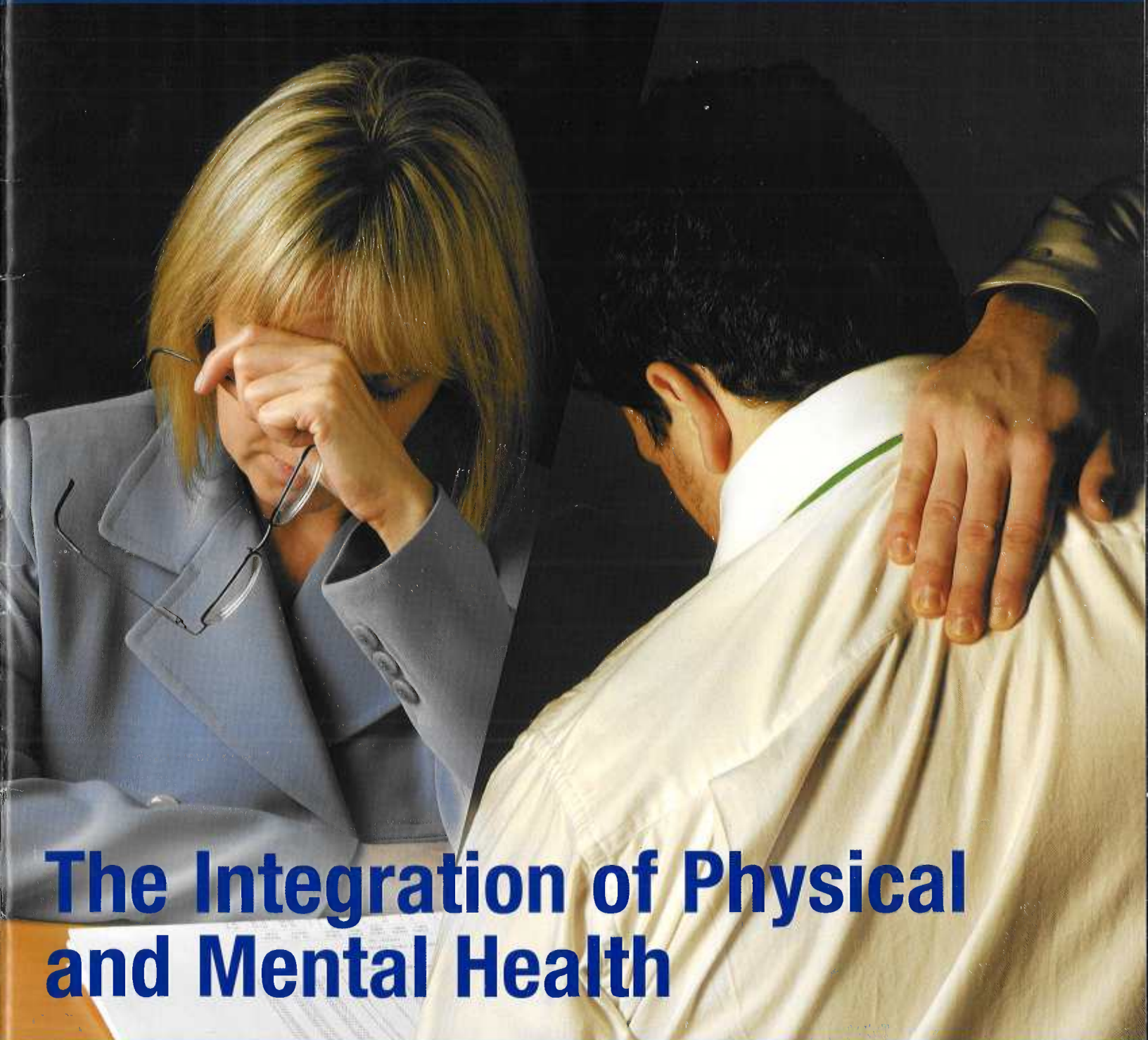


# *Journal of* **Employee Assistance**

The magazine of the Employee Assistance Professionals Association

VOL. 38 NO. 3 • 3RD QUARTER 2008



## **The Integration of Physical and Mental Health**

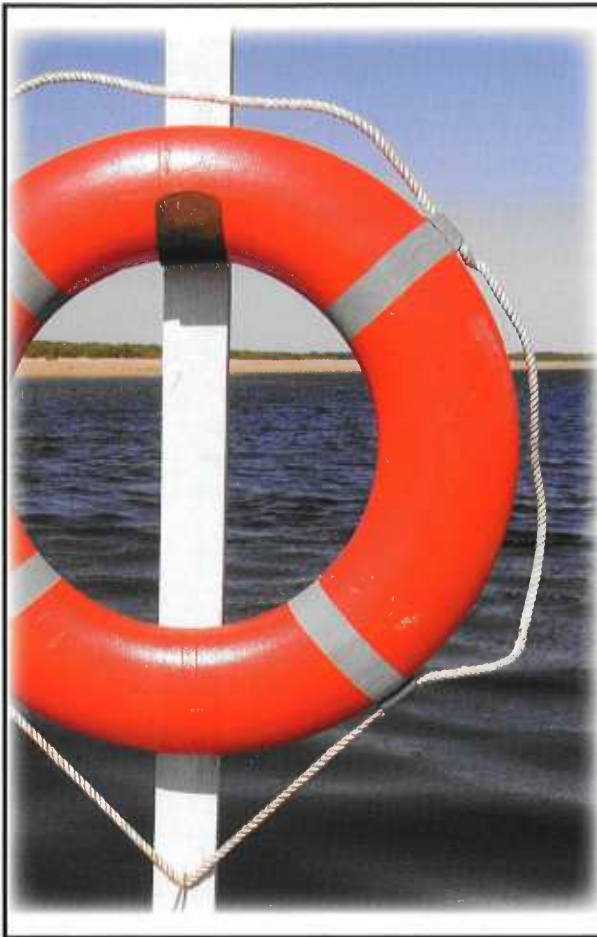
Also Inside:

- Adding Trauma-Informed Questions to EAP Assessments
- Helping Employees Reduce Divorce-Related Stress
- Communicating EAP Organizational Services to Employer Clients



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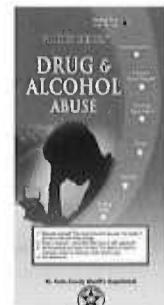
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# Journal of Employee Assistance

The magazine of the Employee Assistance Professionals Association

VOL. 38 NO. 3 • 3RD QUARTER 2008

## Focus

### The Integration of Physical and Mental Health

19

Employers are recognizing that just as physical health concerns can affect employees' mental health, conditions such as depression and anxiety disorder can exacerbate physical problems. EAPs can leverage their knowledge of mental health issues and their workplace expertise to help employers coordinate their health care efforts.

#### Preventing or Reducing Common Health Problems

20

by W. Dennis Derr, Ed.D., SPHR

#### Addressing the Health Needs of Older Workers

22

by Deborah DiGilio, M.P.H.

## Features

### The Limitations of Traditional EAP Metrics

7

by Susan C. Westgate, M.S.W., LGSW

The EA profession needs to develop new systems of reporting that can illustrate the value of the services and support EAPs provide to organizational clients.

### Developing a Trauma-Informed EAP Assessment

10

by Susan Polyot, M.Ed., CEAP

By including trauma-informed questions in assessments, EA professionals can make better referrals and increase the likelihood of treatment success.

### Divorce, Presenteeism, and Mediation

12

by Sam Margulies, Ph.D.

Divorces and other family disputes can prevent employees from giving full attention to their jobs. EAPs can help workers reduce the cost and stress of these conflicts by encouraging the use of mediation.

