

# *Journal of* **Employee Assistance**

The magazine of the Employee Assistance Professionals Association

VOL. 38 NO. 4 • 4TH QUARTER 2008

## **Preventive Health Services: A New Core Technology Component?**

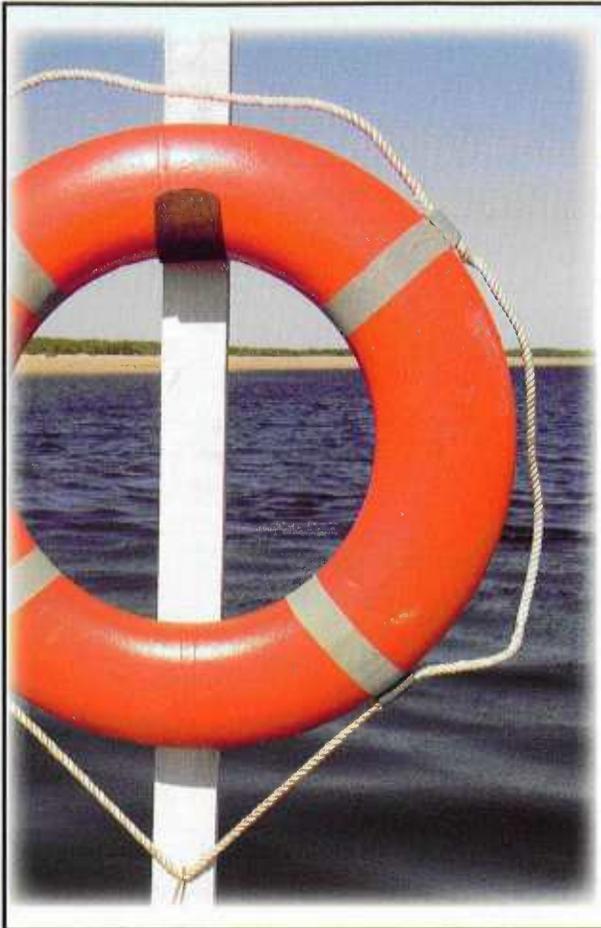


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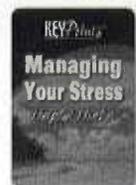
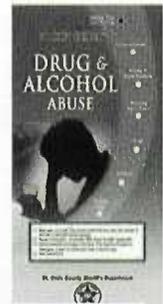
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# Journal of Employee Assistance

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## Cover Stories

### **Adding Prevention to the EAP Core Technology** 4

*by Joel Bennett, Ph.D., and Mark Attridge, Ph.D.*

Many EAPs provide services to help prevent mental health and addiction problems, and most EA professionals believe prevention should become a core component.

### **Sleep Deprivation and Substance Abuse** 7

*by Mary Hill, LCSW, CEAP*

EAPs can help educate employers and employees about the importance of sleep and its links to health and substance abuse problems.

### **Using Films to Assist with Therapy** 10

*by Danny Wedding, Ph.D., M.P.H.*

EA professionals may find it useful to supplement bibliotherapy with films, especially with clients who are nonverbal or unlikely to complete assigned readings.

## Features

### **Collaborating within the Work Organization** 12

*by Jennifer Shotlander, LCSW, CEAP*

Creating strong partnerships with other units can help EAPs fulfill their Core Technology and deliver more value to employees and work organizations.

### **The Human Dimensions of the Business Cycle** 14

*By Susan K. Friedman*

Helping employees survive swings in the economy requires EA professionals to understand and anticipate the multi-tiered impacts of growth and recession.

### **Integrating Conflict Resolution into EAPs** 18

*by Sherrill Hayes, Ph.D.*

Many of the skills needed for conflict resolution are familiar to EA professionals and can be used to provide additional services or enhance existing ones.

### **New Approaches to Drug-Free Workplace Programs** 20

*by Chris O'Neill, R.N., D.Min., and Joel Bennett, Ph.D.*

Evidence-based approaches to preventing alcohol and drug use can leverage EAPs to help promote occupational norms and ethical values.

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*“EAPs are actually well suited to offer prevention services that target workplace culture and behavioral risks from a health and productivity management perspective.”*

Joel Bennett and Mark Attridge  
“Adding Prevention to the  
EAP Core Technology”

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# Opportunities for the Taking

by Maria Lund, LEAP



Maria Lund

Several articles in recent issues of the *Journal* have discussed significant challenges facing our industry and profession. In the 2nd quarter issue, for example, John Burke wrote about the proliferation of “free” and low-cost EAPs and the impact they are having on EAP providers and purchasers. In the same issue, John Pompe and Dave Sharar lamented the absence of credible research that could help demonstrate the value of EAPs.

The 3rd quarter issue followed in this vein, with Susan Westgate noting that the EA profession has never come to a consensus on how to define and measure utilization and thus has difficulty communicating the value of the services EAPs provide to employer clients. Another article, by Susan Polyot, cited studies showing that as many as one in four adults is a trauma survivor but that most EAP assessments do not include questions that could help EA professionals identify and assist clients who have suffered trauma.

In this issue, the focus is mostly on opportunities. One lies in our ability to provide effective prevention services, specifically preventive services for mental health, addictions, and workplace behavioral issues. A survey conducted earlier this year found that many EAPs already offer such services and that most EA professionals believe it is “very important” to do so. For that reason, Mark Attridge and Joel Bennett propose in their article that preventive services for mental health and substance abuse be considered a core component of what EAPs do and how they are valued.

Additional opportunities for EAPs lie in collaborations with other departments in the workplace. Many EAPs have long worked closely with Human

Resources and Occupational Health offices, but Jennifer Shotlander, an EAPA member in the Washington, D.C., area, posits that collaborations with Wellness, Work-Life, and even Security units offer a wealth of opportunities for EAPs to increase their visibility, promote greater understanding of their mission, and deliver more services.

Yet more opportunities are available by adopting the skills and concepts that underlie conflict resolution. Sherrill Hayes, a professor who specializes in conflict resolution, reminds us that both fields empower individuals to resolve their own problems, use similar skill sets, and encourage alternative means of resolving workplace disputes and conflicts. For this reason, he writes, EA professionals can easily incorporate conflict resolution services into their menu of EAP services or use conflict resolution skills and concepts in their everyday work.

Pursuing just one of these opportunities could add considerable value to your EAP and make a meaningful difference to your clients. Prevention, for example, is consistent with our workplace productivity focus. And with many employers seeking new strategies for cutting costs, prevention services may be more marketable than ever.

While you’re considering how best to take advantage of the opportunities that come with prevention, collaboration, and conflict resolution, be sure to review the other articles in this issue. The topics include (1) using popular films as adjuncts to therapy, (2) understanding how business cycles affect employees’ job security, wellness, and work performance, and (3) helping workers get more restful sleep by understanding the link between substance

abuse and sleep deprivation. Another article reviews the current state of drug-free workplace programs and provides a case study of an industry that incorporated evidence-based practices into its DFWP and successfully reduced alcohol-related accidents and injuries.

I hope these articles provide you with helpful information and stimulate fresh thinking about the practice of employee assistance. The challenges we face are many, but so, too, are the opportunities. Even in this tough economy, these opportunities are ripe for the taking.

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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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