

Journal of **Employee Assistance**

The magazine of the Employee Assistance Professionals Association

VOL. 37 NO. 1 • 1ST QUARTER 2007

The Impact of September 11 on EAPs



Also Inside:
Recognizing and Managing Seasonal Affective Disorder
Addressing Romantic Relationships in the Workplace
Excerpts from Presentations at EAPA's 2006 Annual Conference



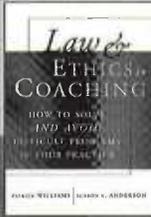
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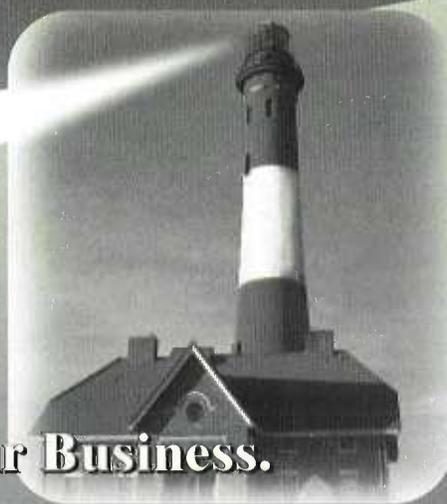
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To promote the highest standards of practice and the continuing development of employee assistance professionals and programs.

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Looking Back, Growing Forward

by Maria Hartley, LEAP

On December 7, nearly 500 World War II veterans gathered in Hawaii to remember their comrades who died when Japanese airplanes bombed the U.S. Navy's Pacific fleet 65 years earlier. Many of them commented that it would be their last trip to Pearl Harbor—they are in the eighties and nineties, and few expect to be alive on the 70th anniversary of the attack. As they die, the living memory of Pearl Harbor will die with them.

It has now been five years since the September 11 attacks, and a new generation of survivors and witnesses is carrying memories of that day. For this generation, the impact is felt not just at home but at work. The terrorist attacks, though politically motivated, targeted workplaces—60 businesses at the World Trade Center lost employees, and one firm, Cantor Fitzgerald, recorded more than 650 employee deaths. In the weeks and months afterward, interest in and demand for EAP services reached levels not seen before or since.

The attention devoted to EAPs after September 11 was welcome, but in retrospect, did we take full advantage of it? What lessons did we learn from those difficult weeks and months? What did our customers learn about EAPs? And what impact did September 11 have on EAPs outside the United States, in countries that were not directly affected by the attacks?

This issue of the *Journal* offers several perspectives on how the events of September 11 have changed the workplace and challenged EAPs to assist employers and employees in new ways. One article describes how the terrorist attacks heightened suspicions of Muslims and people of Middle Eastern

descent and discusses how EAPs can help mitigate these concerns and encourage greater tolerance of, and respect for, workers of different backgrounds and beliefs. Another article details how EA professionals and other caregivers who respond to large-scale disasters risk exposure to compassion fatigue and offers recommendations on how to detect and treat it. A third article posits that September 11 raised the profile of EAPs and reminded employers just how much service and value they provide.

Some of the most interesting perspectives on September 11 are from EA professionals outside the United States. On the European continent, the September 11 attacks had minimal impact on EAPs and their clients. Though the attacks shocked the general public and contributed to a general sense of unease, most workplaces in Europe went about their business as though nothing had changed. But Kate Nowlan, an EAP provider in London, writes that the September 11 attacks gave advance notice to employers in her country—and the July 2005 subway bombings forcefully reminded them—of the need to consider the psychological impact on workers when developing business continuity plans.

In addition to the theme articles, this issue contains information on other topics of interest, such as the impact of workplace romances on workers' performance and productivity, the value that effective public relations can bring to an EAP, and the symptoms of, and treatments for, seasonal affective disorder (SAD). This issue also includes excerpts from five of the more than 45 presentations at the 2006 EAPA Annual

Conference. If you didn't attend the conference, be sure to visit EAPA's Website and read the conference diary, which will give you a first-person glimpse of some of the many educational and professional opportunities that were available in Nashville.

I hope the new year brings you many promising opportunities, and I hope the articles in this and every issue of the *Journal* provide you with information and resources to take full advantage of them. As always, I welcome your ideas on how to improve the *Journal* so it meets and exceeds your needs. ■



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