits leaders are seeking more value—not just more vendors. They're prioritizing solutions that are personalized, AI-enabled, clinically effective, and inclusive. It's no longer enough to check the mental health box. Support needs to be accessible, engaging, and actually used—building a healthier, more resilient workforce in the process.

With employee mental health on top of mind, benefits buyers are taking it a step further and looking more closely at the value delivered by the abundance of mental healthcare options on the market. Today, a mental healthcare offering, virtual or otherwise, should have the flexibility to meet the needs of all employees and have the capability to demonstrate high engagement, improved health outcomes, and clear value for the company – and the individual.

How To Evaluate and Choose Vendors

Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) have been a constant in the employee benefits space, but few employees know they have one, let alone use it. It's important you find an EAP that employees will want to use. Whether you're looking to replace your EAP or supplement it, here's what you can look for as a benefits buyer:

✓ Covers the Full Spectrum of Needs

Many mental health solutions treat mental health like an isolated episode of care, with a focus on diagnosing, treating, and discharging. They often funnel people unnecessarily into clinical modalities, such as therapy, as the entry point of care, regardless of their actual need state. Yet, mental health is not a problem that is fixed at one point or one severity level.

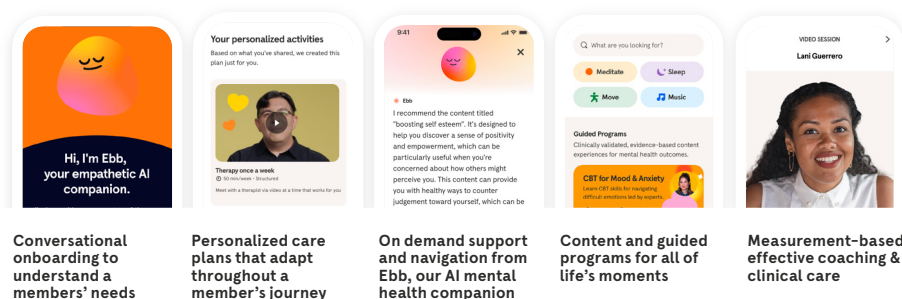
A personalized care approach utilizing multiple modalities is necessary to address your employees' ever-changing and continuous mental health needs. A system that offers varying levels of care, including coaching, therapy, psychiatry, work/life services, and skill building resources, is vital to connecting people with the level of care they need, when they need it. Whether they're not getting enough sleep, struggling with anxiety, or dealing with substance use issues, members should be able to access support through a personalized care plan – not a one-size-fits-all approach.

✓ Provides a Personalized Care Approach for Mental Health

Whereas traditional EAPs have not evolved beyond episodic and high acuity care, today's mental health benefits should cover a full spectrum of support and make it easy for your employees to have a go-to resource no matter what they're dealing with.

This approach ensures that every member gets the right care for their needs. Members with needs that are subclinical or mild in nature can be adequately supported with skill-building resources and mental health coaching, while members with higher levels of need can engage in therapy and psychiatry.

For members with more complex clinical conditions, a team-based, multidisciplinary model is key. A solution should be able to adequately address needs like substance use disorder and suicidality, among other serious mental illness diagnoses. Studies have shown positive outcomes for anxiety and depression when coaching and clinical care are combined to provide support.¹ A multidisciplinary care team consisting of a coach, therapist, and/or psychiatrist allows for a collaborative approach to supporting a member's care plan and goals and a seamless transition when the member's needs change.





Offers Easy Access to Quality Care

More than 1 in 5 U.S. adults experience a mental illness each year,² but access to mental health providers remains a key challenge due to provider staffing shortages, high cost of care, stigma, and other barriers. In one secret shopper study, more than 80% of mental health providers from 12 plans in six states were unreachable, not accepting new patients, or not in-network.³

This signals a critical shortage of clinicians available to help a growing number of people wanting quality mental healthcare. In today's access crisis, a person in-need of care must often wait weeks, if not months, for an appointment. We can solve this shortage not simply by adding more clinicians, but also, by adding more layers of care.

