



Administration & Finance Division

To: Mayor and Council

From: Jordan Forbes, Human Resources Manager

Date: September 23, 2020

Subject: Proposed addition to benefits coverage – Internet Cognitive Behavioural Therapy

At present, the Corporation of the Town of Fort Frances has an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) through Riverside Community Counselling, which is a part of Riverside Health Care Facilities Inc. While this service is effective, there are limited resources available, and many of our staff have close family or personal relationships with the staff there, which reduces their comfort level in accessing care.

For some time, I have fielded concerns about the stigma that certain staff members feel about accessing mental health services in this way, and in addition, I have heard from them that the limited availability of services in our community presents a problem. The reality is that many of our staff seek mental health services outside of our community.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the use of internet Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (iCBT) has become more commonplace, and it has proven to reliably reduce symptoms of common mental health disorders. In addition, given the pandemic, border closure, and the associated economic decline, the prevalence of mental health issues is likely to increase amongst our staff base. Given this, our CAO directed me to look into the feasibility of providing this type of service to our staff to supplement our existing benefits.

During the summer, the MindBeacon group, who work with the Provincial Government, and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) approached us, offering to provide a demonstration about their services. They have provided the attached proposal outlining their services and benefits.

The cost is \$3.00 / person / month, which is very reasonable to offer a supplement to our EAP and reduce the barriers to our staff accessing mental health services. At present, we would provide the service to our Full Time, Part Time and Seasonal staff (up to a maximum of 120 people).

Based on the cost, and the benefits, we are recommending purchasing this additional benefits coverage to help support the mental health and wellbeing of our staff during the pandemic and beyond.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jordan Forbes".

Jordan Forbes
Human Resources Manager

Council approval of this report will agree to the recommendation of the Administration and Finance Executive Committee to purchase this service as identified in the proposal attached to the report.



Overview for The Town of Fort Frances

August ^{31st}, 2020

MindBeacon Group

[BEACON](#) | [CBT Associates](#)

175 Bloor Street E., Suite 801, North Tower,
Toronto, Ontario, M4W 3R8

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BEACON Digital Therapy

Developed by experts in evidence-based treatment working closely with experts in technology and technology engagement, BEACON is a digitally delivered therapist-assisted course of personalized CBT beginning with a rigorous self-assessment (DSM5) that can provide a full differential diagnosis and personalized treatment plan. BEACON is not just a wellness product, or a loose collection of educational modules, or a CBT-informed self-help tool or something for people to do before they get effective treatment. The BEACON platform and guiding e-therapists together provide a solution that bridges the mental health care gap in a proactive, cost-effective, and scalable way:

- **Patient and provider centered:** evidence-based protocols, personalized care pathways, single therapist (registered mental health professional) effectively support the individual throughout treatment and leverages existing provider capacity.
- **Comprehensive assessment/treatment:** standardized intake, enables accurate and efficient assessment of concerns and recommendations for appropriate care.
- **Reduced barriers to care** including stigma, cost, capacity, geography, scheduling, and treatment fidelity: high efficacy treatment, reduces cost of traditional treatment by up to 75%, 24/7 access is convenient, private, geographically more accessible to those who don't have quality care available in their community.
- **Measurably better patient outcomes:** standardized assessment, comprehensive diagnosis and targeted treatment, effective and efficient triage, monitored outcomes, reduced relapse.

Access to clinically proven Therapist Assisted Internet Cognitive Behavioural Therapy

BEACON - Therapist Assisted Internet CBT (TAiCBT) is CBT delivered virtually with support of a trained BEACON Therapist (a regulated professional, e.g., Psychologist, Registered Social Worker, Registered Psychotherapist, etc.).

Once an employee moves into BEACON therapy, they will complete outcome measures, psychoeducational readings, and homework and activities that are part of an evidence-based CBT treatment protocol in an engaging and convenient way on mobile devices and/or desktop computers.

Employees will regularly communicate with and get support from their assigned BEACON Therapist through asynchronous messaging. In addition to providing tailored advice and information, a working relationship (therapeutic alliance) develops between the employee and BEACON Therapists that increases engagement. The therapeutic alliance also results in better outcomes than passive digital platforms and programs where coaches are involved but do not have active access to client activity.

BEACON therapy includes access to the platform for 52 weeks, including 12 weeks unlimited 'active' access to their BEACON Therapist. During this time, they will progress through their personalized treatment plan at their own pace. They also have 'passive' access for 40 weeks when they can review their content, homework and message history in a way that supports relapse prevention.

