



# Logistics & Transport

Sector EAP analysis  
and clinical insights

  
**assure**  
PROGRAMS

## COMMENTARY

### Introduction

This report considers the psychosocial risks and insights derived from EAP (Employee Assistance Program) observations for customers in the Logistics & Transport Sector. It is intended to support Assure Programs' business partners in exploring trends at an industry level and is best used in conjunction with each customer's individual EAP reporting and other data sources, to inform proactive mental health and wellbeing strategies.

Assure covers over one million Australians across all industry sectors including employees' family members, and in 2019 provided 65,000 hours of EAP counselling and 6,800 hours of support for critical incidents and significant events. 77% of all Assure's counselling sessions were face to face, and 95% of clients were either 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with their counselling experience.

In the Logistics & Transport Sector, Assure provides EAP services to 20 organisations, totalling 21,000 employees plus their families. In 2019 Assure provided 2,200 counselling sessions and 320 hours of support for critical incidents and significant events in this sector.

Mental health issues are the most common reason people are accessing EAP at Assure, comprising 35% of all presenting concerns. Because we only use experienced psychologists (not provisionally registered psychologists, counsellors, social workers or chaplains) we are able to assess and treat these issues (particularly complex and trauma-related cases) using evidence-based interventions. Additionally, if appropriate, we offer continuity of care for longer term treatment in conjunction with a GP Mental Health Care Plan, where clients can receive rebates through the Medicare system when necessary and continue to use the same Assure psychologist if they choose.

### Industry context and psychosocial risks

The Logistics & Transport Sector is a broad industry involving (but not limited to) the transportation of passengers and freight by road, rail, water or air. Employees directly involved in these operations may be subject to a unique range of psychosocial risks in their working environment, including long working hours and shift work, fatigue and sleep deprivation. These risks may culminate in unsafe workplace behaviour, accidents, or even fatality (e.g., road or aircraft crashes, derailed trains). Operators in these contexts need to demonstrate continuous vigilance regarding issues of safety and compliance, including the need to continuously concentrate and remain focussed for extended periods in order to keep oneself and others safe. These demands may invariably lead to a reduction in cognitive ability and an increased risk of fatigue and safety incidents, particularly if there are insufficient opportunities for rest and recovery.

An additional factor to take into account is that many workers in this industry, such as drivers, pilots or other transport providers, are likely to spend minimal time at a fixed work address and more time in transit due to the nature of their role. This may place some individuals at a greater risk of social isolation, particularly if their work requires them to spend extended periods away from their home environment or away from people with whom they can share meaningful social connection. These challenges could be exasperated during periods of high demand and increased workloads (e.g., postal service organisations being required to complete a greater quantity of deliveries over the Christmas period).

There are additional demands, less specific to transport providers and operators, that may also affect employees in this sector. For example, those who provide support services for passenger and freight transport may be frequently required to handle completing or even conflicting responsibilities, such as overseeing fleet management activities, designing and upgrading transport networks and timetables, managing stations, depots, seaports or airports, and maintaining constant vigilance regarding work, health and safety risks. Others in the broader domain of logistics (e.g., postal services) may need to contend with multifaceted responsibilities such as sourcing, warehousing, and storage activities, distribution and production schedules, and so on. These tasks can be a significant source of cognitive demands, particularly when tasks conflict with one another or pose a threat to role clarity.

Above and beyond the specific requirements of an individual's role, it is critical to ensure that employees within the Logistics & Transport Sector are equipped with the coping skills required to maintain their resilience and seek support when it is needed. This may involve equipping managers with the capabilities required to check-in with their staff on a regular basis, gently draw their attention to the support services available (e.g., Assure's EAP service), and actively promote activities that support wellbeing (e.g., receiving adequate sleep and rest). This may be particularly critical in the case of managers who are required to supervise employees from whom they are geographically separated.

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The prevention of unsafe workplace behaviour, accidents and fatalities (e.g., road or aircraft crashes, derailed trains) is of critical importance in the Logistics & Transport Sector, particularly in cases when there are insufficient opportunities for rest and recovery.

