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# Fort Bend County Podcasts

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## Podcast Episode 9- EAP Benefits

July 25, 2022

**Gina-** Welcome to this week's Benefit Detective Podcast. I'm Gina.

**Wendy-** And I'm Wendy. Oh, we have a special guest today. We have Monique Lovato. She is with Deer Oaks. Welcome, Monique.

**Monique-** Hi. Thank you for having me.

**Gina-** Mhmm, Monique. Hey. So just talking here, Monique Lovato is with Deer Oaks, also with our EAP. And when people think of EAP, the employee assistance program, they automatically think mental health. And with that being said, we have, I know, a slew of benefits for the mental health side. I know I've used the EAP in the past for other experiences as well. Can you elaborate on the benefits of using EAP for mental health?

**Monique-** Yeah. So our services are short term solution focused counseling, and so the benefit of that is that our goal is to get you the help you need within your 8 sessions. I know a lot of times people tend to put mental health on the back burner, but it really should be a priority. And so we definitely recommend you using our services proactively and so not waiting until it gets to that end point and just knowing that we can help with so many different areas whether it be stress management, work life balance, if you're suffering from anxiety, just family relational problems. So there's so many things or so many different ways that you can use these services.

**Gina-** Oh, wow. That's so good.

**Wendy-** That is good. And I know, EAP offers help with legal assistance and with preparing a will. What are some of the other services that are offered?

**Monique-** Yeah. So with the legal services, we actually offer 2 tiers. We offer unlimited telephonic consultations with the state attorney. So you can call and ask questions on traffic violations, custody battles, divorce issues, small claims court, really anything under the legal realm without with the exception of any type of labor law. And then we have a second tier where if you know absolutely that you are needing legal representation, let's say you're going through a divorce, a custody battle, something like that where you know you need legal representation, we would set you up with a local attorney. And if you choose to hire that attorney, you get a 25% reduction in their hourly rate. As you mentioned, we also do an interactive online will preparation that's available on our website. And so what we do is we give you the coupon code so that way it doesn't charge you for the service. And then, also part of the legal services, we give you access to a legal document library that has over a 100 legal forms that you can download. A lot of those you would actually have to pay for if you went outside to an attorney's office. So some examples would be if you're renting out property, if you're breeding a dog, if you're selling a car, selling a computer, you know, establishing medical power of attorney, private, those



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types of forms. All you have to do is print them out, get them notarized, and they will withhold in court. So those are really helpful. And then we also give you access to, we have videos on estate planning and different things like that.

**Gina-** Oh my gosh. That's so good.

**Wendy-** It's good.

**Gina-** Because, you know, I've been meaning to contact y'all about that will. I really need that in place just to think it ahead, you know, think it ahead. But with Monique, we also noticed that there's stuff on finances. Can you elaborate on that one?

**Monique-** Yeah. So we actually have a whole financial section of our call center. We have accredited financial counselors there that are ready to help. This service is unlimited, so you can use it as many times as you want for budget preparation, debt consolidation, vacation planning, college planning, retirement planning. Really anything under that financial realm of budget preparation is what we can help you with. If it takes you 30 sessions to work with that financial planner, then you can work with them 30 sessions. This is not associated with the 8 visit model, and we even offer Saturday appointments.

**Gina-** Oh my gosh. That's wonderful.

**Wendy-** That is.

**Gina-** I know some people out there are like, you know what? I really need to focus on getting a better credit score for a house or whatever the case may be. That's awesome. That is awesome. Now I know that I've contacted you in the past in regards to my child going to college and just getting additional information. Like, can you elaborate on that as well about the college benefits that y'all provide?

**Monique-** Yeah. So there's so many ways that we can help if you are, you know, your child's getting ready to go to college. We can help with the application process. If you're looking for vocational schools, trade schools in the area, doing the financial aid form. And this is really us this isn't us just going on Google, you know, and pulling up a list and giving that over to you. We actually our, representatives will help and provide packets for you. We will provide you all of the information that you're needing, whether it's the requirements, what you have to submit to us, any specifications that you're looking for, you want to verify that that school has that. Those are all the different ways that you can use this service. And again, it's unlimited. So for as many different reasons as you like, you can use it. It's a whole concierge program, so we can help not only with, you know, college preparation, but this is child care, elder care, and then daily living and convenience, which is, like, pet sitters, house cleaners, travel services, really anything under the realm.

**Gina-** Oh my gosh. That is fantastic.



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**Wendy-** It is.

