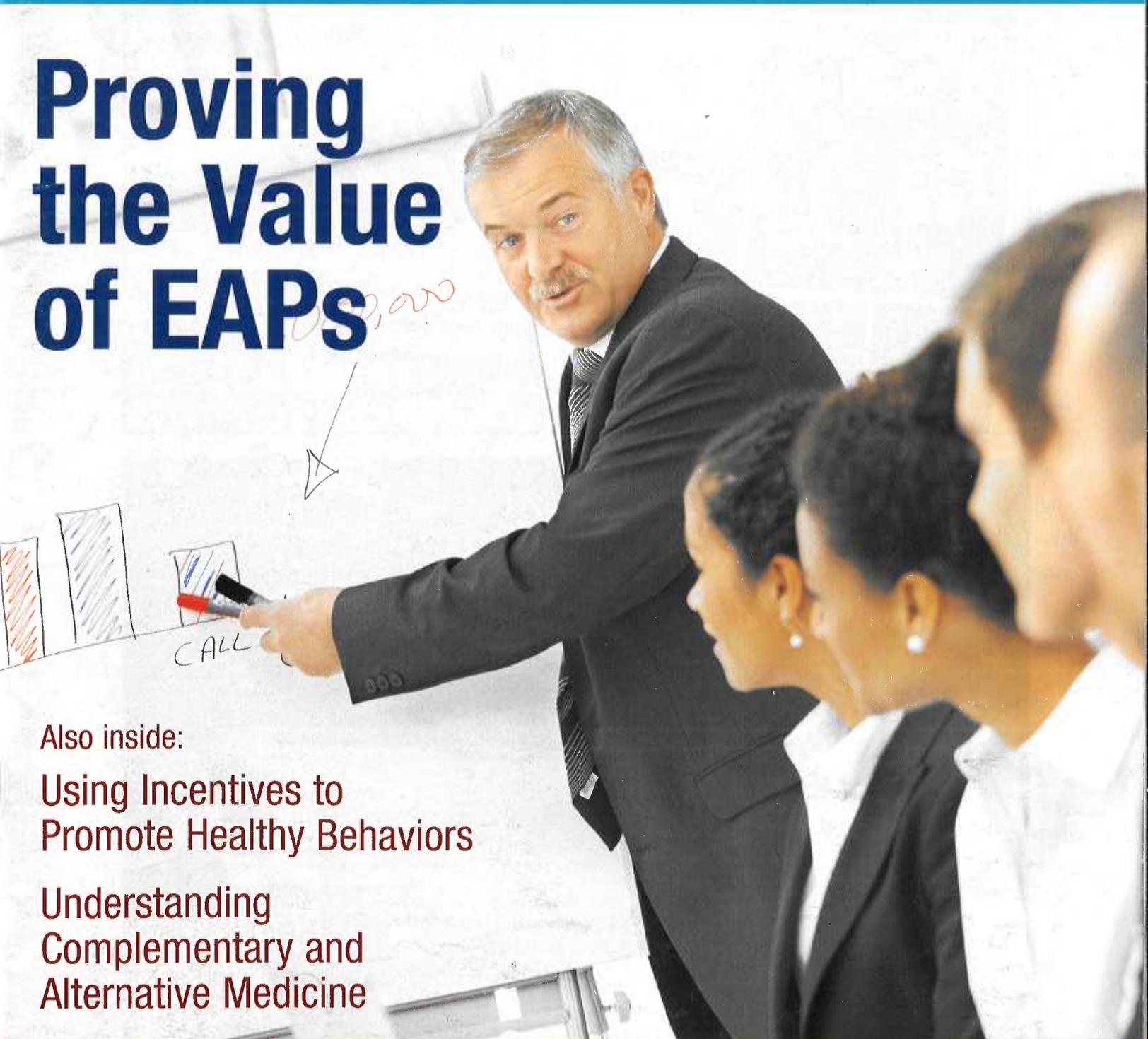


# *Journal of* **Employee Assistance**

The magazine of the Employee Assistance Professionals Association

VOL. 39 NO. 3 • 3RD QUARTER 2009

## **Proving the Value of EAPs**



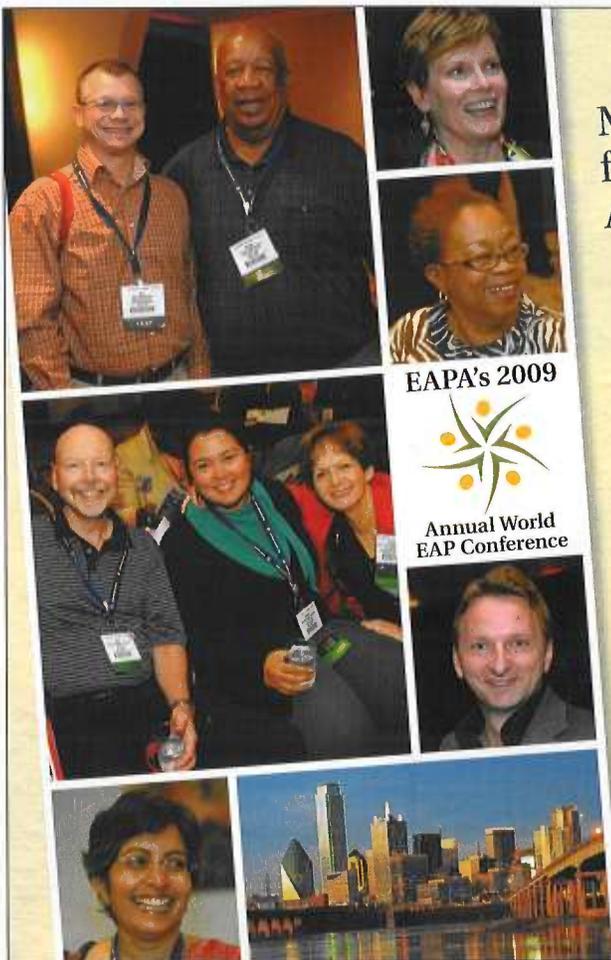
Also inside:

**Using Incentives to  
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# Journal of Employee Assistance

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## Cover Stories

### Do 'Free' EAPs Offer Discernible Value? 6

by John Burke, M.A., and David A. Sharar, Ph.D.

A survey of human resources managers, benefits consultants, and EAP providers reveals that free EAPs are here to stay but attitudes toward them can be changed through research.

### The New EAP Purchasing Realities 10

By Richard S. Citrin, Ph.D., M.B.A.

Rather than try to demonstrate their value, EAPs should try to understand purchasers' needs and provide services and programs to meet them.

### Commodity or Craft: The Choice is Ours 13

by Thomas M. Fauria, Ph.D., CEAP

The strength of EAPs lies in their workplace roots and their knowledge of employers' culture and policies, and these are the keys to differentiating them from mental health services.

## Features

### Using Incentives to Keep Workers Healthy 16

by Katherine H. Capps and Jeri G. Kubicki

Employers are offering a range of incentives to encourage employees to adopt and maintain healthy behaviors, such as losing weight and quitting smoking.

### Understanding Complementary and Alternative Medicine 18

By Katy Danielson, M.P.H.

The growing popularity of non-conventional therapies makes it imperative for EA professionals to understand the evidence underlying them.

### Promoting Resiliency from Within 21

by Katrina Fowler, CEAP, LCDC

An EA professional finds that her experience working with laid-off employees provides her with the tools she needs to overcome the doubts and frustrations she feels when she finds herself in the same situation.

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*"Currently, EAPs are perfectly priced to reflect the value that the marketplace associates with the product. Despite our desire to have our product seen as more valuable, product life cycle research has demonstrated that a long-lived and mature product comes to be viewed as a commodity."*

*"The New EAP Purchasing Realities," page 10*

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# Moving Forward in New Directions



Maria Lund

by Maria Lund, LEAP, LPC, CEAP

**W**e all feel it in some way—the uncertain world economy continuing to apply pressure on financial markets, home prices, businesses, governments, workers, families, and virtually every other component of our public and private institutions and systems. While most of the impacts from this pressure are negative, there is at least one positive development taking place: Many people are rethinking long-standing assumptions and moving forward in new directions.