With these risks and their potential consequences in mind, there has never been a greater need to equip staff with the coping skills required to maintain their resilience and seek support when it is needed. This may involve equipping managers with the capabilities required to check-in with their staff on a regular basis.

### EAP Insights

The information on the following pages summarises EAP utilisation for Assure's customers in the Logistics & Transport Sector over the past two years, in comparison with all other sectors. We can make the following observations and insights:

- Overall utilisation increased substantially from 4.33% in 2017 to 5.24% in 2018, and again to 7.06% in 2019, compared to 8.15% for the all-sector average in 2019. This increasing degree of utilisation may reflect growing levels of awareness and acceptance of mental health issues between 2017 and 2019. It could also be reflective of year-to-year changes in the psychosocial risks and critical incidents faced by employees in this evolving sector.
- The most common age of clients (32% aged 30-39) is consistent with other sectors, however was somewhat lower than the rate of access for this age group during 2018 (38%). By way of contrast, access was higher for those aged 40-49 in 2019 (27%) than in 2018 (21% in this sector).
- 36% of clients were in their first 2 years of tenure, which was more or less consistent with other sectors during 2019 (37%), but higher than the rate for this age group during 2018 (32%). By way of contrast, 31% of clients had been employed for over 6 years, which was similar to other sectors during 2019 (33%).
- Substantially more clients were male (51%) than for other sectors (37%). This may be consistent with the overall gender mix of employees in this sector, and also highlights the importance of addressing mental health stigma in male-dominated workplaces within the Logistics & Transport Sector.
- Access by family members was more or less consistent between 2018 (8%) and 2019 (10%), and was somewhat lower than the rate of utilisation across all sectors (13%). Ensuring that the families of these employees are aware about the availability of Assure's EAP service for them may help to increase this rate of uptake.
- Employee awareness about their EAP service comes most commonly from their supervisor (33%), which was substantially higher than in other sectors (20%). This was followed by HR or People & Culture (19%), which was slightly lower than in other sectors (22%). This data suggests that equipping HR personnel and supervisors with the capabilities required to support vulnerable staff members and offer a referral to EAP when needed may be of particular importance in this sector, given that these personnel are the primary gateway to EAP for many employees.
- The mix of workplace concerns (36%) and personal concerns (64%) was more or less consistent with other sectors and remained stable. However, it should be noted that whilst relationships and mental health issues are classified as personal concerns, they often have their origin in workplace pressures. Furthermore, workplace issues can often be a factor underpinning stress in the home environment.
- Among personal concerns, relationship issues within couples were the most commonly reported concern (19%), which was consistent with the all-sector average (also 19%). This was followed by symptoms of anxiety (15%) and stress associated with personal demands (7%), which again was more or less consistent with the all-sector average (16% and 7% respectively).
- Among workplace concerns, critical or stressful incidents (11%), concerns about performance and reduced productivity (11%) and excessive workload pressures (10%) were the most common. It was notable that critical or stressful incidents were discussed substantially more frequently in the Logistics & Transport Sector than in other sectors (3%), which was likely the case due to the safety-critical nature of this industry and the potentially greater risk of industrial accidents in this context (e.g., road or aircraft crashes, derailed trains).
- Access to Assure's Manager Support Program was primarily to help employees through change, critical incidents and other stressful situations (49%), which was lower than in 2018 (58%), but much higher than in other sectors (33%). As previously mentioned, this may have been due to the safety-critical nature of this industry and the greater scope for industrial accidents. This was followed by advice about on referring employees to EAP (27%, up from 22%).

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### Mental Health & Wellbeing Strategies

Assure has been working with a number of its customers in the Logistics & Transport Sector to develop and deliver proactive mental health and wellbeing strategies. Every organisation has its own challenges and priorities so there is no one-size-fits-all solution, but common themes include:

- Mental health awareness (for leaders and employees)
- EAP awareness: Assure has an awareness video to allow much greater reach via customer Intranets and email
- Dealing with aggressive customers and difficult customer conversations
- Change management
- Leading resilient teams, including helping leaders to promote resilience in workers operating in a fly-in-fly-out context
- Handling direct or vicarious trauma, such as a major safety incident or an accident involving fatality
- Creating psychologically safe workplaces
- Wellbeing assessments and positive psychology programs have also been helpful for people who are already coping well ('surviving') but want to raise their performance to another level ('thriving').
- Electronic or virtual delivery of training and awareness programs allows employees to access them in geographically remote locations and at times that fit with rosters.

