

Bridging Public Health with Workplace Behavioral Health Services: A Call to Action

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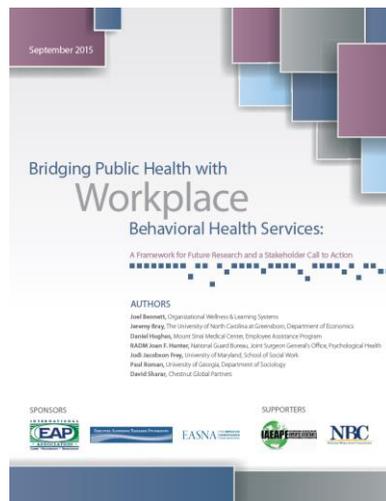
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White Paper: Bridging Public Health with Workplace Behavioral Health Services (WBHS): A Call to Action

This Rapid Fire Session Addresses:

- ❑ Rationale for a “Call to Action” for EA/WBHS Research
- ❑ Organizing Framework for Promoting and Organizing EA/WBHS Research
- ❑ Recommendations to Stakeholders to Promote and Align EA/WBHS studies with Public Health

White Paper Produced in Partnership...



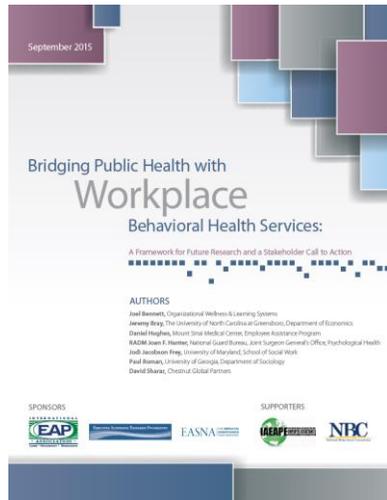
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EASNA Research/Practice Webpage:

<http://www.easna.org/research-and-best-practices/1636-2/>

Employee Assistance Archive open to everyone; housed at University of Maryland:

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Bridging Public Health with Workplace Behavioral Health Services (WBHS): A Call to Action

- ❑ Rationale for a “Call to Action” for EA/WBHS Research

Lack of Evidence

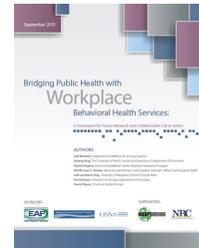
- Work organizations invest billions in Workplace Behavioral Health Services (WBHS), predominately delivered by EA professionals.
- Industry, government, and society assume devotion of such resources = effectiveness.
- Yet research on the effectiveness of WBHS services to prevent and address the mental health and substance abuse risks and problems is lacking.
- Absence of science and evidence-based practice (EBP) leads to decisions based almost entirely on cost and providers have no tested standards for quality.

Challenges of WBHS Research

- WBHS research has been difficult to conduct.
- WBHS research requires significant collaboration with work organizations and professionals.
- Most WBHS research is provider-supported, subject to conflicts of interest, often conducted for marketing purposes, or not publicly disseminated.

EA Industry Call to Action

- *“Bridging Public health with Workplace Behavioral Health Services”* White Paper is a Call to Action.
- Overall Aim: Energize a new collaboration among work organizations, EA/WBHS providers, government agencies, researchers , and other stakeholders to systematically examine the processes and effectiveness.
- Ultimate goal: To reduce behavioral health concerns – improving overall health and quality of life for employees and their families.



ACA Reinforces the Need

- Affordable Care Act (ACA) in the U.S. reinforces the need for rigorous EA/WBHS research.
- ACA identifies mental health and substance abuse treatment services as “essential health benefits” in all health care plans – extending access and parity.
- ACA is likely to lead to broad integration of WBHS into the mainstream health care system and increase access to care for many U.S. Americans.

