



# Welcome Back from EAP

by GAIL M. CARROLL

**W**e would like to welcome you all back to another new school year. Regardless of how many years you have been teaching, the school year often begins with many thoughts, ideas and new goals. I am happy to be back, and I hope you are all thinking about your own needs and self-care as you return to school. Keeping stressors at bay is a realistic goal. It is important to have a plan for how you will care for yourself this year. Eleanor Brown tells us that “*rest and self-care are so important. When you take time to replenish your spirit, it allows you to serve others from the overflow. You cannot serve from an empty vessel.*”

I want to remind you that Judy Beranger and I are available in EAP to assist you with your self-care, wellness and counselling needs. The Employee Assistance Program is a supportive program to provide active members with assistance for personal and/or professional challenges and to foster healthy lifestyles through the Wellness Program. It is a confidential service that provides an initial consultation and referral to an external counsellor. All members employed in the province by school districts or the provincial government can access the Program. Members have access to \$2,000 worth of funding for the lifetime of their career. Once we have spoken with an individual and made a referral to a counsellor in the community for that individual, \$40 per hour will be applied to the bill, i.e., if the counsellor charges \$150/hr. (counselling fees vary), EAP for Teachers will be billed directly for the \$40 and the member will pay the remaining balance and turn that receipt into Johnson's for an 80% refund. Common challenges that are experienced in a variety of life areas that EAP provides support for are: Abuse (emotional, physical); Addictions; Balance (home, personal, work); Career Expectations (others, self); Caregiving; Mental Health Problems; Parenting; Relationships (personal or professional); Stress Management; Grief and Loss.

The EAP also offers workshops in a variety of topics related to wellness and self-care.

Take the first steps to better health:

- Recognize need for support;
- Call an EAP Coordinator;
- With the Coordinator, identify the direction to be taken.

**Note:** Although you may not notice when issues are affecting you, if others have, your administrator may encourage you to seek support through EAP.

The NLTA has just announced its new Medaca Program (*see below*). It is exciting to be able to offer a new service to active members. It shows the commitment the NLTA has to growing and supporting the health and well-being of members.

As you begin this school year, please make a promise and a commitment to do at least one kind thing for yourself each day, to remember that you matter and to schedule in time to care for yourself. “*An empty lantern provides no light. Self-care is the fuel that allows your light to shine brightly!*” (~ Unknown) Here's to lighting the spark that helps each and every one of you to shine brightly this school year!

*Gail Carroll is an EAP Coordinator with the Employee Assistance Program for Teachers. For confidential assistance contact Gail at 726-3223 or 1-800-563-3599, ext. 242, gmcarrroll@nlta.nl.ca, or Judy Beranger, ext. 265, jmberanger@nlta.nl.ca.*

## NLTA Introduces an Early Intervention Pilot Program

In May 2019, the NLTA Group Insurance managers partnered with Manulife and Medaca Health Group to introduce an Early Intervention Pilot Program to help provide better access to medical treatment for members with mental health conditions. This initiative is part of the Group Insurance Managers' ongoing efforts to explore ways to assist members with their mental health and wellness. Effective January 2019, Managers increased the maximum registered psychologist and social worker benefit available to members and their dependants under the Health plan from \$800 to \$1600 per calendar year. This latest initiative is a pilot project aimed at reducing the wait times members experience in accessing care from mental health professionals. The program targets members who are not currently under the care of a mental health professional and who have been off work for less than eight weeks, or who, over the previous year, have been unable to maintain consistent attendance at work.

This pilot program is intended to provide members with timely and effective assessment of depres-

sion and other mental health challenges through a national network of leading psychiatrists. The psychiatrists work with family physicians to help the member recover and return to work. The goal is to improve an individual's health and wellness so they can make a healthy return to productive living. The program is delivered through local psychiatrists or through telemedicine. Mental illnesses can be successfully treated, and research clearly indicates that early diagnosis and treatment leads to better results.

To be eligible to access the program, a member must have Long Term Disability Insurance coverage under the NLTA Group Insurance Program. The first step is then to make contact with one of the Coordinators in the Employee Assistance Program for Teachers (EAP) to assess whether the Early Intervention Pilot Program is the appropriate approach and that the member meets all of the eligibility requirements. Once referred to the NLTA Early Intervention Services by an EAP Coordinator, the member will be contacted by Manulife's dedicated Early Intervention Case Manager, who will provide an overview of the service and ask some questions to better understand the individual's needs. Following the return of this questionnaire, the file will be triaged based on need and a Targeted Mental Health Assessment will be booked with a psychiatrist, normally within 15 business days. Once this assessment is completed, the psychiatrist will consult with the member's family physician to discuss the findings. From there, treatment recommendations will be made, and a copy of the assessment report will be sent to the family physician for review. Manulife's Early Intervention Case Manager is available to coordinate travel, if required, as well as follow-up services and treatment coordination, if applicable.

When dealing with health issues, privacy matters. Medical information shared is never disclosed to any other party unless consent is given by the member to do so. Manulife abides by federal and provincial privacy legislation that protects the confidentiality of personal health information. Quality assurance audits are in place at Manulife to ensure all Case Managers are following the legislation.

To access or inquire about the NLTA Early Intervention Program, please contact an EAP Coordinator at 726-3223 or 1-800-563-3599, ext. 242 or 265, or Manulife at 1-877-827-4710, ext. 217441.

Group Insurance Managers are excited to be able to offer a new service to members to support mental health and wellness. The NLTA is committed to growing and supporting the health and well-being of members!

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