**Resilience and self-care:** Noting the increasingly complex and uncertain environment within the modern workplace, the need to build a resilient and agile workforce is critical. Research tells us that one-off resilience training simply does not cut it, so how can we create sustained behaviour change to help employees and leaders navigate our increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous work environment?

Assure has designed a program Thrive to address this, using an assessment tool based on the 6 key neuroscience pillars of resilience, that can be targeted to the specific needs of each organisation. Acknowledging the need to scale up across large, geographically dispersed workforces, this program incorporates virtual coaching via state-of-the-art technology and artificial intelligence, alongside face-to-face training and coaching programs. This approach provides an interactive and engaging way to build resilience through a comprehensive program tailored to different learning needs.

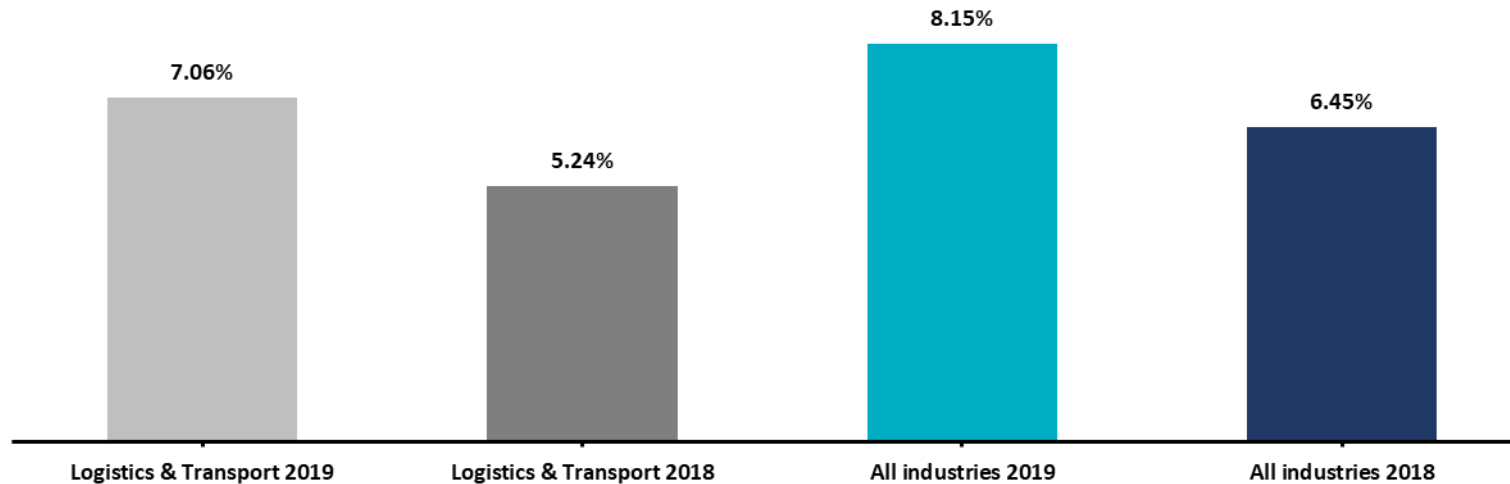
**Psychosocial risk assessments:** As a precursor to deciding on specific mental health and wellbeing initiatives, and to help target investment in the most cost effective way, we would recommend carrying out an assessment of psychosocial risks across your organisation. Assure has developed an online assessment tool the Backbone of Mental Health & Wellbeing in the Workplace which allows business leaders and employees to assess strengths, or areas to improve, within 8 key areas of clinical risk.

If you would like to discuss your strategy for proactively improving the mental health and wellbeing of your organisation, please talk to your Assure Programs Customer Care Manager or call (07) 3211 8919.