In contrast to the fragmented experience many have while accessing care, benefits leaders can now provide their employees fast and easy access to additional layers of care, such as clinically-validated digital content and behavioral health coaching. An effective, personalized, virtual mental health offering allows members to go through a streamlined onboarding process and access care through phone, app, video, chat, or in-person, which enables them to easily access care that meets their preferences. This shift redefines mental healthcare, opening up new avenues for people who may have thought therapy and psychiatry were the only options.

Members who require or desire more support should be able to schedule an appointment with a therapist in a timely manner, so they can receive care from a licensed clinician. By getting connected to the right care at the right moment, members are more likely to get the mental health support they need both in the short and long-term.

WHAT DOES EASY ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTHCARE LOOK LIKE?

The Headspace member experience

- < 2 minutes to chat with a mental health coach
- 1 day on average to first therapy appointment
- Immediate, on-demand access to self-care content

✓ Drives Meaningful Member Engagement and Personalization at Scale

What's equally important for a mental healthcare offering is that it drives engagement and fosters member satisfaction. A mental healthcare offering should be well-known and understood, a solution that's not only present within a benefits ecosystem, but also everyday life. As the personnel that supports employee well-being and satisfaction, benefits leaders should have access to resources that help to normalize mental health, destigmatize seeking help, and drive cultural change in their workplace.

Headspace's global recognition supports employee adoption. When an employee or their family member sees Headspace on their Starbucks app, the Headspace Series on Netflix, or the Headspace App displayed on a friend's phone, they feel more inclined to engage.

A best-in-class mental health solution should also intelligently guide members to the right level of care and resource using AI-powered personalization. Headspace takes stratified approach to care, leveraging conversational AI to evaluate a member's needs, symptoms and risk factors at the onset and then intelligently guide them to the most appropriate level of care within Headspace's ecosystem—whether coaching, therapy, psychiatry, self-guided tools, or work-life services. It's critical to look for vendors who incorporate responsible AI as part of their long-term innovation strategy.

✓ Promotes Positive Culture Change

On an organizational level, benefits leaders should also consider a solution that invests in leadership training and supports a company culture of good mental health. Offerings like manager consultations, workplace webinars, and critical incident support are essential in building a supportive, healthy workplace. Expert-backed guidance should be available to help leaders destigmatize discussions around personal and life issues (i.e. financial stress, sleep issues, and more) and connect members to their mental health benefits when their needs are mentioned. Headspace's EAP is built to serve as an extension of your staff in this way.

Headspace Culture goes one step further to catalyze positive culture change. As a part of your EAP offering, Headspace Culture provides up-to-date mental health resources to inspire and educate both benefits leaders and teams. Interactive, skills-based leadership workshops cover a wide range of mental health conversations and content to help leaders engage in and model best practices around mental health. Benefits leaders and members also receive regular newsletters, educational guides on various topics related to employee mental health, and invitations to live and virtual experiences.

DRIVING ENGAGEMENT WITH HEADSPACE CULTURE

A partnership that helps you deeply understand your channels, population, and best practices to reach them.

- Weekly engagement reports on new enrollments, monthly active use, and what content in-app members are using most
- Tailored communications strategy to promote mental health services in a way that resonates with your workforce
- Live meditations and themed workshops led by in-house mental health experts to promote skill building and community building
- Leadership trainings for leaders and managers on how to engage in self-care and build cultures of growth, empathy, and compassion

Delivers High-Quality, Evidence-Based Care That Drives Outcomes

It's not enough to have members use the services offered. It's crucial that those services deliver outcomes. For buyers, mental health benefits should provide measurement-based care (MBC) and must have the data to show positive outcomes for its members. By using MBC – the systematic, longitudinal, and action-oriented tracking of individualized outcomes such as symptom severity and goal attainment⁴ – providers can continuously measure and follow up on care, with options to escalate and deescalate care when needed. Unfortunately, today, less than 20% of mental healthcare providers practice MBC.⁵

Validated clinical assessments, such as the PHQ-9, the GAD-7 and the Perceived Stress Scale, are examples of MBC metrics used to track symptom improvement for mental health conditions like anxiety and depression, and identify members with high acuity needs. The outcomes of these assessments ensure both the effectiveness of the provider and the clinical quality of the care delivered. It also allows an employer to understand the health of their employee population and areas for improvement.

