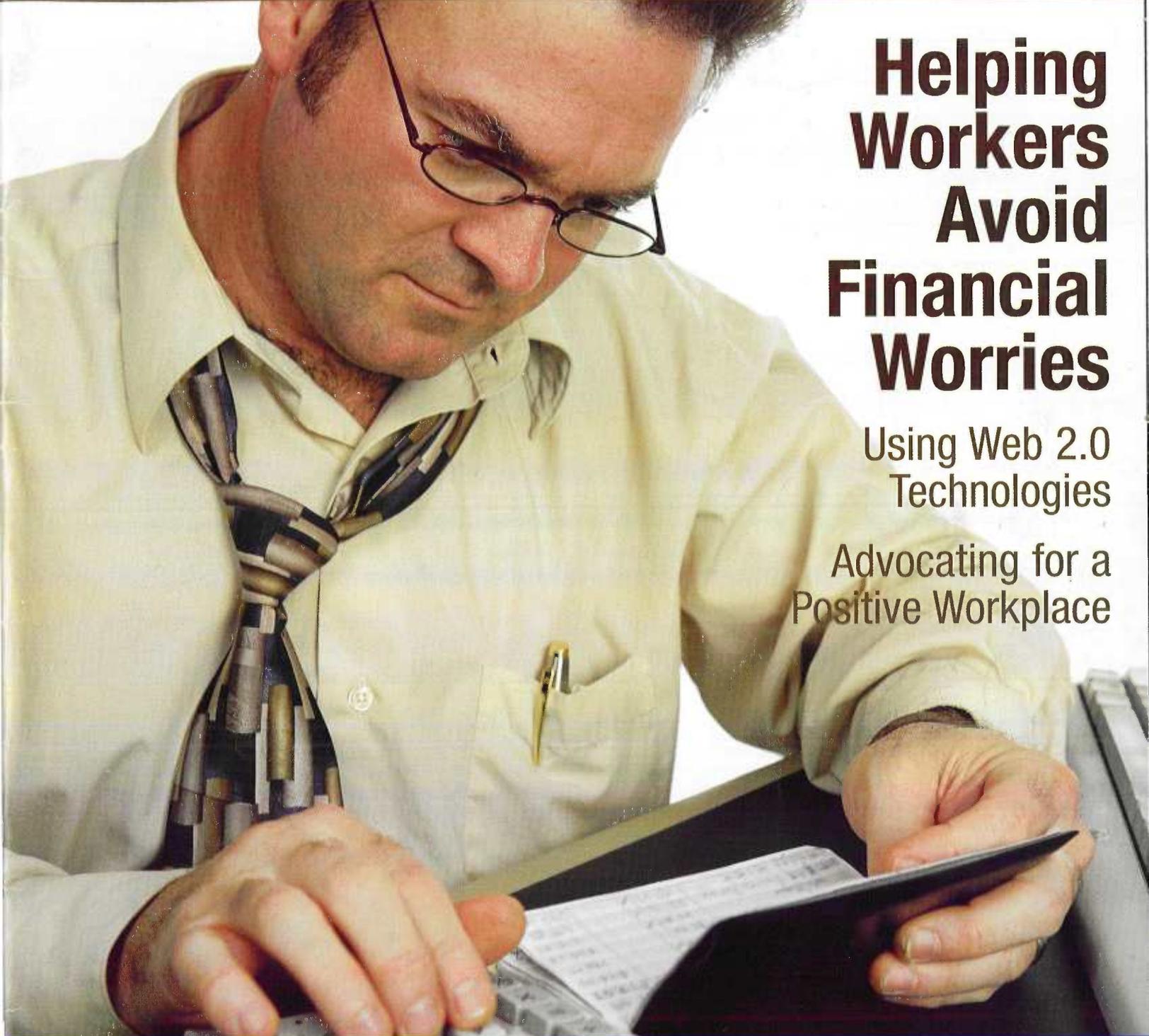


Journal of **Employee Assistance**

The magazine of the Employee Assistance Professionals Association

VOL. 39 NO. 1 • 1ST QUARTER 2009



Helping Workers Avoid Financial Worries

Using Web 2.0
Technologies

Advocating for a
Positive Workplace



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The EAP for a Wall Street firm on the front lines of the market meltdown is tailoring its response to meet the needs of different groups of workers.

Minimizing the Impact of Layoffs on Front-line Managers 19

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Ensuring that layoffs are conducted fairly can help reduce negative feelings among managers who must give notice to workers.

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"...managers who implemented layoffs were more likely than other managers to report sleep problems as well as various symptoms of poor health, such as ulcers, headaches, and heart trouble, and to seek treatment from health professionals for such health problems."

Leon Grunberg, Ph.D., Sarah Moore, Ph.D.,
and Edward Greenberg, Ph.D.

"Minimizing the Impact of Layoffs
on Front-line Managers"

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An Owner's Manual for a Recession

by Maria Lund, LEAP

As I write this column, the holiday season is in full swing, but the mood is anything but festive. Everything is down—the economy, the stock markets, corporate profits, and public morale. The only things going up, it seems, are the unemployment rate and the number of companies seeking “bailouts” from the government.

