



# How to provide effective EAP, coaching and counselling without the stigma

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**Atrium's Directors established their remote Global Wellness service in response to the needs of their clients during their extensive work as global business coaches/counsellors.**

“ We have experienced the stigma associated with obtaining assistance, counselling and coaching everywhere, throughout our careers. Even today, no-one wants to be seen to “need” emotional support, or soft skills support for fear that it might be seen as a weakness or a failing. And many do not want to address or face what holds them back, distracts them at work or stops them performing. ”

Said Atrium Director, Gabrielle Ramsay-Smith.

What they discovered was that Executives who took up coaching and counselling, albeit secretly or in the form of “Executive Coaching”, which was an acceptable way to be seen to have help, found that they were able to deal with their work life more productively, effectively and efficiently. The bottom line was, they dealt with issues and got results.

Professional Sports people disguise their counselling in “sports coaching” to achieve results, as they too have to address their emotional issues (their supposed “weaknesses and failings”). To achieve this, they use psychologists and psychotherapists. The stigma is sidestepped by labelling it “sports coaching” and “training the brain for success”. Annie Vernon, a former Olympic rower, released a book called “Mind Games” where she writes about the secrets of how athletes train their brains in order to become world class performers. She looks at the support that is provided for athletes to deal with competitiveness, confidence, motivation and performing under pressure. These are all the same issues that people in business deal with daily.

Many HR professionals are finding the stigma associated with mental health and its layers of complexities challenging. It starts with the executive team and runs throughout the business. But it's not just in business, it's in our schools and in our societies. Children are ridiculed

by their peers if they need counselling and are seen as “having something wrong with them”. Counselling is often perceived as a punishment in children's eyes. It's no different in wider society, those who need mental health support are seen as less intelligent and weak. Atrium's Head of Global Wellness, James Elder explains,

“ Success assumes a natural talent, when all they have is money or status. ”

Many organisations, charities and celebrities are trying to dispel the stigma associated with mental health support. HRH Prince William is currently spearheading this cause and has recently said,

“ Men are the hardest-to-reach audience on the subject of mental health. Suicide is the biggest killer of young men under the age of 45 and that's an appalling statistic. We need to pass the message onto men everywhere that it's OK to talk. We have to normalise the conversation. ”



Company EAPs and counselling services are not only dealing with crisis issues, many of Atrium's day to day clients are “okay” but want to be “amazing”, and it's because of this complex, multi-layered requirement, that EAP provision is such a challenge for HR. So how do companies achieve this when most people can't disguise EAP or counselling with an “Executive Coaching Program” or “sports coaching”?

**These are some of the obstacles for EAP and on-site counsellors:**

- EAP programs are often cheap due the production-line mentality of call centres and some are limited to 6 or 8 sessions per person. To compensate for these low costs, many EAP providers use inexperienced, low level counsellors that have only had a few weeks of training; the support given isn't always good quality. When it comes to the more complex mental health issues, EAP counsellors refer the client on, as the necessary support is not included in their scheme.
- On-site counsellors make it visible to others in your office that you “need” help which in turn causes stress or avoidance.
- Meeting a counsellor at their office means scheduling time to be out of the office, which you may have to explain to your colleagues, or do it in your own time before or after work or on your annual leave days. This is a big commitment and many will say they haven't got the time.
- Time and cost of travelling for a qualified and experienced coach or counsellor, along with having to allocate days or half-days can make it expensive.

**How Atrium removes these obstacles:**

- ✓ Atrium's Global Wellness service is world class. All therapists are handpicked by Atrium Directors and their psychotherapists are qualified to BACP Standards\*. Atrium's psychotherapists are experienced in dealing with all mental health issues, for all ages and they achieve long lasting results.
- ✓ Atrium reduces the cost of having more qualified psychotherapists by eliminating the cost of time and travel. Their psychotherapists work remotely and therefore do not charge for travel time or costs, only charging for the hour they spend with your employee.
- ✓ Employees can choose where their counselling will take place: their office with the door shut; at home; in their hotel room etc. As long as there is internet connection, the service can be provided remotely via video conference. This makes it more private and less stressful: no-one needs to know.
- ✓ Employees can choose when they have their counselling without explanation or huge commitment: before work; during work; after work; whilst away on business; whilst away on holiday. Atrium's psychotherapists work their schedule around the client's.

Atrium is passionate about mental health at work and understands the influence it has on individual and business performance. If you'd like to have a no obligation discussion with Atrium about these issues please email [info@atriumhr.com](mailto:info@atriumhr.com) and join our mission to ensure that people get the right support, whatever we choose to call it.

\*BACP accreditation requires a first degree, at least 450 hours of tutor contact hours; lasts at least two years (part-time) or one year (full-time); includes a supervised placement as an integral part of the training; covers theory, skills, professional issues and personal development; requires an assessment of competence at the end.

## What Atrium's Clients say:

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Atrium have given me the confidence to recognise what I am good at and what I need to be aware of, and that is already changing my mindset.

**Headmaster, Private School**

I found I was genuinely and vigorously challenged and made to think about how I had fallen into a position where I was performing sub-optimally but convincing myself it wasn't my fault.

**Finance Director, Integrated Service Company**

Atrium's team are very skilled in the 'art and science' of coaching teams to high performance and leadership behavior that are required to deliver business results.

**General Manager of Exploration, International Oil Company**

The service was excellent. It helped me through a tricky patch at work and if I was ever in that situation again, I would reach out to Atrium.

**Private client**

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