For example, more and more employers are beginning to use cash awards, gift cards, and merchandise to encourage their workers to adopt and practice healthy behaviors. In the past, employers have been loathe to use such incentives to entice employees to get and stay healthy, but slowing business activity and rising health care costs are prompting many companies to look beyond old ideas to find new ways to encourage change.

Workers, for their part, are turning to so-called complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) therapies to alleviate conditions such as back pain, headaches, stress, and even depression. While the efficacy and safety of many of these therapies are unknown, dissatisfaction with the high cost of traditional medical treatments and frustration with the health care system itself are driving more people to experiment with acupuncture, massage therapy, and other CAM options.

Granted, both of these developments pre-date the current economic crisis. But with economic activity at a near-standstill and finances squeezed, both employers and employees are looking for new approaches to familiar problems. EAPs, which serve both groups,

are beginning to do the same.

In particular, EAPs are looking for ways to increase the perception of their value and stay viable in a marketplace where price pressures abound. This issue of the *Journal* looks at this challenge from several angles and suggests some potential new directions for our industry.

The emergence of “free” EAPs, for example, has been a concern for many EA professionals for several years, and calls have been growing for our industry to take measures to promote the value of fee-based programs. In the interest of understanding more about the free EAP phenomenon and its relative merits for all interested parties, Dave Sharar and John Burke surveyed human resources managers, benefits consultants and EA professionals to assess their knowledge of and attitudes toward both types of programs. The interviews revealed that value is a “mostly subjective, anecdotal and intuitive” concept for many HR and benefits professionals, one that can only be clarified and strengthened through comparative research.

Richard Citrin tackles the issue of value from a different perspective, suggesting new models of service that EAPs can provide to meet purchasers’ differing needs and expectations. Among these models are health and productivity services, disability services, and reporting services, wherein EAPs share data that goes well beyond utilization reports.

A third article on the subject of value argues that the rise of network EAPs using independent contractors to deliver services over a broad geographic area has contributed to the commoditization of our industry, and the solution lies in restoring our focus on the workplace. Tom Fauria suggests taking a vari-

ety of measures, including educating EA professionals about factors that contribute to providing quality services and improving continuity of care through the use of standardized assessment tools, to demonstrate the value of EAPs that provide services to only a few employers.

All in all, the articles in this issue suggest that as we look for new ways to stay viable, we must consider our mission and values as well as the opportunities and the business landscape. New directions tied to our roots and ideals can move us forward into renewed vitality.

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# HEALTH SENTRY

Volume 20, Issue 1



Adults with ADHD have very successful careers. Others may struggle with a variety of challenges...

## Succeeding in the Workplace with ADHD

Adults with ADHD have very successful careers. Others may struggle with a variety of challenges, including distractibility, procrastination, and complex projects. Each individual has a unique picture as you go about accommodations and modifications

movement in the surrounding distractibility (daydreams) can be adults with ADHD. The following

quiet cubicle, take work home, not in the office.

phones, classical music or other office noises.

such as a conference room, where

ly to voice mail, and respond to day.

book to avoid interruption of the

come to you during meetings so

that you can communicate more effectively.

- Perform one task at a time. Do not start a new task until the current one is done.

Adults with the hyperactive type of ADHD often do better in jobs that allow a great deal of movement, such as sales, but if you have a sedentary job, the following strategies may help:

- Take intermittent breaks to do photocopying, go to the mailroom, or walk to the water fountain.
- Take notes in meetings to prevent restlessness.
- Move around, exercise, take a walk, or run up and down the stairs.
- Bring lunch – instead of going out to buy it – so the lunch hour can be a time for exercise.

Failing to remember deadlines and other responsibilities can antagonize coworkers, especially when working on a team.

To improve memory, try the suggestions below:

- Use tape recording devices or take copious notes at meetings.
- Write checklists for complicated tasks.
- Use a bulletin board or computer reminder list for appointments and memos.
- Learn how to use a day planner and have it with you to keep track of tasks and events.
- Write notes on sticky pads and put them in a highly visible place.

For more information on adult ADHD visit [www.help4adhd.org](http://www.help4adhd.org) for tips, help and more.

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