

## **Part 2.**

### **EASNA Standards and Accreditation History: SUMMARY**

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#### **Preface and Background**

The purpose of this brief article is to document a significant series of events in the field of Employee Assistance. The intent is to recount, from collective memory, just how the EASNA accreditation process and standards, evolved. There were many people involved in EASNA during this evolution and I have attempted to include many names. For those of you who are not named, please know that EASNA as well as the field of EAP, thanks you.

John Maynard has written a companion article that chronicles the efforts of ALMACA (EAPA). I was commissioned, by the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, Office of Managed Care to chronicle the parallel efforts by the Employee Assistance Society of North America (EASNA). I wish to thank Dr. Nancy Kennedy and Charlie Williams for their unyielding support for the field of employee assistance and this project.

In the mid 1970s, Wayne Corneil was watching the evolution of the alcohol treatment field in the United States from his vantage point in Canada. Being a Health Canada employee (a Canadian governmental body), he was involved in helping to regulate health care in various business sectors, including the Canadian airlines. An initiative by the Canadian Labor Congress (a Canadian counterpart to the AFL-CIO) started a dialogue about the need for national standards. The interested parties were concerned for those employees who were being evaluated for alcoholism treatment and subsequently returned to the workplace. The issue, especially in the airline industry, was that pilots were being assessed for treatment, treated and returned to their jobs. good professional assessments were needed. Through an initiative by Health Canada, Peer Training Programs were being designed and would soon be offering, through Canadian community colleges, a two-week program for peer professionals. The move was afoot to support the workplace professionals' efforts with standardized training and professional back-up. In 1977, Wayne attended an ALMACA meeting in Detroit and spoke about the need for an international component within the organization. He revealed the trends taking place to the north. Dr. Corneil suggested that the ALMACA Board consider the need for standards and a certification process for their constituents.

He argued that these peers made decisions that effected the fate of many alcoholics and their co-workers.

In the years 1978 and 1979 Jim Wrich, Vice President of ALMACA spearheaded an initiative to create program standards for the field of Employee Assistance Programs (EAP). Unfortunately, for many reasons, this effort stalled.

This was the beginning of a two-pronged initiative to satisfy the need for this critical body of work. In 1983, Keith McClellan, Wayne Corniel and George Watkins attended a conference held in Kansas City. This group of three individuals from the U.S. and Canada met informally. A discussion ensued, regarding the need for an initiative by the degreed professionals in the field of EAP. There was a decision to continue this dialogue in September 1983 at the Input Conference in Toronto, Ontario. It was at that conference, that the EASNA name was conceived. The primary mission of the organization was to be Program Standards and Accreditation. Later, Jim Wrich was recruited by the group in an attempt to bridge the gap between the existing and new organizations.

### **EASNA Overview**

Soon after, in 1984, EASNA launched a conference with the Performance Resource Press in Dearborn, Michigan. Here, attendees discussed the absence of standards by which to define the field of Employee Assistance. Concerned that some programs could provide ineffective, even harmful services to employees and their companies, there was a marked interest in this initiative. A core group of 8-10 people took a proactive stance and established the non-profit organization. The defined goal was "to provide a leadership role in the encouragement of quality EAP services through the development of Program Standards and an Accreditation process."

This created a huge ripple throughout the EAP field. ALMACA responded to the shift by initiating a name change to EAPA and proceeding with the formation of the CEAP process.

In 1985, EASNA established a professional code of ethics. This was closely followed by the creation of a refereed journal that was named the Employee Assistance Quarterly. A move was now afoot to lay the groundwork for the work needed to create standards.

For the next two years, EASNA concentrated on building the critical mass needed to create the body of work necessary to accomplish its goals. By the spring of 1989, there was a sizable group interested enough to convene a conference aimed at the creation of program standards. At the same time, EASNA launched from its benefactor, George Watkins and the North American Congress on Alcoholism, and became a stand-alone entity.

June 18-22 1989, at Algauer's Hotel in Chicago, Illinois, EASNA held the First Annual EASNA Institute. President, Wayne Corneil, in letter and opening address to participants, stated:

" Governments are moving to regulate the employee assistance field. Who will set the standards, the regulations to be enshrined in legislation? There are those who would have regulations spawn a whole new industry of private agencies controlling quality assurance. Who will regulate these groups? Will a few well-connected individuals determine how we are to be measured or will the collective wisdom of practitioners form these regulations?