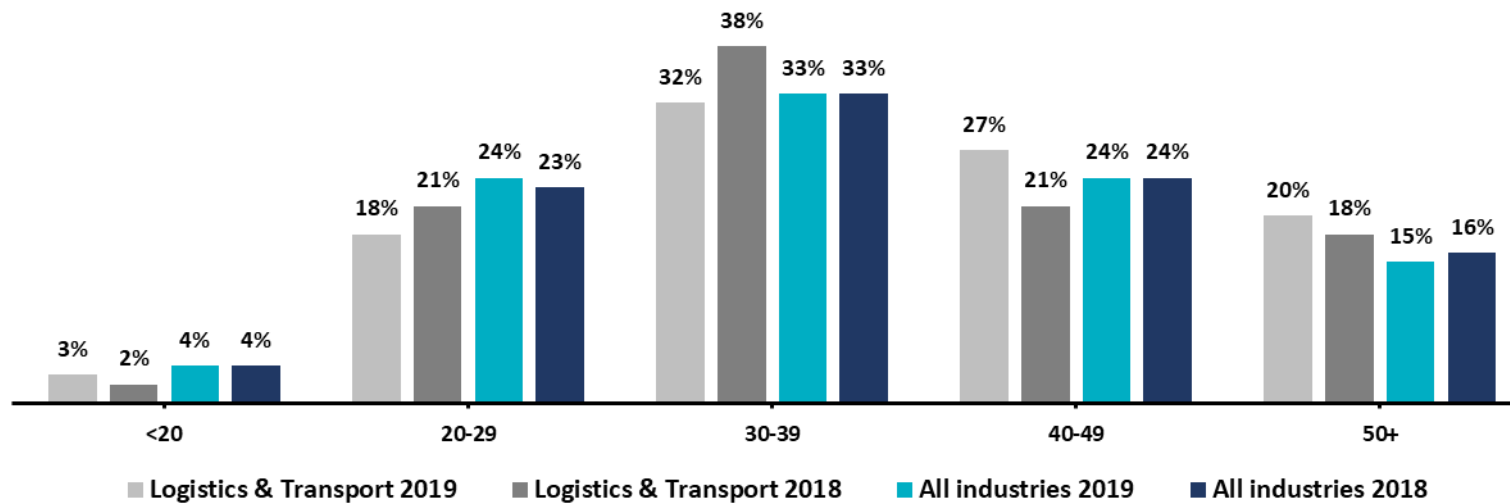
# Logistics & Transport

## WHO HAS BEEN ACCESSING EAP?

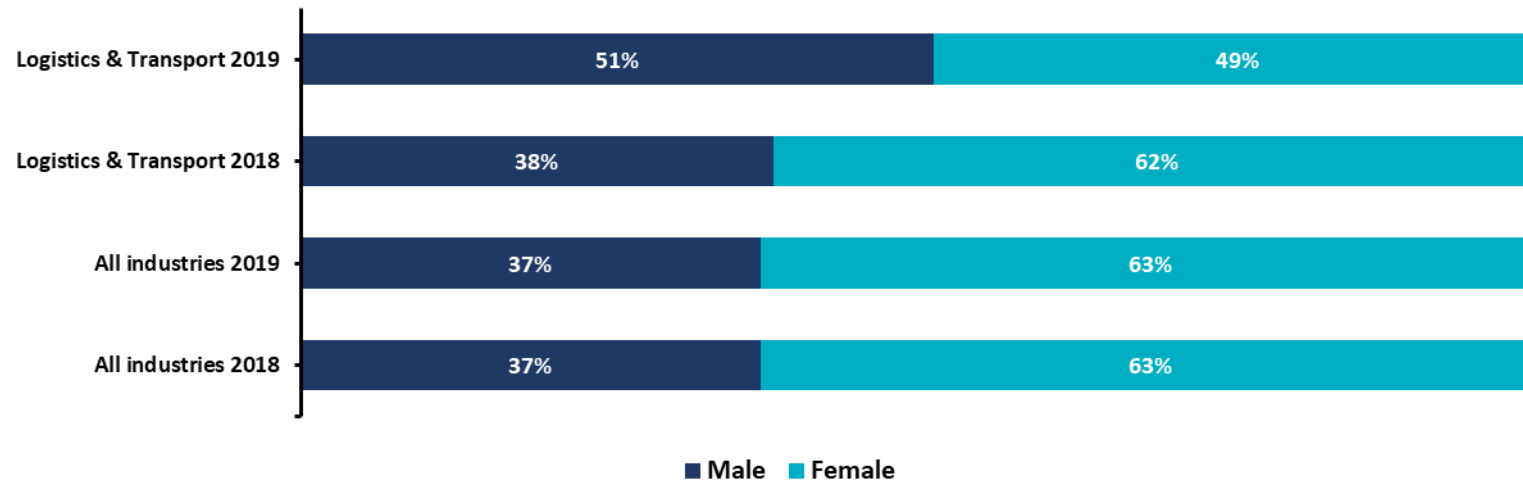
