

Frequently Asked Questions

IMPACT's Online Counseling Capabilities

1. Who can use online counseling?

Individuals, couples and teens between the ages of 13-18 with parental oversight. Online sessions are ideal for shift workers, people with busy schedules, those who have limited transportation, those with international language barriers and people who live in rural areas with reduced access to face-to-face counseling options. Online sessions are not appropriate for someone in crisis or with active suicidal thoughts.

2. What counts as an online session?

Our platform allows communication with counselors in multiple ways. A session can be:

- **Text Messaging** exchange over a week (unlimited/non-scheduled texting for any 7 day period)
- **Phone Session** that is scheduled & live, 30-60 minutes
- **Video Session** that is scheduled & live, 30-60 minutes
- **Chat Session** that is scheduled & live, 30-60 minutes

If text messaging occurs in the same week as a phone/video/chat session, it is not considered a separate session.

3. I live in Ohio and selected an independently licensed, masters' prepared provider to be my online counselor. Why did the counselor automatically schedule part of the initial session by video when I wanted phone sessions?

In Ohio, providers licensed by the Counselor, Social Work, Marriage & Family Therapist Board must follow state regulations for online therapy. Within these regulations, an initial session including video to establish treatment guidelines is mandated by law. During the initial session, your preference for therapy by phone, video or chat will be established for future sessions.

4. I'm not sure I feel comfortable using an online counselor. Can I try it out first?

Yes, we offer a 30 day no-risk guarantee to try online counseling. If you decide that online counseling is not for you after completing one or more sessions within the first 30 days, no problem! Just call IMPACT Solutions back to receive a new EAP authorization for the full allotment of complimentary sessions.

5. How quickly can I schedule my first appointment?

After you receive your IMPACT EAP authorization, you will receive an email invitation to complete a simple questionnaire to gather basic demographic information and to specify your counselor preferences. Once the questionnaire is completed (less than 5 minutes), you will be

prompted to schedule an appointment online by selecting an open timeslot(s) on the counselor's calendar. The time from receiving your EAP authorization to starting therapy (average 24 - 48 hours) is largely dependent on your availability, not the counselor.

6. Tell me more about the expertise of these counselors?

Our providers include psychologists and independently licensed counselors, social workers, and marriage & family therapists with a minimum of 3 years of experience. Only 20% of those who apply to become online providers are accepted in the network. All providers must demonstrate a competency to provide therapy online which includes a video interview and a skills platform test.

7. How many mental health providers are available to select from online?

We have over 5,000 mental health providers capable of speaking 44 languages across 168 countries. Currently, we have 163 licensed in Ohio to provide services.

8. Are the online counselors available during evening and weekend hours?

Yes, we offer appointment times 7 days a week including hours outside of the typical 9am-5pm weekday to accommodate all busy schedules especially shift workers.

9. What happens if I can't find an online counselor who has an opening when I want to schedule a session?

Due to our large provider network and the vast array of open appointment times available throughout the day, evening and weekend; this is highly unlikely. In the rare case that you can't find a counselor that aligns with your schedule, an online support team member can help or you can call IMPACT Solutions for assistance with a referral for face-to-face counseling.

10. English is not my primary language. Do you offer counselors who speak other languages?

We have online counselors available in 44 languages and across 168 countries. Specifically, in Ohio, our online providers speak the following languages: English, Spanish, Persian, Hindi, Hebrew, American Sign Language, Mandarin, Urdu, and Yiddish

11. How does my counselor know how many EAP sessions I have authorized to use?

When you requested online counseling, you were given an authorization number that matched the number of complimentary sessions you are entitled to receive from IMPACT Solutions. If you ever have questions about the number of EAP sessions that have been authorized, used to date or if you want information about other payment options; the online support team can help. It is important to know that the online counselor does not know anything about your particular IMPACT EAP session model or other payment options. They are focused solely on providing short term, solution focused therapy.

12. What happens after I exhaust all of my complimentary EAP sessions?

The therapeutic relationship can continue after you exhaust your complimentary sessions by paying \$45 per session. You will be required to enter credit card information only after you exhaust your complimentary sessions and elect to continue as self-pay.

13. What happens if I do not want to pay \$45 for additional online sessions but I want to continue with therapy?

You can work with the online support team member to identify community provider resources or review your employer's behavioral health insurance options in order to continue receiving counseling services.

14. What happens if my online counselor thinks I should be working with an alternative mental health provider/resource due to the nature of my concern?

Our triage team completes an initial assessment from the onset to evaluate if online therapy is an appropriate modality for your particular issue. However, counselors are always assessing individual's potential need for a different level of care. If someone's emotional/mental state is not stable or too vulnerable, such as those dealing with active suicidal thoughts, violence &/or a substance use disorder; the counselor will assist you in the coordination of care to seek more appropriate community resources.

15. Does online counseling really work?

Yes, it really does. A year-long research study conducted by UC, San Francisco, UC Berkeley & Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital & Trauma Center published January 2019 by JMIR revealed online counseling has outcomes that are comparable, if not better than face-to-face counseling.

(https://mhealth.jmir.org/2019/1/e10948/?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=facebook)

16. Tell me more about IMPACT's online counseling vendor partner?

IMPACT is partnering with the best and only public company specializing in telehealth. BetterHelp is the largest organization providing session-based therapy adhering to strict compliance and security standards. They have over 2,000 employees and 3 million users with providers capable of speaking 44 languages across 168 countries.