As benefits leaders seek mental health benefits that their employees actually use, they need a vendor that cares about delivering value holistically. An effective mental health solution should deliver cost impact studies and peer-reviewed and outcomes research that prove their ability to improve member symptoms while also lowering costs for the employer. Outcomes should also come with aggressive performance guarantees that ensure the member population is receiving timely availability of both virtual and in-person care.

Meets the Needs of Your Entire Population

A quality mental health provider should be able to provide personalized, evidence-backed support to your entire employee population, regardless of their race, ethnicity, age, or geographic location.

Diverse care team

A diverse set of providers is critical to ensuring members receive culturally-responsive care with a provider who understands that identity and lived experience influence mental health needs. One study found that Black psychologists represent 4% of providers in the U.S. even though Black Americans represent 13% of the nation's population.⁶ Mental health benefits should be inclusive and give members the option to connect with both virtual and in-person providers that reflect their identity.

Support for the whole family

Employee mental health is often tightly intertwined with the health of their families, which can include children, teens, and any elderly household members they might be supporting. Providing a broad spectrum of mental healthcare to support families is essential. Through their benefits, parents and caregivers should have access to expert-backed self care content and coaches and clinicians with family care expertise. Dependent teens and children should also have access to resources and tools to support their mental health and well-being.

Global footprint

Today, many companies have employees that are located in different parts of the world. With a virtual mental healthcare offering, members should be able to access support and content from wherever they are and in a language they can understand. Coaches, mediation teachers, and other mental health experts should have training and experience in creating safe spaces for diverse communities and making mindfulness and mental health topics accessible for all.

HOW CAN YOU REACH MORE OF YOUR EMPLOYEE POPULATION?

Offer an approachable, wider front door to care that includes:

- Easy ways to initiate engagement
- An excitement for the benefit
- Consumer grade member experience
- Providers who validate and put psychological safety first

Increases Visibility into Work-Life Services

When thinking about how to deliver better mental health services – such as supplementing or replacing an existing EAP – it is critical for benefits teams to deploy a solution that is easy-to-promote, easy-to-find, and easy-to-use.

The solution must provide support for a broad array of challenges, including life issues that impact someone's mental health, providing employees with easily accessible work-life services through a self-service app or desktop experience. A mental health partner should also train coaches and therapists to navigate the member to relevant EAP resources when a specific need is uncovered. Finally, a solution should provide continuous education on the value of work-life services, including easy access to elder care, child care, financial and legal support.

Removes Barriers to Care

Benefits leaders have firsthand insight into employee sentiment when it comes to their healthcare benefits and EAPs. What are your employees saying about their benefits? Are they finding the help they need, or facing hurdles to support?

To ensure employees are accessing and using their benefits, a mental healthcare vendor should offer care that is member-centric. Through their EAP, HR personnel should have services on hand that help their employees to navigate and get connected to the care they need, while also using a confidential and discreet approach to providing support.

A SNAPSHOT OF HEADSPACE CONCIERGE SERVICES

- Providing immediate phone support from a licensed, master clinician
- Vetting and initiating connections to work/life service providers
- Helping members understand what benefits they have available to them through their employer
- Ensuring the provider they're working with is the right fit for their needs and preferences
- When specialized, off-platform care is needed, vetting in-network, clinically-appropriate providers who have availability and providing a warm hand off
- Ongoing case review and step-down support

Fosters a Positive Vendor-Client Relationship

Benefits buyers should have a seamless experience integrating mental health benefits into the organization with the support of the vendor. From an implementation timeline to regular meetings on well-being strategy, a robust mental health partner should provide leaders with the tools and resources their organization needs to easily launch new benefits.

In addition, a vendor should be committed to producing positive outcomes for the employees and the organization as a whole. They should demonstrate responsiveness both on a day-to-day basis and in times of crisis. In particular, critical incident stress debriefings and account management need to be reliable, so when incidents happen, employees have immediate support they can trust. Importantly, a virtual mental health solution should also provide ongoing reporting analytics on enrollment, engagement, and outcomes-based metrics to demonstrate value.

How to Determine if you Should Replace or Augment Your EAP

Investing in a mental health solution can drastically improve access, engagement, outcomes, and company culture. However, that investment can look different for every organization. Whether you are looking to replace or supplement your EAP, Headspace has options that will work for you.