### EAP Utilisation



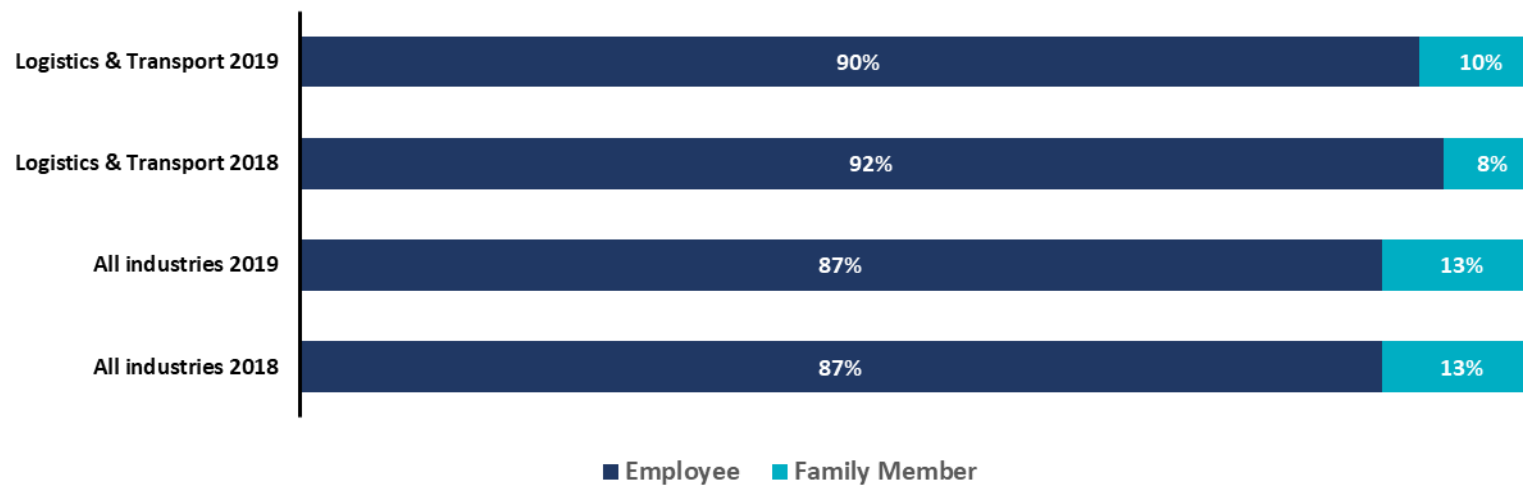
### EAP client age (as % of all clients)