Implementing BEACON

In collaboration with the Town of Fort Frances BEACON will develop a comprehensive implementation plan based on organizational culture and employee demographics. Communication plans will be developed to include three key components:

Top-down Support

Visible and enthusiastic support from Champions such as leadership, managers and/or wellness teams encourage and facilitate conversation about available mental health support

Education

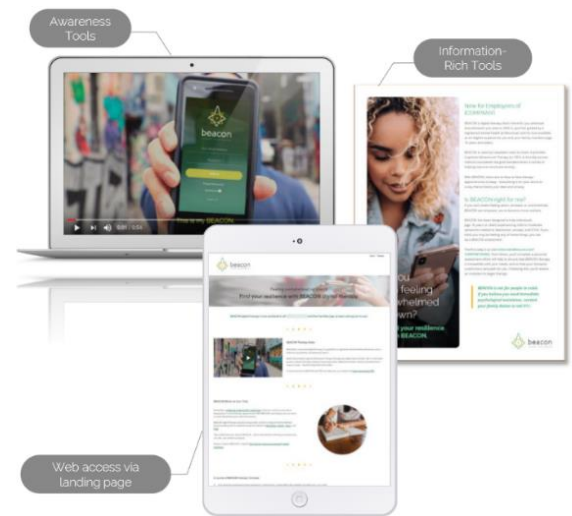
We provide key messaging and tools that integrate insights on how to educate on benefits of CBT and digital therapy

Ongoing Communications

Mental health concerns can arise anytime throughout the year and continuous pulsing of mental wellness content and reminders to keep available support top of mind

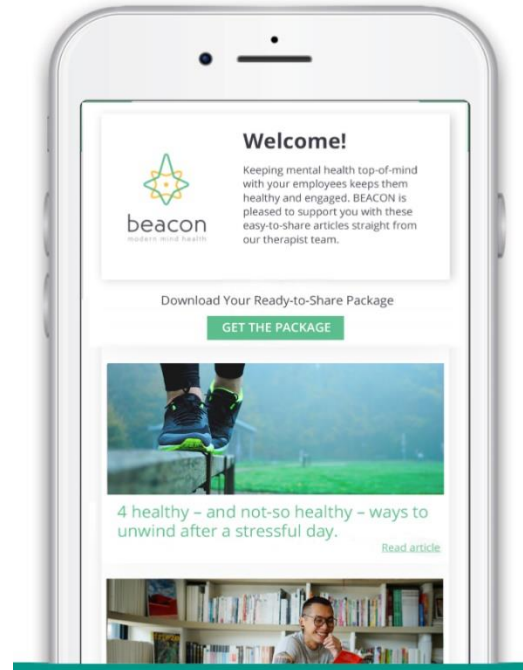
BEACON will provide digital copies of promotional material for all three phases of the communication plan including:

- BEACON webpage for your employees
- Text descriptions for company communications (email, intranet, article, leadership communication, etc.)
- Presentations via webinar or in-person where possible
 - For internal champions (HR, wellness committee, health & safety, management)
 - For employees
- Print-ready tools
 - Posters
 - Postcard
 - Info sheet
 - Digital banners
- Videos
 - Information-rich/educational (example [here](#))
- Support during
 - Bell Let's Talk - Bell Canada- January
 - Mental health awareness week- May
 - Mental Illness awareness week- Oct



Ongoing communications are a key to ensuring your employees are aware of the mental health supports that are made available to them and how to access them should they need support. Our partners receive two mental wellness articles, sourced from BEACON clinicians, every month on topics that are universally relevant to working adults. These articles can be shared across your communication channels (e.g. newsletters, intranet article) with an easy-to-share options provided. Topics include:

- 4 healthy –and 4 not so healthy –ways to unwind after a stressful day
- Are you social media healthy?
- What is CBT? How CBT helps you become resilient
- Setback at work? Here’s how to get over it



BEACON Reporting

BEACON will actively monitor the effectiveness and usage of the program and provide reports accordingly.

Activity Reports are provided monthly highlighting program uptake and usage.

Performance Reports are provided on a quarterly basis, highlighting not only uptake and usage, but also aggregated data of all participants including demographic information, primary mental health concern, mental health improvement, and satisfaction scores. Please see Appendix A for a sample Performance Report.

