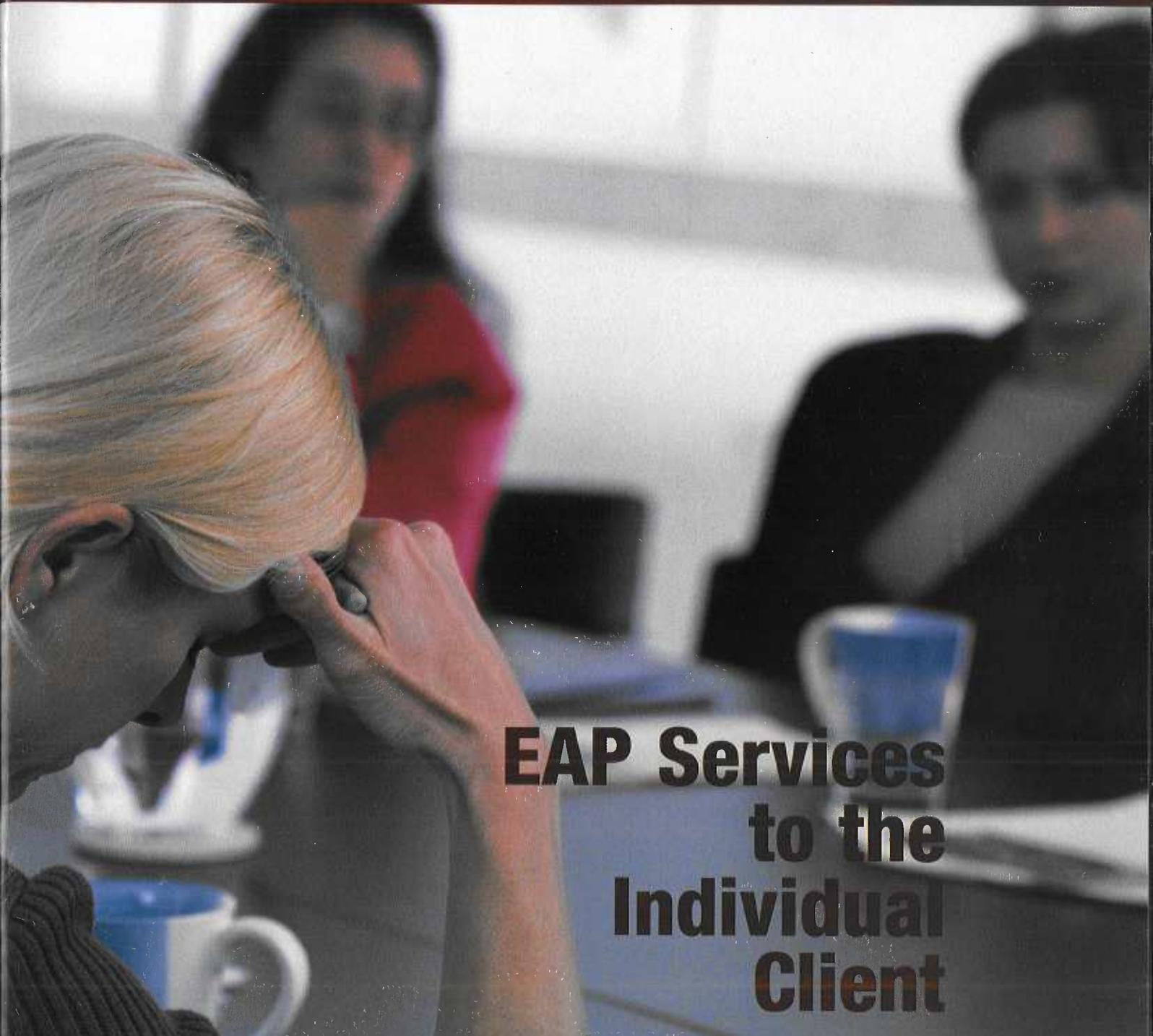


# *Journal of* **Employee Assistance**

The magazine of the Employee Assistance Professionals Association

VOL. 34 NO. 1 • 1ST QUARTER 2004



## **EAP Services to the Individual Client**

Also Inside:  
Assessment in an EAP Setting  
Thoughts on Psychological Debriefings  
Reaching Out to Hospital Social Workers



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# Journal of Employee Assistance

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## Focus

### EAP Services to the Individual Client

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As EAPs have broadened their client base beyond the recovering alcoholic, they have expanded their menu of service offerings as well. Underlying each new service, however, must be a commitment to preserving the confidentiality of the individual, a strategy to educate employees and employers alike about the benefits of using the EAP, and the training and education to render services properly. Four EA professionals share their thoughts on how EAPs can best assist their individual clients.