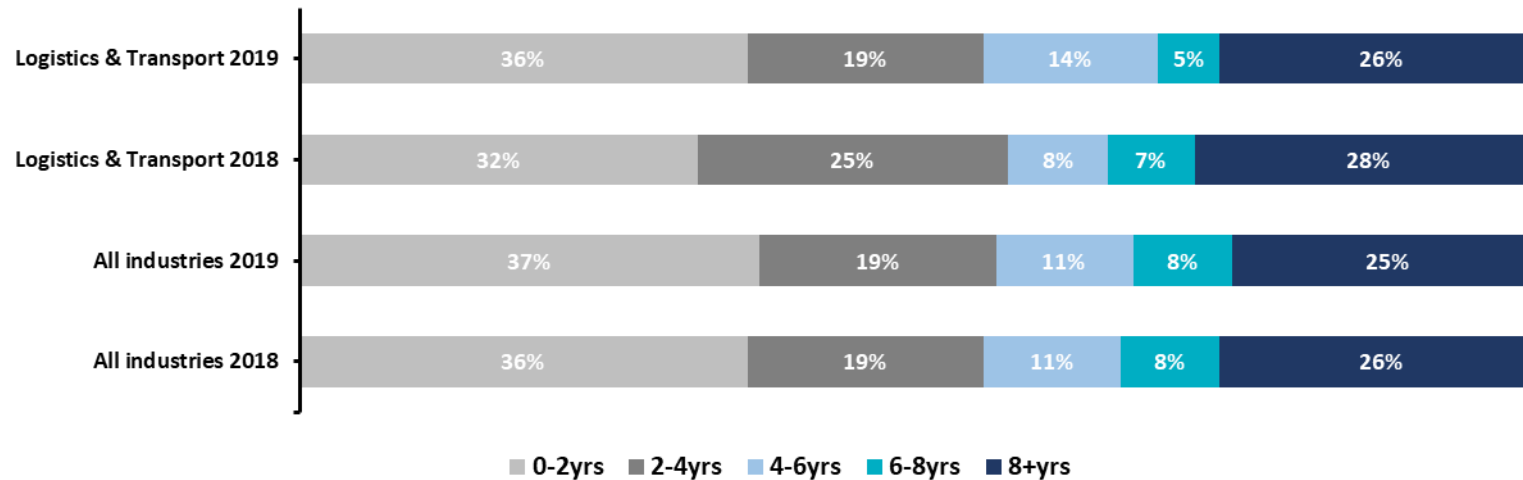
EAP client gender (as % of all clients)



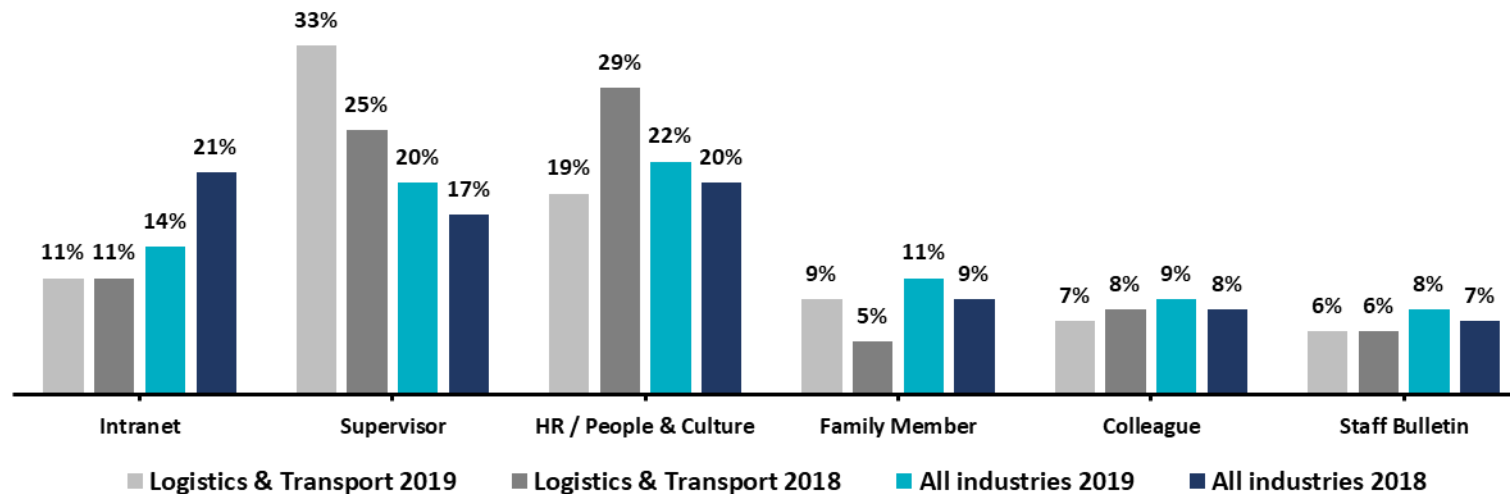
EAP client type (as % of all clients)