See below for considerations as you navigate enhancing your mental health benefits:

WHY YOU MIGHT SUPPLEMENT YOUR CURRENT EAP

- You have a strong existing relationship with your current EAP vendor
- You are locked into a multi-year contract
- The EAP is free with your health plan

WHY YOU MIGHT REPLACE YOUR EAP

- You see extremely low utilization
- Your employees have little awareness of your EAP offering
- You have experienced challenges with account support
- You have received little or no reporting on how your EAP is performing

Your Mental Healthcare Buyer's Checklist

☐ Comprehensive, End-to-End Care

- **End-to-end support** across the full spectrum—from prevention to high-acuity care
- **Family-inclusive care**, including resources for kids, teens, and caregivers

☐ High-Quality, Accessible Support

- **Fast access** to licensed, high-quality providers when it matters most
- **Diverse provider network** to meet cultural and identity-based needs
- **Personalized care at scale** through responsible AI and smart triage

☐ Engagement That Actually Works

- **Support your people will actually use**—designed to feel approachable and relevant
- **Measurement-based care** that proves impact through real outcomes
- **Experiences that drive engagement** and build workforce resilience

☐ A True Strategic Partner

- **Collaborative vendor relationship** with data, guidance, and hands-on support
- **Culture-building tools** to help you create a more mentally healthy workplace



The Only Proactive System to Support Mental Health Continuously

Headspace is a globally-beloved mental health brand that reduces stigma, drives engagement, and opens a wider door to support. Whether you choose to replace or supplement your EAP, you will be supported by a proactive system to improve mental health continuously:

MENTAL HEALTH COACHING

Members have access to on-demand, unlimited, 24/7 mental health coaching. Coaches provide longitudinal support for life's challenges and keep members on track between clinical care.

THERAPY

Via phone, video, or in-person sessions, members tackle complex mental health needs by partnering with licensed, high-quality providers experienced in various treatment specialties, such as depression, anxiety, and work stress.

PSYCHIATRY

Evidence-based psychiatry services provided by board-certified psychiatrists via video call help members understand their treatment options, track symptoms and side effects, and adjust medication based on their needs.

24/7 PHONE LINE

Phone calls with a licensed counselor are available to members 24/7, providing in-the-moment support and connections to other resources.

SKILL-BUILDING RESOURCES

Members have unlimited, on-demand access to evidence-based mindfulness, meditation, and well-being content to support their everyday mental health.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Members, together with their teams, have the opportunity to participate in live meditations and workshops, as well as engage in in-app community sharing.

MANAGER SUPPORT

Provide your team with guidance around improving job performance, addressing conflict, and managing issues of harassment.

WORK/LIFE SERVICES

Help members in need find local resources including housing, food, elder care, child care, as well as financial and legal services.

CRITICAL INCIDENT SUPPORT

Helping during an organization's most vulnerable moments by providing on-site or virtual services to aid in recovery.



Headspace | Headspace Care | Headspace EAP

Headspace does all of this and more – [find out how we can help today.](#)

¹ JMIR Formative Research, 2021. "Association Between Care Utilization and Anxiety Outcomes in an On-Demand Mental Health System: Retrospective Observational Study."

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2023. "About Mental Health."

³ The Hill, 2023. "Congress urged to tackle 'ghost networks' amid mental health crisis."

⁴ Quality Measures For Mental Health And Substance Use: Gaps, Opportunities, And Challenges.

Pincus, H. A., Scholle, S. H., Spaeth-Rublee, B., Hepner, K. A., & Brown, J. (2016, June). Quality Measures For Mental Health And Substance Use: Gaps, Opportunities, And Challenges. Health Affairs, 35(6). doi: <https://doi.org/10.1377/hlthaff.2016.0027>

⁵ Lewis CC, Boyd M, Puspitasari A, Navarro E, Howard J, Kassab H, Hoffman M, Scott K, Lyon A, Douglas S, Simon G, Kroenke K. Implementing Measurement-Based Care in Behavioral Health: A Review. JAMA Psychiatry. 2019 Mar 1. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6584602/>

⁶ JAMA Network, 2020. "Association of Racial/Ethnic and Gender Concordance Between Patients and Physicians With Patient Experience Ratings."

