International Accreditation

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International Accreditation

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ABSTRACT. This article describes the present size of Employee Assistance programs outside of the United States. It emphasizes the rapid growth and the development of the profession beyond the Employee Assistance Professional Association. It then discusses the international programs and approaches to accreditation. Suggestions are made for international agencies that might be apprehensive about standards being too "American" and not being cross culturally applicable. The Council on Accreditation appears the most logical, but the author also describes the recent development of World Wide guidelines, which have been sponsored by numbers of EAP groups. The guidelines might be a pathway or intermediary step to accreditation for those international EAPs that do not feel they might be ready for the full Council on Accreditation process.

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At the present time, there are 4,412 members of Employee Assistance Professionals Association in the United States. There are 518 additional members from outside of the United States as international members (13% of total membership). There are 3,337 individuals in the United States that are CEAPs and 83 from other countries[2].

This does not, however, in any way provide us with a comprehensive picture of the size of the EAPs in other countries than the US. For example, within the past 2 years, a group from Europe called the European Forum composed of EAP practitioners from the United Kingdom to Russia has formed. In Asia also, for two years, a similar group has formed and most recently in October of 2003, the first meeting of the Central and South American EAPs convened. All of these three are separate entities from EAPA and most members are independent of EAPA.

For the past five years, this author has edited two International EAP Anthologies wherein many of the 42 chapters were written by indigenous authors. The newest compendium will be available in the fall of 2004 and again covers more EAP programs and countries.

The question of accreditation in critical for the development of the EAP program internationally. Already,, international programs are applying for accreditation by the Council on Accreditation (COA) in New York. There include EAPs from the United Kingdom, Puerto Rico and Japan. As the author works with the latter two, it is clear that cultural differences have to be taken into account.

Programs from other countries applying for accreditation should first review the self-study manual (obtained from COA) and list whatever appears to be a problem for them, or what they do not understand. They also should list what documents they do not have in English. The author is recommending an interpreter from the native country be hired (paid by the accrediting organization) for the self-study.

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[2] These data were presented at the annual Employee Assistance Professional's Association conference in New Orleans, LA for the international section.

There has been a virtual explosion of EAP programs worldwide. In Geneva Switzerland in the fall of 2002, a meeting was convened of EAP organizations worldwide including:

–Council on Accreditation (COA)

–Employee Assistance Professionals Associations

(EAPA US)

–Employee Assistance Professionals Associations International (EAPA Int'l)

–Employee Assistance Professional Associations of Australia (EAPA)

–Employee Assistance Society of North America (EASNA)

–European Network on Occupational Social Work (ENOS)

–International Council on Alcohol and Addictions (ICAA)

–International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW)

At the same time, there was great concern about the lack of uniform standards of practice for the EAP field. As a result, this author was commissioned to develop World Wide guidelines for EAPs in the workplace. Documents were provided from the following organizations:

–*Employee Assistance Professionals Association – International*

Program Guidelines

–*EAP National Guidelines* – Australia/New Zealand

(The most recent version of EAPA was received after the guidelines were

drafted)–Employee Assistance Professionals Associations European

Forum–Article of Associations of ENOS, European Network on

Occupation Social Work (ENOS), 1995

–*Conceptual Framework for the Professional Field of Occupational*

Social Work, Federal Association of Occupational Social Work ENOS-

Germany

–Global Qualifying Standards for Social Work and Education and

*Training,*International Federation of Social Work (IFSW) Bern,

Switzerland

–Government Guidelines for Workplace Mental Wellness Health Care

System Tokyo, Japan

–International Council of Alcoholism and Addictions 1999

–Management of Alcohol and Drug-related Issues in the Workplace –

International Labor Organization 1996

–Draft Code of Practice on Managing Disability in the Workplace –

International Labour Organization 2001

–New Standards Guidelines - The Council on Accreditation

–UK Guidelines for Audit and Evaluation for Employee Assistance

Programs UK EAPA

The author then developed a matrix where she was able to extract common principles for international procedure[3]. They are listed below:

Mission/ Objectives

It is essential that an EAP have a clear mission statement.

Ethics/ Values

The EAP adopts and follows its own code of ethics, requires its professional staff and affiliates to adhere to the codes of ethics of their respective professions and avoids conflicts of interest in carrying out its responsibility.