EAP client length of employment (as % of all clients)



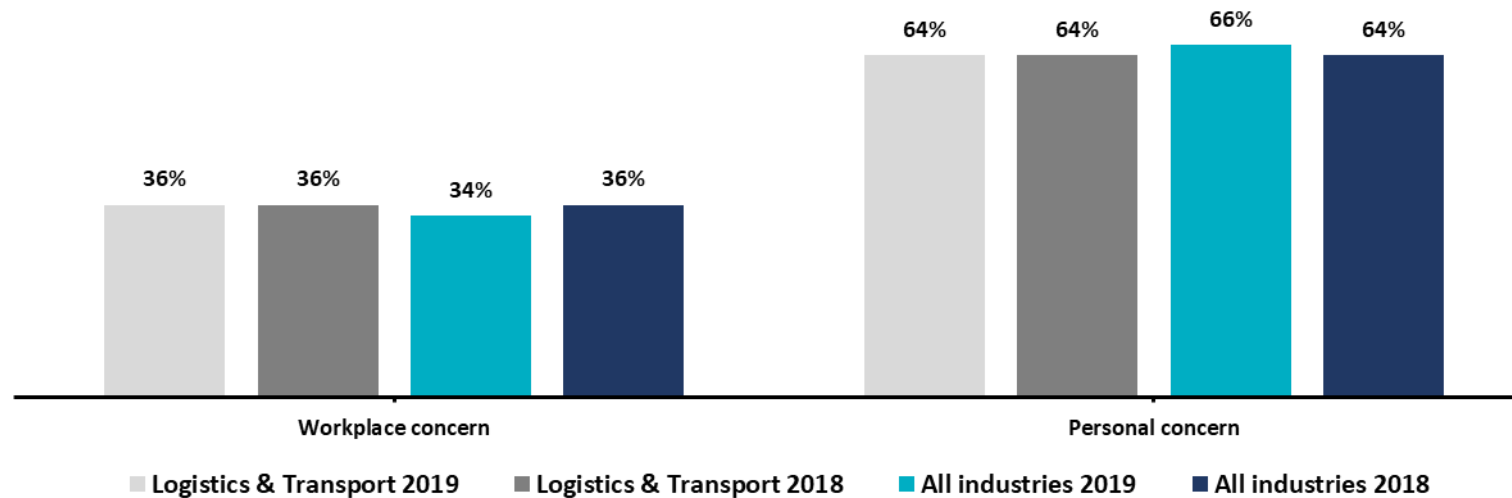
How learnt of EAP? (as % of all clients)