**Gina-** Wow. Because when you think vacations, pet sitters, and Yeah. Stuff like that or even going into a new area, maybe you moved and you're like, I need a babysitter. What do you do?

**Wendy-** True.

**Gina-** That's fantastic.

**Monique-** We do background checks on babysitters.

**Gina-** Yeah. Wow. I just don't want to leave my kid with just anybody. You know?

**Wendy-** Yeah.

**Gina-** Yeah. That's perfect.

**Wendy-** And I know y'all offer webinars. Can you tell us more about the different webinars y'all have?

**Monique-** Yes. We offer so many. So, really, we roll out all of our webinars in January of every year. We have the whole year set up. We do different webinar series that we offer. So we have a stress management series, a leadership certificate series, a supervisor excellent series, and then we also just host standard webinars on our website that are available on demand.

**Gina-** Oh, gosh. That's so good. Because, yeah, I know that we put out your newsletters, and we we've done all of that as well. So that's always a good thing to have. And if you ever want to go back and look at any of this information, like the newsletters, we do have them on Econnect under Risk Management and Employee Assistant Program with Deer Oaks. Now I know also, Monique that y'all provide a new wellness platform and have great videos. So I was actually on there looking at those videos, and they're wonderful.

**Monique-** Yes. I was so excited to, get those off the ground because those got rolled out in 2024, And so we offer different languages. I think we have over 10 languages that we offer in these videos. I think it's, we have 24 available in English. And then all of these videos are no longer in 10 minutes in length, so that's great. They're quick. They're easy and digestible information. We have everything from physical. You know, we have stretches, breathing exercise to mental, you know, focusing on resiliency, hydration, sun care, just mindfulness, just a lot of different videos that you can download.

**Gina-** Oh my gosh. That's wonderful.

**Wendy-** Great benefits. And I know we have a pamphlet that we give out to our employees that y'all have provided for us. And I noticed under the services, there's one called take the high road program. Can you tell me what that is?



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**Monique-** Yeah. So I love that program because to me, anybody can use it. You know, you don't need, you know, what people think of EAP services for this. So this or take the high road is where we will reimburse you for up to \$45 if you are ever in need of a cab, Uber, Lyft, any type of ride share program. All you have to do is send us a receipt. No questions asked. We're not going to interrogate you. We're not going to ask you why you're using the service or try to sign up for AAT services. Nothing like that. You just send us a receipt. We'll tell you where to send it, and we will send you a check for up to \$45. It is one time per person per year. It is based on calendar year, but it's available to your household. So, Regina, let's say you're going on vacation to New York and you take an Uber to your hotel, you can send us a receipt for that fee and then or for that ride, and then your husband can send us a receipt for when y'all go back to the airport. So you both get your own benefit. It doesn't you know, it's not just per household. And I see people use it in so many different ways. It was initially developed as a safe ride program, but, I mean, I've seen people use it. One of my East Coast clients got snowed in their parking garage. They needed to have an Uber come pick them up. I've had somebody go to the eye doctor, got their eyes dilated, couldn't drive themselves home. So people use it in different ways. It's completely up to you, but you do get it per calendar year. And so it's just a nice a nice little something to have in your back pocket.

**Gina-** Oh my gosh. That's wonderful.

**Wendy-** It's a great benefit.

**Gina-** We have the Fort Bend County Fair here. We have Houston Livestock Show on video. People go to concerts. That's fantastic. I love that.

**Wendy-** Very.

**Gina-** And I'm just curious. Is this only for the US? Because what if you're, like, in Mexico or I was in the Caribbean? Does that work there?

**Monique-** Yes, because you're just sending us the receipt. So as long as you have that receipt, you just send it over to us, and you have 60 days to send us a receipt. So it's not immediately rushed, but you also can't send us receipt from 5 years ago. But Okay. Yeah. Yeah. No questions asked.

**Gina-** Oh my gosh. This is great information, Monique. Thank you so much for joining us today on this and giving us all the benefits of EAP, our employee system program through Deer Oaks, because this is great information that I know a lot of people probably didn't understand or did not realize.

**Wendy-** And there were a few I didn't even know.

**Gina-** Exactly. So this is wonderful. Thank you again.

**Monique-** Yes. Thank you for having me.



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**Gina-** Well, I guess that wraps up this week's benefit detective podcast. I'm Gina.

**Wendy-** And I'm Wendy. And remember, we are back on our schedule, so listen for us on Thursday.

**Gina-** And remember, the benefit detectives are here to help.