In office hallways and on factory floors, people are quiet and nervous, wondering whether their employers will be able to ride out the storm. Look beneath the surface, however, and you'll see they have plenty to say—on blogs, listservs, wikis, and social networking sites. Using these Web 2.0 tools, they're talking and seeking advice about how they'll survive the recession, how they'll manage finances, how they'll find new jobs, or how much they think they should tell their children about their financial situations.

As more people begin to use Web 2.0 tools, so, too, should employee assistance professionals. We need to be part of the conversation, whether it's about helping employers manage layoffs, helping employees survive them, or helping each other cope with the increased workload that layoffs entail. Web 2.0 tools are designed to help people share information and collaborate, activities that are critical to our profession in good times and bad.

If you aren't certain you understand Web 2.0, be sure to read Marina London's article on page 12. Marina is EAPA's Web manager and author of iWebU, (<http://iwebu.blogspot.com>), a weekly blog about the Internet and new media for mental health and EA professionals. Her article provides a good overview of the many Web 2.0 tools and how EA professionals can take advan-

tage of them to help themselves and their various client groups.

One group who will need our assistance in the months ahead is the front-line managers working for employers undergoing layoffs and restructurings. Letting go of employees is never easy for managers, and doing so for reasons that seem arbitrary can be stressful and even physically or emotionally painful, as the article on page 18 describes.

EAPs need to be involved in the layoff process because it has so many implications for productivity and for the workplace overall, EA professionals can get involved in organizational development (OD) efforts such as succession planning; we can help management plan for how to most effectively conduct a layoff; we can help with corporate messaging to employees; and we can help both managers and employees with the emotional and practical impacts of a layoff.

For a “front lines” look at how one EAP is helping an employer manage the current crisis, turn to page 17 and read Dan Pitzer's article. Dan is assistant vice president of the EAP at Merrill Lynch, an investment bank at the center of the economic storm. His insights will be helpful to all EA professionals, even those relatively unaffected by the downturn.

One of the reasons economic recessions cause such turmoil is that many people have complex relationships with, and attitudes toward, money. These relationships and attitudes result partly from a lack of education about money and partly from behaviors and beliefs passed down through families for generations.

Understanding how people view and relate to money is necessary to help them survive economic difficulties.

Even if your employer clients do not expect to lay off workers during the recession, I encourage you to read Deborah Price's article on page 10. Helping clients understand how their underlying beliefs about money affect their decisions about spending and saving is much more effective than simply helping them create a budget.

All in all, this issue of the *Journal* is like an owner's manual for EA professionals operating in a poor economy. I hope it helps you navigate the challenges facing our profession in the coming months.



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Prevention is Inherent in EAPs

I disagree with Joel Bennett and Mark Attridge that a new component comprising preventive health services needs to be added to the EAP Core Technology (4th quarter 2008, pp. 4-6).

I have always assumed that prevention is understood to be inherent in each of the eight EAP Core Technology components because it is a *stage* of treatment rather than a *type* of treatment (such as a consultation or a clinical evaluation). My medical training taught me that there are three stages of treatment, primary, secondary, and tertiary, with prevention being the primary stage. Thus, prevention is already part of each component of the EAP Core Technology; adding a separate prevention component is both unnecessary and confusing.

The original EAP Core Technology that arose in the early 1980s from research conducted by Paul Roman and Terry Blum carefully outlines the basic tasks/functions of a typical work-based EAP. Roman and Blum extended the "reach" of the Core Technology in 1988 to include family members and dependents, but the basic eight elements remained the same.

At the same time Roman and Blum were investigating the core concepts of an EAP, Jack Urfoote, Andrea Foote, and Max Heirich at the University of Michigan were investigating how wellness programs and EAPs interface with each other. Urfoote and his team coined the term "megabrush" for their new mix of employee assistance and wellness services, whereas "broad brush" refers to broadening the focus of EAPs from substance abuse to a more generalized array of emotional issues.

Over the past 20 years, I have con-

ducted numerous studies of various models for delivering employee assistance, work/life, and wellness services. I have found that the concept of prevention is clearly present in all three different domains of knowledge and is heightened by an integrated service delivery model.

As the accompanying diagram illustrates, the triage role is key to an integrated delivery model. Consider, for example, a new mother who calls her company's help line for resources to identify day care options. In an inte-

grated delivery model, the intake person would ask her some questions to rule out the possibility of postpartum depression or any other emotional issues associated with this major life change. At the same time, the intake person should inquire about sleep deprivation, losing pregnancy-related weight, proper nutrition for a breastfeeding mother, and other health concerns related to the presence of a newborn infant in a home.

When employee assistance, wellness, and work-life programs collaborate, the focus on preventive health can be heightened. Perhaps professionals in all three areas should continually review their process of treatment, from prevention through follow-up, to ensure that employees are receiving the full range of treatment stages.

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Decision Model Flow Chart for an

