

Journal of **Employee Assistance**

The magazine of the Employee Assistance Professionals Association

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Benchmarking and Nomenclature

Also Inside:
Preventing Workplace Violence
Treating Internet-Addicted Employees
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Focus

Benchmarking and Nomenclature 23

Many EA providers use different measures, different service names, and different systems, frustrating the industry's ability to communicate across programs and make generalized claims about results.

Defining the Business of EAPs

by John Burke

24

Using Six Sigma Principles

by Mary Beth Chalk

27

Benchmarking Clinical Outcomes

by Edward R. Jones, Ph.D., and Jeb Brown, Ph.D.

29

Benchmarking the Psychosocial Environment

by Martin Shain, S.J.D.

32

Features

Preventing Workplace Violence 8

by Kristi R. Anderson, M.P.H., Mary P. Tyler, Ph.D., and E. Lynn Jenkins, M.A.

Every year, roughly 1.7 million American workers are victims of workplace violence. More than 600 are murdered while on duty. EAPs can be crucial components of efforts to reduce the impact of violence in the workplace.

The Impact of Child Abduction 12

by Sue Andriola

Employee assistance professionals can educate workers to prevent and respond to the devastating crimes of child abduction and sexual exploitation and help maintain their productivity if they are victimized.

Promoting Healthy Weight 14

by Kathy Greco, LMSW, CEAP, Rich Paul, ACSW, CEAP, and Brent Pawlecki, M.D.

With obesity on the rise, EAPs can take advantage of their assessment, referral, and case management skills to help employers keep healthcare costs under control and encourage employees to maintain healthy lifestyles.

Treating Internet-Addicted Employees 17

by Kimberly S. Young, Psy.D.

Although Internet addiction is a new area of clinical practice, EA professionals can take several steps to help individuals understand the factors underlying their online habits and reintegrate past activities into their lives.

Serving Latino Clients with Addictions 19

by Carl Maas

Using best practice models when providing assistance to Latinos suffering from addiction can ensure that outcomes are more effective and help lower costs and increase the return on investment for employers.

DEPARTMENTS

Best Practices 36

Front Desk 2

Info Sources 40

Letters 4

News Briefs 37

The View from Here 34

"As blasphemous as it may sound, the term "employee assistance program" should give way to a term that better describes our capabilities and the impact our profession can have on the workplace."

John Burke
"Defining the Business of EAPs"

Index to Advertisers 5

A Value Proposition Related to Enhancing Performance

by Maria Hartley, LEAP



Maria Hartley

Do EAPs contribute to maintaining a healthy and productive workforce? If so, what's the value of this service to employers?

Pose these questions to a group of EA professionals, and each one is likely to cite different studies and propose different answers. But I think we can all agree that an EAP has a value proposition related to enhancing the performance of individual workers and the workforce as a whole. I also think we can all agree that we don't often measure that proposition well for our customers, and thus we have difficulty establishing our value. To the degree we can benchmark and demonstrate our value, we win—and so do our customers.

One of the challenges of benchmarking our value is agreeing on what we mean by the terms "EAP," "EAP services," and "outcomes." What began as internal programs designed to address the burden of alcohol abuse on the workplace have become, over time, mostly contracted, third-party programs that deliver a vast array of services to target a variety of conditions and issues. In addition, EAPs responding to market pressures have repositioned themselves in various ways, moving toward health care, risk management, and organizational development. It sometimes seems that no two EAPs are alike today, making it difficult to compare services or outcomes across the board and keeping the essence of employee assistance a mystery to our customers.

Earlier this year in the *Journal*, we examined the "tug-of-war" between two competing EAP roles: developing strategic programming to reduce healthcare costs versus applying knowledge about behavior and behavioral health to enhance workplace potential. Defining

our essence and role is a giant step in the process of creating value. The next step is to define services and outcomes so that we can benchmark and demonstrate value in a manner that customers will find meaningful.

In this issue, we ask whether the term "EAP" appropriately describes the services we deliver and, more importantly, whether it communicates the value our profession can offer employers. Regardless of whether you agree with John Burke, a longtime trainer and consultant in the EAP field, that the term "EAP" has outlived its usefulness, I think you'll find his article well worth reading and discussing with your colleagues.

The same is true of the other focus articles in this issue, which illustrate remarkable work by EAPs to benchmark value. Mary Beth Chalk, chief operating officer of a firm that provides integrated EAP and work-life services, writes that Six Sigma, a system of measuring and benchmarking performance popularized by Motorola and General Electric, can be used by EA professionals to improve the quality of our services and help demonstrate their value. Martin Shain, an advisor to Canadian employers on mental health issues, asserts that EA professionals can measure and benchmark the psychosocial environment of workplaces and pinpoint "hot spots" that EAPs are well suited to addressing. And Ed Jones, vice president and chief clinical officer of PacifiCare Behavioral Health, and Jeb Brown, a consultant on behavioral health outcomes management, describe a system for benchmarking the performance of clinicians and use it to demonstrate that soliciting feedback from clients will enable EAPs to provide services when and where they will demonstrate the most value.

After you digest these articles, you'll find there's plenty more to read—about the impact of child abduction and sexual exploitation on the workplace, the steps EAPs can take to help prevent workplace violence, strategies for assessing and treating Latino clients with substance abuse problems, how EAPs can assist workers addicted to the Internet, and the many factors EA professionals need to consider when helping clients overcome workplace issues related to obesity. And be sure to catch Terri Schmidt's thoughtful letter to the editor about the important role of affiliates and the challenges they face within the EAP industry.

Until next issue, see you in San Francisco at the EAPA Conference!

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