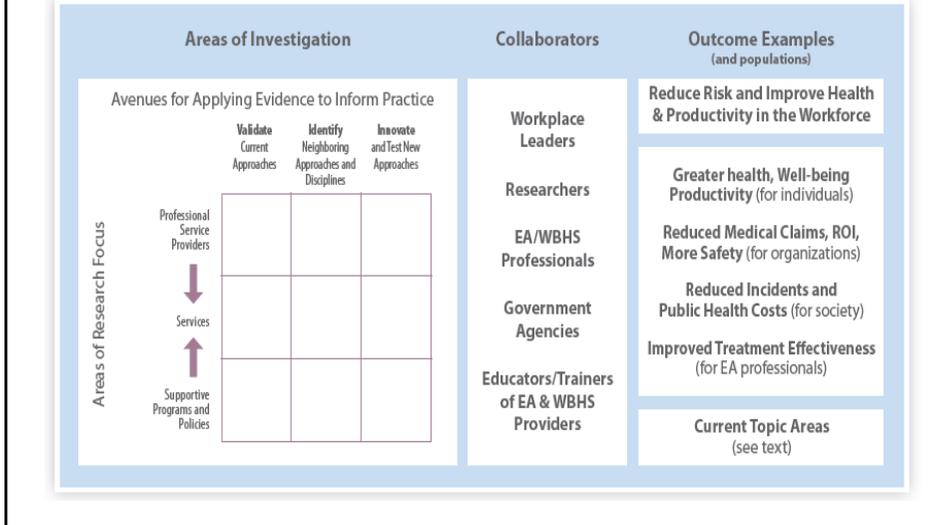
Lack of EA/WBHS Research is a Public Health Problem

- Behavioral health issues have a profound impact on workforce productivity, employer costs, families, and communities.
- Payers and consumers of EA/WBHS will benefit from knowledge about how these services work and how they can be improved.
- EA/WBHS professionals lack evidence-based principles to guide the delivery and enhancement of services.
- ACA has specific provisions for behavioral health and relies on work organizations to help delivery these services.

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Framework to promote and organize WBHS research

Organizing Framework



Areas of Investigation

	Validate Current Approaches	Identify Neighboring Approaches and Disciplines	Innovate and Test New Approaches
Professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How effective are training programs for developing EA professionals? What are the core competencies of EA service professionals? What attitudes do EA professionals have? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do different core disciplines within the EA profession approach their work (e.g., psychologists versus social workers)? What key collaborations serve as best practices for WBHS? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does the profession view innovation? What are the barriers to testing new approaches?
Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How effective are existing EAP protocols in core service areas (see Table 1)? What is the impact of emerging technology on EA/ WBHS effectiveness? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can EAPs effectively adapt services used in other fields of public or occupational health? Can EAPs apply other public health models, such as the Triple Aim? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What types of studies are needed to develop innovative EA/ WBHS services? Can health media make EA/ WBHS services more effective?
Programs and Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can researchers help EAPs test and adapt EBP? What makes EAPs unique and requires special training to deliver services? What policies are needed to enhance or regulate current approaches? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Which programs benefit from collaboration with professionals outside the EA field? What interdisciplinary projects will result in better uptake of EA/ WBHS? How can workplace policies guide collaborations for better service delivery? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can national policy foster greater involvement amongst work organizations to get their participation in EA research? What types of "disruptive technologies" will help vitalize the EA/ WBHS field?

Collaboration is Key to Advance EA/WBHS Research

- **Workplace Leaders** – organizational consumers across all industries
- **EA/WBHS professionals**
- **Researchers** interfacing EA/WBHS, e.g., public health, mental health, addiction, workplace health and productivity, risk management, HR, administrative science
- **Funding and Governmental Policy Agency Representative** (e.g., CDC, NIH, SAMHSA, ONDCP) who can encourage research and play a role in relevant policy (e.g., ACA).
- **Educators/Academics** who prepare future generations of EA/WBHS professionals.

The Ultimate Goal of Collaboration

- Reducing risk and improve the health and productivity of the workforce.
- Achieving outcomes for employees, the organizations they work in, and society as a whole -- recognizing that the primary outcome is not just about the employers financial ROI – other outcomes matter (e.g., practitioners are using EBP guidelines)
- Achieving outcomes that demonstrate effectiveness of EA/WBHS practitioners.