Pricing

BEACON is pleased to present the following proposal to the Town of Fort Frances for approximately 120 employees and their family members for a 12-month period starting before December 31, 2020:

Employee Type	Price (PEPM)
All Employees	\$3.00

Services to Include:

BEACON Digital Therapy

- BEACON Digital Therapy for the Town of Fort Frances employees and family members
- Online assessment and therapist review of assessment results
- Customized care path based on the individuals presenting concerns
- A dedicated BEACON therapist guides the employee through a full course of CBT treatment, which includes:
 - Unlimited secure messaging
 - Weekly outcome measures
 - Psychoeducational readings
 - Skills-building exercises and activities

BEACON Aggregate Reporting

- Monthly Activity Reports
- Quarterly Performance Reports

BEACON Communication

- Customized launch and promotion plan
- Training for people leaders and employees
- Digital and print-ready promotional tools
- Monthly mental health content

We believe that BEACON Digital Therapy would provide the Town of Fort Frances with best-in-class mental health services focused on early intervention, awareness and access to timely, effective care for mental health concerns. We welcome the opportunity to partner with your organization and very much look forward to discussing this overview.

Sincerely,

Anthony Sam

Business Development Director

BEACON | CBT Associates

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Appendix A

Sample BEACON Performance Report


beacon
modern mind health

Performance Report
[sample]
Reporting Period:
[ddmmyy - ddmmyy]

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beacon

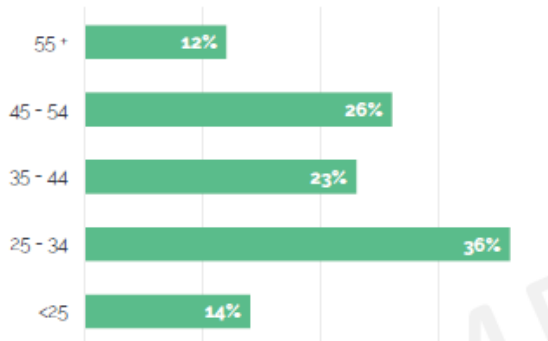
Performance Report

[mmddyyy - mmddyyy]

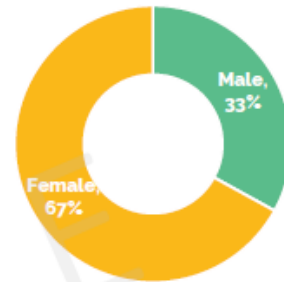
Demographics

Summary of participant demographics.

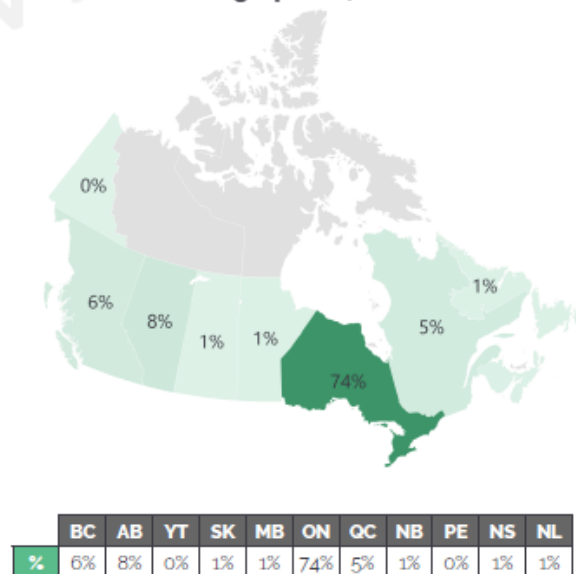
Demographics | Age Range



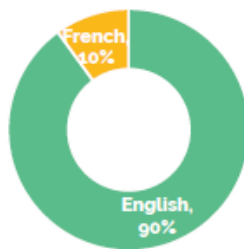
Demographics | Gender



Demographics | Province



Demographics | Language



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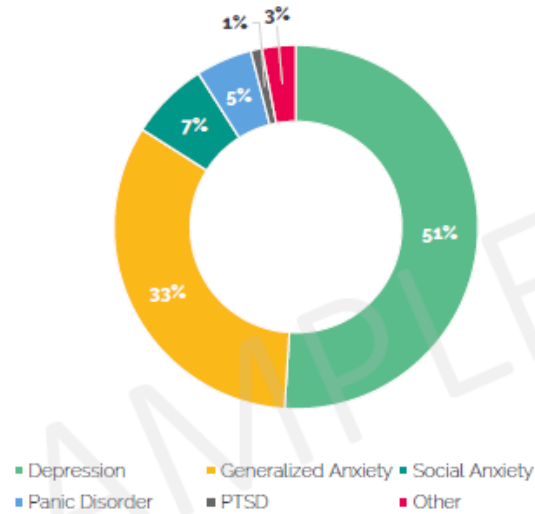
Performance Report

[mmddyyy - mmddyyy]

Protocol and Severity

Summary of participant's primary concerns.