### Reducing Burnout among Hospital Professionals

15

by Seval Akgun, M.D., Ph.D., A.F. Al-Assaf, M.D., M.P.H., and Coskun Bakar, M.D.

EAPs can help identify and alleviate the factors that cause burnout and improve the health and performance of hospital staff.

## DEPARTMENTS

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*"Trauma is frequently defined as a normal reaction to an abnormal event, so an expanded definition of trauma is critical to obtaining an accurate and comprehensive assessment."*

Susan Polyot

"Developing a Trauma-Informed  
EAP Assessment"

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# Mind, Body, and Employee Assistance



Maria Lund

by Maria Lund, LEAP

**W**alk into any bookstore these days and you'll probably see at least one shelf, if not an entire section, titled "Mind/Body" or something similar. Books devoted to this topic were mostly of Eastern origin 20 years ago, but now they are solidly part of Western culture, and authors such as Deepak Chopra are household names.

Likewise, the concept of mind/body health is new to most employers and workplace professionals, but it is fast gaining attention thanks to a growing body of research illuminating the connection between physical and mental health. As businesses seek to reduce absenteeism and health care costs, they are beginning to focus on how employees' physical health can affect their mental health (and vice versa).

This focus is prompting many employers to invest in wellness programs and to integrate these programs into existing corporate health and safety initiatives, benefits plans, and the overall corporate culture. A survey conducted last year by the Business Roundtable found that 75 of its 160 member companies have wellness programs, while a 2006 poll by the Society for Human Resource Management noted that 62 percent of responding employers have such programs.