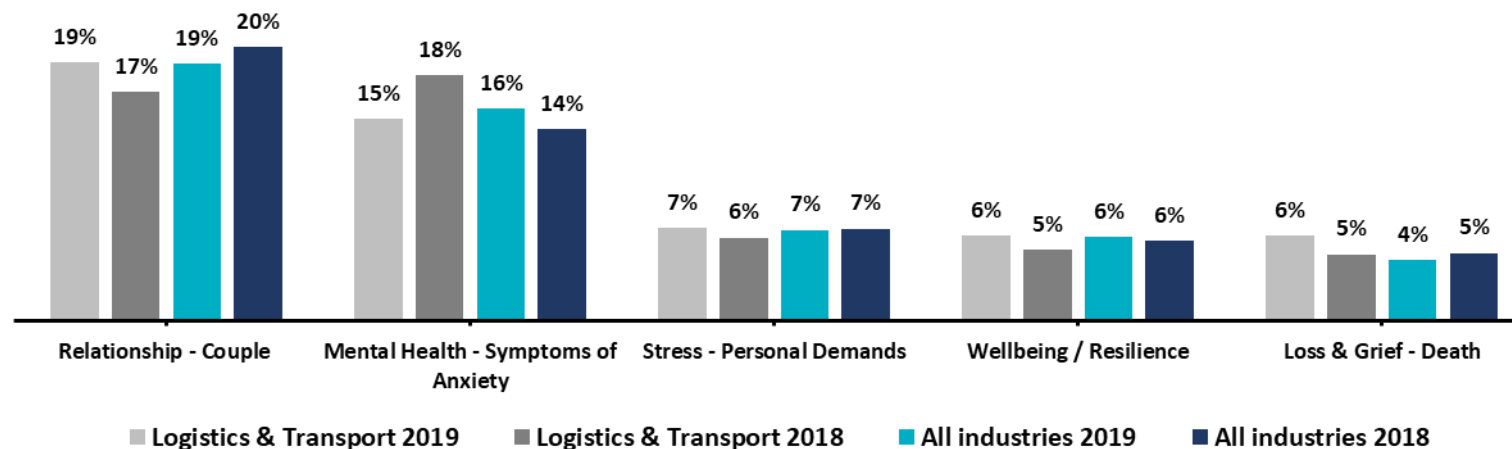
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## WHY HAVE PEOPLE BEEN ACCESSING EAP?

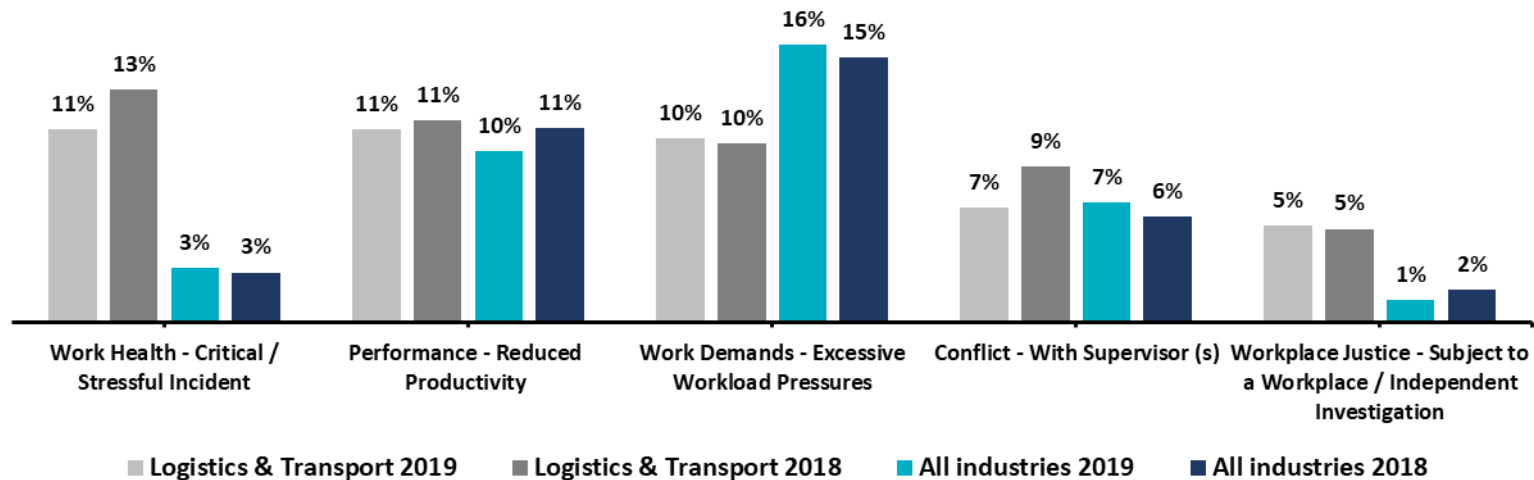
Primary presenting concern (as % of all clients)



Top 5 primary presenting concerns - PERSONAL (as % of all clients)



## Top 5 primary presenting concerns - WORKPLACE (as % of all clients)



## Reasons Managers accessed Manager Support Program (as % of all MSPs)