#### Ensuring Executive Confidentiality

by Michael Mayne, M.B.A., CMA, CPCC

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#### Reaching Out, Gaining Trust

by Patricia Kant, PHR, and Georgette Kingkade, LMHP, CEAP

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#### Resolving Workplace Conflicts

by Kate Wills, LPC, CEAP, and Tristin Mead, LPC, CEAP

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#### Assisting the GLBT Employee

by Flavio Epstein, Ph.D., CEAP

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## Features

### Assessment in an EAP Setting

by Raquel Warley, M.A., CSW

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By more thoroughly assessing presenting problems and linking clients with appropriate resources, EA professionals can greatly improve treatment outcomes and help demonstrate their value to work organizations.

### Thoughts on Psychological Debriefings

by Gerald Lewis, Ph.D.

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A noted authority on psychological debriefings cautions against "throwing the debriefing baby out with the reactionary bath water" in the debate over post-traumatic stress disorder.

### Reaching Out to Hospital Social Workers

by Kim Schuetze, ACSW, CCM

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EA professionals can help ensure the best medical care and follow-up treatment for hospitalized workers and family members by forging links with social workers at hospitals.

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#### Long-Term Counseling: A Feasibility Study of Extended Follow-up Services with High-Risk EAP Clients

Limited research suggests EAPs can reduce relapses and cut treatment costs by providing post-treatment follow-up services to recovering alcoholics. A two-year study explored the feasibility of providing such services within an EAP by measuring role conflict among EA professionals and job retention rates among high-risk EAP clients.

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# Being a Therapist Is Not Enough

by John Maynard, Ph.D., CEAP



John Maynard, Ph.D., CEAP

**W**ith this issue of the *Journal of Employee Assistance*, Maria Hartley takes over the reins of EAPA's Communications Advisory Subcommittee. This special group of hard-working EA professionals guides the development of the *Journal* and the *Exchange On-Line*, selects the focal topics for each issue, contacts potential authors, reviews submitted articles, and generally provides support (and an occasional headache) for Stuart Hales, our editor.

In her "day job," Maria is vice president of First Sun EAP in South Carolina, so she has a hands-on understanding of the challenges involved in delivering EA services as well as an appreciation of both the historical roots of our profession and the need to anticipate emerging trends. You will find her new column, which sets the stage for the "Focus" articles in this issue of the *Journal*, on page 19.

Meanwhile, I feel privileged to have the opportunity to continue sharing "The View From Here" in this column. In each issue, with your help, I'll comment on topics important to the EA profession. I say "with your help" because I'll be counting on you—no matter where you live or work around the world—to alert me to important developments, trends, challenges, and opportunities that you are facing or that you see coming in the future. My e-mail address is at the end of this column.

Speaking of challenges, let's look at one directly related to this issue's focus, EAP services to the individual client. We all know that EAPs assist individuals with concerns ranging

from the inconveniences of daily living to serious addiction, from workplace stress to severe crisis reactions, and from legal or financial difficulties to mental illness. To meet client needs in these diverse areas, most EAPs establish a network of service providers, typically therapists. EAPs usually inform these therapists of their documentation requirements and "how many sessions" they have within the EAP design guidelines, but most EAPs do not do an adequate job of educating their network therapists that being a therapist is not enough in an EAP setting.

Licensed therapists in an EAP setting have the same ethical and professional responsibilities to individual clients they would have in a private setting, but here the workplace or company is also a client. EAPs are not simply funding mechanisms to provide certain healthcare services to employees and family members; rather, they are workplace services to improve the functioning of the organization. In that sense, an EAP is not fundamentally different from a skills training program or an employee e-mail system—it is a tool to improve productivity.

