**EAP Drivers and Influences**

*Projected Utilisation*
Many global companies would like to provide EAP services to Israeli employees; however, such services are not often implemented in Israel. The concept of EAP services is new to Israel. Many people are unfamiliar with the benefit; therefore, there is a need to educate the public about an EAP’s potential offerings.

Employers in Israel may invest in providing EAP services voluntarily depending on their beliefs, motivation, and priorities. Multinational organisations that already offer EAP services in other locations may require the implementation of a similar programme in their Israeli offices.

Individuals in Israel utilise telephonic and face-to-face counselling. Some providers also offer counselling services over Skype via the use of web cameras.

The average cost of counselling services in a private practice ranges from 350 ILS to 400 ILS per session. The average length of a counselling session ranges from 50 minutes to one hour for an individual, while a couples counselling session generally lasts 90 minutes.

*Attitudes Toward Counselling*
Israeli members of Generation Y are more open to counselling and therapy than their older counterparts.

*Attitudes Toward Alcohol and Substance Abuse*
The people of Israel are growing more concerned about alcohol abuse.

**Fast Facts**
- **Population:** 7,602,400
- **Capital City:** Jerusalem
- **Political Structure:** Parliamentary Democracy
- **Currency:** Shekel
- **Time Zone:** IST

**Professional Clinical Qualifications**
There is not an organisation that oversees EAP accreditation in Israel.

EAP counsellors are difficult to locate in Israel, as most therapists receive education and training based on a psychodynamic approach as opposed to behavioural, cognitive, focused, and short-term approaches. In the last few years, some certificate programmes for cognitive behavioural therapists have been made available; however, such therapists are still a minority, without satisfying coverage and sometimes without enough hands-on experience.
The Ministry of Health’s Council of Psychologists determines if a mental health professional is eligible to be certified as a specialist or to begin training for specialisation. An individual may apply for certification only after he or she is listed in the Psychologists Register. The Council of Psychologists oversees professional committees for each recognised field of psychology. The following fields are officially recognised in Israel: clinical psychology; developmental psychology; educational psychology; rehabilitation psychology; social, industrial, and organisational psychology; and medical psychology. By law, only psychologists who are recognised as specialists may practice without supervision.

The Israeli Psychological Association oversees credentialing.

In order for a psychologist to practice in Israel, he or she must have fulfilled the academic requirements set by The Psychology Registration Committee. One must have:

- A degree for an accredited university that is considered the equivalent of a secondary degree in psychology from an Israeli university.
- A curriculum of study that included a minimum of 20 annual credit hours in psychology at the bachelor’s in arts level, as well as a minimum of 16 annual credit hours in psychology at the master’s of arts level. Included in the curriculum, one should have studied at least four basic subjects in psychology as follows:
  - Two subjects from introduction to psychology, learning, or experimental psychology
  - Two subjects from personality, cognitive psychology, developmental psychology, social psychology, statistics, or methodology
- Completed his or her studies over a period of four to six years, or over a time span that is accepted in the country of study.

There are no known liability insurance requirements for mental health professionals in Israel.

### Key Professional Associations

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<tr>
<th>Association Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Fax</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Website</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Israel Psychological Association</strong></td>
<td>P.O. Box 11497, 74A Frishman Street, 61114 Tel Aviv, Israel</td>
<td>+972 3-523-9393</td>
<td>+972 3-523-0763</td>
<td><a href="mailto:psycho@zahav.net.il">psycho@zahav.net.il</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.psychology.org.il">http://www.psychology.org.il</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Israel Association of Social Workers</strong></td>
<td>93 Arlozorov Street, Histadrut Building, 62098 Tel Aviv, Israel</td>
<td>+972 3-692-1180</td>
<td>+972 3-692-1148</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Israeli Psychiatric Association</strong></td>
<td>P.O. Box 90000, 42100 Nantania, Israel</td>
<td>+972 9-898-1221</td>
<td>+972 9-894-5054</td>
<td><a href="mailto:beleich@post.tau.ac.il">beleich@post.tau.ac.il</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>National Association of Nurses in Israel</strong></td>
<td>The Histadrut Building, 93 Arlozorov Street, 62098 Tel Aviv, Israel</td>
<td>+972 3-692-1379</td>
<td>+972 3-692-1128</td>
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National Delivery Systems

Health Care
Israel offers mandatory national health insurance through one of four health care funds: Clalit, Maccabi, Meuhedet, and Leumit. The system ensures that all permanent residents of Israel receive standardised medical care, including hospitalisation if needed. The system is financed by the government, a health tax that employers must pay, and progressive insurance contributions that members must make depending on their circumstances. Members may switch funds once per year.

New immigrants must register for a fund when they arrive in Israel, and they are exempt from payment during their first year of residence. The funds must accept all permanent residents regardless of their medical history. Tourists and foreign workers are not eligible for national health insurance. Employers who staff foreign workers must provide them with private insurance that is equivalent to one of the national health care funds.

There is generally a wait list for psychiatric care; the public system may have wait lists that range from 6 to 10 months. People in need of care often receive a prescription for psychiatric medicine, as opposed to psychotherapy treatment.

Behavioural/Mental Health Coverage
The health care funds do not currently offer mental health coverage; however, the government covers all such services through the Ministry of Health budget at this time. The government has declared a reform in the field of mental health services that will allow the health care funds to become more responsible for mental health coverage, leaving only a small portion of services to the responsibility of the Ministry of Health. Once the reform is complete, the government will be responsible for the financing of substance abuse rehabilitation centres, mental health services for prisoners, community rehabilitation services for eligible individuals, care for children with autism, and care for people who suffer from mental health problems and mental retardation. Any remaining services will be covered by the health care funds.