EASNA believes that this issue will determine not only the future but also the very existence of EAPs. It is essential that everyone from our field, not just a select few, have the opportunity to contribute to the formulation of standards. I trust that you will take advantage of the session here to participate fully in this important task.

EASNA is a leader in the employee assistance movement. The reason it has been in the forefront is the active involvement of its members. I am confident that your contributions over the next few days will again advance our chosen field. I am certain also that you will find the interaction with your colleagues stimulating and challenging, adding to your professional expertise."

The next days found a group of 89 participants (appendix A) sequestered for 12-14 hours per day under the guidance of EASNA's Board of Directors which included; Wayne Corniel, Keith McClellan, Katherine Mathias- Maher, Leo Lalond, Sanford Weinberg, Ray Steinkerchner, Samuel Klarreich, Marjorie Middel, Ray Johnston, Charles Stanley, Donald Pare, C. Vincent Bakeman, Peter Bell, Edward Haaz, Russell Kelly, Janis Levine, Lionel Moore, Paul Newman, George Perkins, Linda Povernny, Marie Roy-Brisbois, Sheilah Schleifer, Charlotte Schmidt, Linda Stennett-Brewer, Wayne Weagle, Kenneth Wolf and James Wrich.

By the end of the Institute, there were over one hundred pages of newsprint, from several groups that needed to be collated. Several "editors" were recruited to take

each respective category and distill the information for eventual inclusion in a draft document. During the next several months, these editors submitted their documents to McClellan and Corneil who, along with other key participants, produced the first draft.

In the fall of 1989, the first draft was sent out to the field for comment. Responses were received from over 100 professionals affiliated with the field of EAP. There were several revisions and a peer driven, consensus driven process resulted in the formation of the EASNA Standards for Employee Assistance Programs.

In 1990, EASNA published these first standards. Of the criteria considered, an EAP should be:

- Easily accessible
- "User friendly" for consumers
- Respectful of confidentiality
- Centered on the employee
- Focused on prevention
- Staffed by competent professional staff

While the standards were being refined, an accreditation committee headed by Bill Graham (Canada) and James Offield (USA) were hard at work, developing a process by which programs could be measured against these standards. By early 1991, the accreditation process was instituted. The first program in the U.S. to be accredited was Genesis EAP in Iowa. Soon after, the first Canadian EAP, CanCare, was accredited. This gave launch to a body of work that was soon embraced by the field.

Several individuals worked countless hours to carry on and refine both the standards and the process. Accreditation Committee Chairs included: Bill Graham, James Offield, Edward Haaz, Barbara Marsden and Suzanne Claeys. Standards Chairs included Sanford Weinberg, Sharon Pocock, Charlie Williams, Donna Scotten and Marilyn Hayma

Between 1991-2000 there were many developments. During that time, there were three revisions to the Standards. All revisions took place in an open forum and with input by many from all aspects of the EAP field. Many U.S. Internal/External programs and the largest Canadian firms began fully supporting the standards and accreditation process. In short order, the process achieved a high profile through

inclusion in many Canadian Requests for Proposals (RFPs). Within these ten years, most large and mid-sized Canadian and several mid-sized U.S. EAPs were involved in the accreditation process.

EASNA shortly became victims of its own success! Now, the task of refining the standards and filling the demand for site visits was becoming daunting for a handful of dedicated volunteers. The EASNA Board, in 1999, authorized an exhaustive search for a partner whom could carry the mantle of accreditation to the next level of success. EASNA found a potential partner in the Council on Accreditation.

In the year 2000-2001, EASNA contracted with COA to administer the current process. Dr. Dale Masi became the liaison between COA and EASNA. Later that year, Dr. Masi coordinated with SAHMSA/CSAP and COA/EASNA for support and funding for the creation of a new and revised set of standards that would reflect the work done by EADNA, COA, EPA and others in the field. Masi became an "in-house" consultant for COA and teamed with EASNA Standards committee to combine these standards. Parallel committees aligned between COA and EASNA were the workhorses for the task at hand.