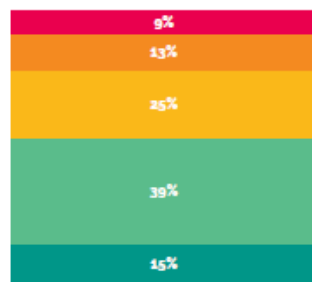
Users by Concern | BEACON



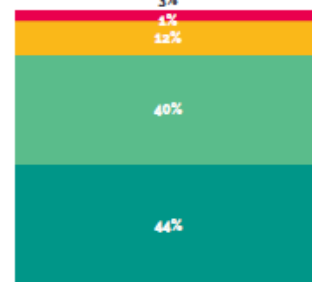
Comparing Severity Level

at the start and end of BEACON Treatment

BEACON start



BEACON end



■ Subclinical ■ Mild ■ Moderate ■ Moderately severe ■ Severe



Performance Report

[mmddyyy – mmddyyy]

Mental Health Improvement

Average mental health improvement of participants.

In a clinical context, someone with significant improvement in symptoms is considered a responder; this most often means someone has changed from feeling bad and ill and not functioning, to feeling much better and much more able to function.

Mental Health Improvement



*25% or greater reduction in symptom score



Performance Report

[mmddyyy – mmddyyy]

Satisfaction

The figures below are satisfaction ratings of all participants.

These measures are an insightful indicator of how the BEACON program can contribute to a users improvement in their overall quality of life.

BEACON Satisfaction Score

Avg satisfaction with BEACON overall



Therapeutic Alliance Score

Avg. satisfaction with BEACON therapist



BEACON Satisfaction Scores

Miscellaneous Questions

Because of BEACON, I am better able to perform at work

78% strongly
agree or agree

Because of BEACON, I am more engaged with things that are important in my life

81% strongly
agree or agree

I appreciate that my employer is supporting my mental well-being by providing BEACON to me..

94% strongly
agree or agree

I would recommend BEACON to be offered as a part of my company benefits plan

94% strongly
agree or agree

I find BEACON easy to use

95% strongly
agree or agree



Performance Report

[mmddyy - mmddyy]

Testimonials

It's felt really good to work through everything. Thank you so much for all you've done - **even my friends are starting to notice a difference** :)

- Female, 22

This was a **life changing** program for me!

- Female, 58

I feel **better than before**, thank you.

- Male, 48

My therapist was **very helpful and supportive**.

- Female, 19

I feel like I'm **deconstructing something** that I thought wasn't deconstructable.

- Female, 28

I already feel like I have learned more tools and gained more knowledge in two modules than I did over the course of 7 sessions last year that cost me \$225 a pop. **#feelinghopeful**

- Male, 40

I appreciate all that I've learned from therapy and **will take this knowledge forward**.

- Female, 37

I appreciate the availability of my therapist. I feel because I'm texting **I can be a little more candid**. I have found it easier to write how I'm feeling and this is a great method of communication for me.

- Female, 28

I can proudly say I succeeded in riding the train in the morning, alone and **without a panic attack**. I truly appreciate all your help and guidance, and even though I've only done a few sessions, BEACON has helped me tremendously.

- Female, 45

Although I am still in the early stages the tiny steps I feel I have taken have brought me hope that I will be able to live without extreme limitations and **significantly improve my life**.

- Female, 57

I **can't imagine** what the last few months would have looked like without this program.

- Female, 37

I feel like I'm opening a **new chapter in my life**.

- Female, 28

My therapist has demonstrated a good balance of **encouragement, inquisitiveness, and guidance**.

- Female, 34

Always **accessible and supportive**. It felt good to have that continuous support instead of a once a week for 45 min type of support you would normally get from in-person CBT.

- Male, 30