Confidentiality

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The EAP gives clients written information that describes the EAP's confidentiality policy, and requires clients to sign a statement indicating their understanding of confidentiality rights and limitations.

The EAP follows policies and procedures governing access to, use of, and release or disclosure of information about clients and such policies meet applicable legal requirements under federal, state, or provincial law.

Rights of Employers

Employers should provide and maintain a safe and healthy workplace in accordance with the applicable law and regulations, and take appropriate actions,

Employers should have the right to take appropriate measures with respect to workers with alcohol- and drug-related problems which affect, or which could reasonably be expected to affect, their work performance.

Client Rights

In recent decades, organizations of people with disabilities and their advocates have worked to make disability an issue of equal rights, rather than social welfare, and to generate change in opportunities for participation in employment and society. They have effectively challenged what is termed the "medical" model of disability, which focuses on the individual's impairment and inability to perform certain everyday activities, including work activities, and sees solutions in individualized rehabilitation programs. In its place, they have promoted the "social" model of disability, in which the focus is on the constraints arising from social, political, economic and cultural factors, as well as barriers in the built environment, and on solutions through measures to remove these constraints and barriers.

Management/ Board or Advisory Group

An EAP if not governed by a Board of Directors should consider having an Advisory Board.

EAP Policies

There are two policies to consider in an EAP A Policy for the program and an EAP Policy for the EAP organizations.

EAPA expects that its members shall ensure that, wherever possible, an organization operating or implementing an EAP shall have a policy, which defines the purpose and objectives of the service and its relationship with other organizational functions. The program shall be clear and readily accessible to everyone involved.

Program Design

Create a Workplace Mental Wellness Policy, which incorporates Mental Wellness Systems at the workplace, assessment of workplace problems and implementation of mental health care, professional personnel, which provide mental health care.

Implementation

Guiding Principle: An implementation plan outlines the actions needed to establish a fully functioning EAP and sets down a time frame for completion.

Supervisory Management Consultation

Guiding Principle: The EAP staff consults with key staff regarding the management and referral to the EAP of employees with job performance problems.

Recruitment, Training and Staffing

The program should have a formula for adequate staffing.

Guiding principle: EAP should be staffed by an adequate number of individuals specifically trained in Employee Assistance Programming (program managers as well as counselors).

Union Representatives

It is important for the success of EAPs that management/union representative: Pro-actively support the introduction of EAPs into organizations, help develop policy & procedures, provide resources to operate, and encourage employees to use EAP when necessary.

Services Delivered

Program Promotion, Education:

Booklets, brochures and posters and other promotional material should be readily available and accessible to all Employees during the life of the program. EAP training is developed in such a way that can be incorporated into an organization's existing procedures and training schedules. All supervisors and mangers should participate in workshops in EAP referral procedures and practices. All employees should be made aware of an EAP through an organization wide awareness campaign.

Prevention Services

The EAP provides prevention services that address the following components:

     a. outreach;

     b. health promotion and wellness; and

     c. coordination with healthcare providers

Topics addressed in prevention activities are changes and updated to reflect the needs and feedback of the host or customer organization and its employees.

The EAP emphasizes the importance of prevention in all of its activities and offers to provide at least one primary prevention activity annually, for the host or customer organizations.

The EAP develops and offers educational sessions on wellness and other prevention-related topics.

Critical Incident Stress Management

Standard EAPA expects its members to ensure that the purchasing organization has given careful thought as to how employees are supported in urgent, serious or emergency situations in a timely fashion and consistent with organizational policies. Wherever possible this service should be provided by the EAP.

Access Procedures

Procedures for accessing EAP services: a. minimizes barriers to the timely initiation of services or use of services; and b/ give priority to employees or eligible participants with urgent needs or in emergency situations.

The EAP communicates to customer employees, and eligible participants that access to the EAP's services occurs through one of the following mechanism:

a. self referral may employees and eligible participants for problems that may be adversely affecting their job performance;

b. referrals by supervisors and suggestions by union representatives, human recourses, and/or medical personnel; and

c. mandatory referrals.

Work/life

The EAP conducts a needs assessment of the host or customer organization to determine the most appropriate and effective work-life services for the host or customer organization and its employees.

EAP assessment procedures include the use of a work-life intake tool to evaluate client needs.

Evaluation includes site visit to Worklife providers and facilities.