The growth in wellness programs and the increasing interest in the connection between physical and mental health present numerous opportunities for EAPs. Employee assistance professionals have long understood that common health problems such as diabetes or hypertension can affect a worker's self-esteem and heighten the risk of depression. We also recognize that phys-

ical and mental health issues can have an impact not only on employees and the workplace, but family members as well.

Our knowledge of these matters and how they can affect workers and the workplace can be very valuable to employers. We must leverage our expertise to make the case for including EAPs in implementing wellness programs and other mind/body initiatives that seek to reduce costs and improve performance.

This issue of the *Journal* looks at the role EAPs can play in the rethinking of health, productivity, and costs. One article, by Dennis Derr of Aetna, discusses how EAPs can play the role of the "welcoming front door" within an integrated benefits plan and help direct employees to the initiatives and resources that will best meet their needs. Another article, by Deborah DiGilio of the American Psychological Association, describes the physical and mental health challenges of older workers, who are increasing in number in the United States and in many other nations.

In addition to these articles, this issue also contains valuable contributions on issues ranging from divorce to trauma to burnout. Susan Westgate, an EA professional in the Washington, D.C., area, proposes a new method of communicating the value of EAP contributions to organizational clients. Sam Margulies, a longtime mediator in North Carolina and New Jersey, discusses the impact of divorce on workers and recommends that EA professionals add divorce mediators to their list of treatment providers. Susan Polyot, an EA professional in Maine, examines how trauma can affect employees and advises that EAPs include questions about trauma in their assessments of workers. Last but not least, a

trio of physicians presents the results of burnout research conducted in Turkey and offers advice for EA professionals who work in hospitals.

As you read these articles, please consider whether you have any ideas for topics that should be addressed in future issues of the *Journal*. I and my fellow members of the Communications Advisory Panel want the *Journal* to meet the information needs of EAPA members, so we'd like to hear your suggestions. Contact any of us or the editor of the *Journal*, Stuart Hales (his e-mail address is [journal@eapassn.org](mailto:journal@eapassn.org)).

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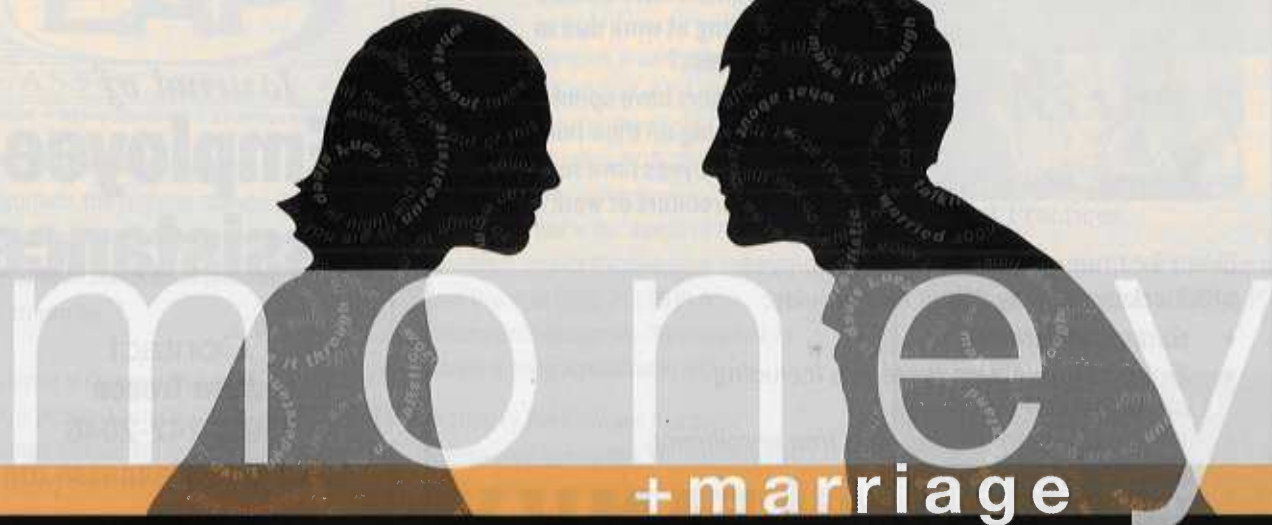
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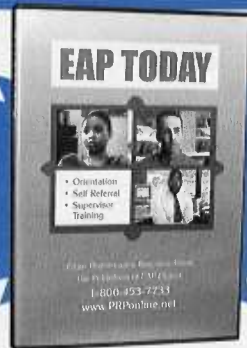
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