The resulting "dual client" responsibility changes the role of a network provider from just a therapist to a consultant. Being a good therapist is necessary, but not sufficient. The dual client responsibilities of EAPs require providers to see that each client receives the services most likely to benefit both the individual *and* the work organization in the most cost-effective manner consistent with ethical practice. This means providers cannot assume they will act in their therapist role when an EAP client

comes in their door. They *can* assume, however, that they will draw on their therapist skills to consult with the client regarding the full range of his/her personal issues and the best resources to help resolve them.

In many situations, a provider's assessment will determine that the client would benefit from therapy services the provider can deliver within the guidelines of the EAP. In these cases, the provider and client will move into brief therapy mode. In other situations, however, the assessment will suggest that the client would benefit from services beyond, or different from, those the provider can deliver within the EAP guidelines. In these situations, the provider becomes a consultant to help motivate and link the client with the most appropriate treatment resources.

Since providers are licensed therapists, most clients will naturally assume that their initial session with a provider is the beginning of treatment or therapy. Unless providers understand, and communicate to individual clients, that their first role is to act as a "consultant" to help determine what is needed to resolve any issues or concerns hindering life satisfaction and/or work functioning, they will short-change both the individual and the work organization.

We who consider ourselves EA professionals need to do a better job of educating our network providers. I'm interested in what your EAP is doing along these lines. When you get a chance, please let me know. Thanks.

You can reach John Maynard by e-mail at [ceo@eap-association.org](mailto:ceo@eap-association.org)

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# Approaching the Client as a Person

One notes the increasing use of the term "commodity" in recent articles concerning EA programs and services. The term is most often used to describe a thing or, by extension, a service delivered as part of a commercial transaction. I am concerned that in our efforts to describe our programs and services in terms familiar to the business world, we are losing something of great meaning and value to describe what we do and for whom we do it.

Martin Buber, the renowned theologian and philosopher, is perhaps best known for his book *I and Thou*. In it, he suggests that in modern culture

there are two ways people can relate to each other and to society. One is the "I-It" relationship, in which we relate to another person as a thing from which we can gain benefit. The other, far more significant type of relationship is "I-Thou," in which we fully accept and appreciate a person's humanity and individuality.

I-It relationships are often necessary and appropriate. For example, when I buy a product at a store, I need the services of a salesperson to get what I want. I don't need to know about his/her personal background, hopes and dreams, or family of origin. When I walk out of the store, I will

have no need to think of the salesperson as a person; if I think of him/her at all, it will be in regard to how well s/he provided help.

Many, perhaps most, of our interactions on a given day will be of the I-It variety. The remainder will be I-Thou interactions, in which we interact with a person not on the basis of what s/he can do for us, but in terms of the person's essential humanity. A "Thou" is not something that can be bought or sold in a marketplace and, thus, is not a commodity.

In an I-Thou

relationship, I view the person with whom I am interacting as someone of great value. A Thou is not to be used to further my own ends or enhance my life (although my life may certainly be enhanced in I-Thou encounters).

I would suggest that EAP services essentially involve establishing I-Thou relationships with those we call clients. Certainly at the core of humanistic psychology and pastoral counseling is the need to develop a genuine positive regard for the client, to see him or her not as a case of major depression or as a narcissistic personality disorder but as a person, a Thou. If we are to be effective in our work, we must approach the client across from us as a person, not as a piece of human capital to be defined in terms of its efficacy for the corporation.

I am well aware of the increasing demands on our profession to quantify what we do and show value. I understand that in a business environment dedicated to turning a profit, "fixing" workers is more cost-effective than firing them and recruiting and training replacements. But if that is the primary way we view our mission, something of profound significance is lost or greatly diminished.

We may need to use and understand "corp-speak" when justifying EAP work, and certainly EA professionals need to be familiar with the language of the marketplace. But we also need to guard against viewing and treating our clients as "Its" instead of "Thous."

Thomas S. Baker  
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