Drug-Free Work Place

The EAP offers a need assessment to determine:

(a) What components of a Drug Free Workplace are most appropriate for the host or customer organization; and

(b) For which of the identified components the EAP will be providing services

Organizational Development /Consultation

Summing up, it may be said that occupational social work, being an integral part of an organizational conception, represents an important connector between staffing and occupational policy and from its specific perspective may contribute further organizational development and personnel service both to the benefit of the company as well as of the employee's well-being and health preservation.

The offer of assistance has to cover a broad range of going far beyond sample casework counseling, in order to do justice to the complexity of problem solution strategies, which are appropriate for the respective organization. Occupational social work must be tailored to the organization and its employees according to their specific requirements. Furthermore it may assist and cooperate in the development if personnel and organizational procedures.

Target groups - Occupational work is intended for:

* All employees of the company/authority, as well as their family members,

* Superiors and mangers,

* The company/authority as an organization and its units.

Clinical Services

A.   Assessment

Guiding Principle EAP staff should:

(1) conduct an assessment to identify personal or work problems of employee or covered family members;

(2) develop a plan of action; and

(3) provide, recommend or refer the client to an appropriate resource for problem resolution. Intent To match clients with the appropriate level of care.

EAPs may be organized in such a way that they act essentially as a point of initial assessment and referral to care givers in the community, be they medical doctors, specialist in alcohol and drug counseling, treatment and rehabilitation, or community-based organizations, including those of a self-help character. Some EAPs, however, also engage appropriate personnel to provide actual counseling treatment and rehabilitation services for individual with alcohol and drug related problems, provided that referral to outside professional are institution is performed as necessary.

Short-Term Counseling

Standard EAPA expects that programs shall establish procedures to determine if and when to provide short-term (session limited) problem resolution services. Initial assessments shall be conducted by those trained to determine the appropriateness of this kind of invention and match the employee client with the most suitable resource internally or externally.

B. Monitoring and Follow-up

Standard EAPA expects that programs will have systems to offer the appropriate monitoring of progress for all clients referred to services external to the EAP.

C. Referral

Guiding Principle EAP staff refer clients to individuals or organizations that offer professional support, advice and treatment in various fields of relevance that match best with the client and his/her needs.

The EAP has procedures to facilitate client referrals, which address the provision of consultation between the EAP and the host or customer organization, and responsibilities for providing follow-up, aftercare, and transition for clients served.

Agreements:

Subcontract/ Contractual Agreement

Agreements with subcontractors require the same quality and level of staff training as that of the EAP.

Affiliate Agreements

Affiliate agreements are comprehensive and address:

a.   the same performance standards required of EAP staff members, such as training and credentials; and

b.   b. roles and responsibilities of the EAP and affiliate.

Quality Assurance

Evaluation of Performances

Guiding Principle EAPs should evaluate appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency of their operations. Intent Meaningful evaluation of an EAP depends upon having measurable program objectives and quality data control mechanisms. The program evaluation has multiple purposes:

- Documenting the benefits of costs and resources expended on the company.

- Focusing the EAP on employee and organizational needs.

- Continuously improving the quality if the EAP and the efficiency of EAP operations.

Outcome Measurements

In each of its programs, and on an ongoing basis, the EAP measures service outcomes for all clients, including:

a. individual client satisfaction with all services receives;

b. level of function; and c. level of achievement for goal of assessed problem or request for services.

EAP consumers give a satisfaction questionnaire to each client after the first session in all services.

For its clinical services, the EAP collects and analyzes client self-reported outcomes and counselor reported outcomes toward achieving the service goals established at the first session.

After each episode of training or consultation, the EAP surveys the services recipient to evaluate the impact of the raining or consultation on his/her ability to handle the situation or situations in the workplace that the training or consultation was intended to address.

Return on Investment (ROI)

From the beginning of the program, a method should be developed to measure the cost benefit of the EAP program.

Quality Improvement Affiliates

An EAP that purchases services from affiliates monitors and evaluates those contracted services and implements corrective action, if necessary.

It will be feasible to achieve accreditation and it will benefit a program. Using the World Wide guidelines could be another approach, but this entails refining them into a self-study procedure—perhaps with ISO, but that would require funding to accomplish. The US government funded this author's adaptation and development of the first COA standards. Regardless of how accreditation takes place, it is important for the individual EAP program and most critically for the development of the EAP field into a profession.