Topic Areas of Collaboration

Areas of Consensus...

- Veteran Workplace Integration
- Crisis Intervention and Mental Health
- Health and Productivity
- Alcohol and Drugs
- Innovative Research and Development
- Refining the EAP value statement
- Resilience

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- Recommendations to Stakeholders to Promote and Align EA/WBHS studies with Public Health

Call to Action Recommendations

- For Work Organization Leaders:
 - ▣ Ask for education about EBP
 - ▣ Utilize EBP in areas that enhance productivity
 - ▣ Encourage employee participation in WBHS studies
 - ▣ Encourage EA providers to conduct credible WBHS outcome evaluations using valid measures and acceptable response rates

- For EA Service Providers:
 - ▣ Initiate direct dialog with business leaders to assure delivery of evidence-based services and training
 - ▣ Provide quality monitoring of EAP subcontractors and affiliates
 - ▣ Hold affiliates accountable for using EBP

Call to Action Recommendations

- For Researchers:
 - ▣ Apply innovative experimental and quasi-experimental approaches to establish effectiveness of EA/WBHS services
 - ▣ Find innovative ways to persuade work organizations to support EA/WBHS research and to allow workers to participate
 - ▣ Use the framework to plan interdisciplinary studies and business-provider-research collaborations

- For Funding Agencies:
 - ▣ Identify specific review panels for EA/WBHS research
 - ▣ Ensure reviewers have appropriate experience in conducting EA/WBHS research to promote continuity and consistency in reviews
 - ▣ Support funding announcements that encourage research among areas and collaborators in the framework

Call to Action Recommendations

- For Educators and Academics:
 - ▣ Develop advanced degrees and training curricula to promote the use of EBP among EA/WBHS professionals
 - ▣ Develop cross-disciplinary programs fostering partnerships between disciplines (e.g., management, psychology, social work, human resources)
 - ▣ Articulate and synthesize theories and conceptual frameworks that can help advance research

Closing Thoughts...

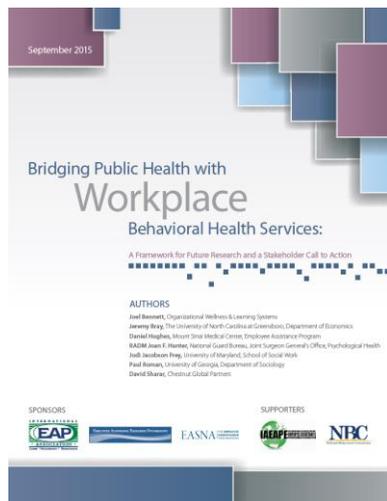
- Continued neglect of EA/WBHS research portends several problems:
 - ▣ Stagnation of the field
 - ▣ Ineffective education and training of new EA professionals
 - ▣ Lack of innovation
- Without commitment to high-quality research public health stakeholders will continue to lack evidence-based standards to guide professionals and consumers toward effective and optimal use of EA/WBHS.
- Scientific basis for valuing EA/WBHS remains limited, despite their widespread and routine use by millions of people.
- EA/WBHS marketplace is currently fragmented and needs a framework to advance our understanding of the services for the benefit of advancing public health.

What is Your Role?

- Read the White Paper
 - ▣ Learn more about this EA industry initiative
- Identify your role in advancing EA/WBHS research
 - ▣ Do you have the capacity to promote or support EA/WBHS research?
 - ▣ Do you have access to employees, data, or other asset to support conducting EA/WBHS research?
 - ▣ Do you have the resources (e.g., funding, staff) to support conducting EA/WBHS research?
 - ▣ Who can you collaborate with to advance EA/WBHS research?



Thank You!



Access the White Paper here:

**EASNA Research/Practice
Webpage:**

<http://www.easna.org/research-and-best-practices/1636-2/>

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