Child Care and Parenting
The Israeli government offers a child allowance to help parents with the cost of raising their children. The allowance is paid once per month, and the amount varies based on the number of children in one’s family.

Elder Care
The National Insurance Institute offers the Counselling Service for the Elderly to assist individuals in resolving common issues regarding seniors. The service is provided by retired volunteers who are trained in courses given at universities and colleges to provide elderly individuals with information, guidance, and referrals to community resources.

Legal Assistance
EAPs in Israel might offer legal assistance as part of their work-life services by way of initial information and guidance.

Cultural Characteristics

Language
Hebrew and Arabic are the official languages of Israel. Many people in Israel also speak English.

Ethnic Makeup
Three quarters of the population is Jewish, with the majority being born in Israel. Approximately one quarter of the Jewish population was born in America or Europe, and a small percentage of people were born in Africa or Asia. The remainder of Israel’s population is largely of Arab descent.

Demographic Trends
Approximately 200,000 migrant workers live in Israel, predominantly from the Philippines, China, and Africa. Approximately half of these workers have expired visas. Many Israelis have concerns that the illegal migrant workers are taking jobs away from citizens, while others are concerned that the non-Jewish workers could disrupt the Jewish culture.
**Lifestyle/Religion/Family**

Israel has a diverse population that includes Jews from all over the world. This diversity has created a melting pot of Jewish customs and beliefs. Life in Israel revolves around the Hebrew calendar, and the official day of rest is Saturday, which is the Jewish Sabbath. The Arab minority of Israel has made a mark on the country’s architecture, music, and cuisine.

In Israel, 75% of the population is Jewish. Approximately 15% of the population is Muslim. A small percentage of the population is Arab Christian, Christian, Druze, or an unspecified religion.

**Communication Styles**

When greeting one another, men exchange a handshake and maintain direct eye contact. The handshake may be accompanied by a light touch of the arm. Close friends and family members may share a light hug. Women who are greeting one another for the first time exchange a handshake. Close friends may kiss one another on the cheek. Women and men who are greeting one another also tend to shake hands during their first meeting; however, it is taboo for religiously observant men and women to touch one another.

In order to say hello in Israel, most people say “Shalom.” Israelis appreciate honesty and prefer to be direct in conversation, which some foreigners may perceive as bluntness. Israelis have a tendency to speak quickly and loudly. It may appear at times as if they are yelling, but it is likely their normal tone of voice.

**BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS**

**Economy**

Israel has received economic assistance from the United States since the 1970s; however, it is a leader in the Middle East in terms of economic and industrial development. Israel has the second-largest number of start-up companies in the world and the largest number of NASDAQ-listed companies outside of North America. Israel is at the forefront of water conversation and geothermal energy efforts, and it is a leader in the software, communications, and life sciences fields. Many multinational high-tech corporations have campuses in Israel.

**Workers’ Rights Legislation**

Full-time work in the construction industry is defined as 211 hours per month; however, full-time work is defined as 186 hours per month in other industries. Israelis are entitled to a weekly rest period of at least 36 hours depending on one’s religion. The break may be taken on Fridays, Saturdays, and/or Sundays. Workers are also entitled to 14 to 21 days of paid time off each year, with the amount of time dependent on the number of years one has been with her or her employer. Israelis may also receive nine paid religious holidays each year according to the Jewish calendar or one’s religion. The hourly minimum wage is 19.95 ILS.

**Status and Influence of Work Councils and/or Unions**

The Israeli union is called Histadrut. Histadrut is a strong union with political influence. Currently, a lot of controversy surrounds this union given the on-going conflict with Palestine.

**Communication**

Broadband Internet services are available throughout Israel via asymmetric digital subscriber line (ADSL). Israel has an excellent telephony system, with available toll-free numbers, SMS texting, and universal international freephones.

**Confidentiality Issues**

The Israeli Law, Information and Technology Agency oversees confidentiality issues related to data. The Israeli Ministry of Justice is working to enhance the country’s enforcement of laws related to collecting, processing, transmitting, and protecting information. These efforts are tied to Israel’s efforts to be recognised by the European Union as complying with the Directive on Data Protection.
Support for International Assignees

Embassies

British Embassy Israel
192 Hayarkon Street
63405 Tel Aviv
Israel
Telephone: +972 3-725-1222
Website: http://ukinisrael.fco.gov.uk/en

Embassy of the United States
Tel Aviv, Israel
Passport Unit
71 Hayarkon Street
63903 Tel Aviv
Israel
Telephone: +972 3-519-7475
Website: http://israel.usembassy.gov

Schools

The Walworth Barbour American International School in Israel (WBAIS)
P.O. Box 484
65 Hashomron Street
40500 Even Yehuda
Israel
Telephone: +972 9-890-1000
Website: http://www.wbaais.org

Jerusalem American International School
Goldstein Youth Village
P.O. Box 177
Jerusalem
Israel
Telephone: +972 2-679-9611
Website: http://www.jerusalemais.org

Additional Resources for US or UK Citizens

Allo Expat
Website: http://www.alloexpat.com/moving_to_israel_forum
Allo Expat is an information and resource portal for expatriates living in or moving to the Middle East region, which includes an online forum for expatriates in Israel.

Easy Expat
Website: http://www.easyexpat.com/en/tel-aviv/overview/geography.htm
Easy Expat is an information portal for expatriates living in the main cities of Israel. It also has various different discussion forums in respect to life in Israel.

Employee Assistance and Work-Life Snapshot

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