

Journal of **Employee Assistance**

The magazine of the Employee Assistance Professionals Association

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Social Media: How EAPs Can Help

Also inside:
Creating an
Evidence-Based EAP
Is Addiction a Disease?



Employee Assistance
Professionals Association

HEALTH SENTRY

Volume 20, Issue 1



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

For Succeeding in the Workplace with ADHD

Attention deficit hyperactive disorder (ADHD) presents challenges for the adult in the workplace. The counselor or a psychologist, social worker or a psychologist, social assistance professional is extremely helpful in identifying and maximizing these factors.

Some 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 identifying accommodations and modifications.

Rest and movement in the surrounding environment and distractibility (daydreams) can be helpful for adults with ADHD. The following strategies may help:

Use a quiet cubicle, take work home, and do not be in the office. Use headphones, classical music or other background office noises.

Use a conference room, where you can directly voice mail, and respond to messages every day.

Use a notebook to avoid interruption of the meeting. What comes 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 for tips, help and more.

Distribute an EAP behavioral health newsletter for a fraction of the cost of doing your own.

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from the publisher of *EAP Digest*

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Journal of Employee Assistance

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Cover Stories

Social Media: The EA Professional's Role

20

by Wendy McMillan, LPC, CEAP

The increasing use of social media sites is causing headaches for workers and their employers and creating opportunities for EA professionals to prevent and resolve conflicts.

Intervention Strategies for Evidence-Based EAPs

6

by Richard M. Weiss

Enough research has been conducted on secondary intervention strategies to enable employee assistance professionals to develop an evidence-based EAP.

Is Addiction a Disease?

9

by Richard S. Sandor, M.D.

Addicts speak of a loss of control, and addiction is best viewed as such. EA professionals can help by educating alcoholics and addicts about the nature of their condition and holding them responsible for maintaining abstinence.

Features

Depression: A Lot Bigger Than You Think

12

by Thomas Parry, Ph.D., and William Molmen, J.D.

The absenteeism- and presenteeism-related costs of depression outweigh the medical and pharmaceutical costs and make a strong case for EAP intervention against this condition.

Helping HR Professionals Boost Resiliency Skills

15

by Kathleen Greer

Human resources professionals often feel isolated and stressed because of the nature of their work, making them a key audience for EAPs.

Measuring Workplace Outcomes in EAPs

18

by Richard Lennox, Ph.D., David Sharav, Ph.D., and John Burke, M.A.

Until EAPs can demonstrate they produce positive workplace outcomes, they will continue to lack credibility with employers and be seen as commodities.

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"The time has come to expend less energy and money on measuring processes and invest more in measuring outcomes and demonstrating results."

"Measuring Workplace Outcomes in EAPs"
—page 18

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Positioning Your EAP for the Recovery

by Maria Lund, LEAP, LPC, CEAP



Maria Lund

What would you have done differently 12 months ago if you had known that today we would be in the midst of the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression? What would you have done to help your employer and employee clients survive the recession, and what changes in strategy or service offerings would you have implemented?

Now, ask yourself the same questions about the recovery. The economists are saying that we've turned the corner, though most of us won't notice any signs of improvement for a few months (and maybe longer). But things will improve, and the time to begin positioning yourself and your EAP for the recovery and the changes it will bring is now.

Some of the articles in this issue of the *Journal* provide ideas for doing just that. For example, Richard Weiss recommends that EA professionals encourage their employer clients to invest only in initiatives that have been shown to produce a positive return on investment—typically those that are designed to enhance people's ability to withstand the impact of problems. Too often, he says, employers have supported primary interventions for which there is little or no evidence of long-term effectiveness. Recommending and helping implement initiatives that are justified by research will benefit employers and employees and help EAPs return to their core competency of solving workplace problems related to human behavior.

Rik Lennox, Dave Sharar and John Burke offer another strategic idea for our field—developing and implementing meaningful criteria for measuring EAP outcomes. Without such criteria, they argue, EAP providers will never be paid

in proportion to their effectiveness, because employers will not be able to base prices on outcomes. The authors propose a workplace outcomes suite that uses a self-report scale to examine the impact of personal issues on workplace functioning as evidenced by absenteeism, presenteeism, work engagement, life satisfaction, and workplace distress.

Thomas Parry and William Molmen, meanwhile, recommend that EA professionals expand their definition of the value of EAP initiatives to include not just medical cost savings but also reduced absenteeism and presenteeism and increased productivity. Using depression as an example, they present research showing that short-term disability claims account for only 19 percent of lost days for workers with depression, whereas presenteeism represents 63 percent. By making this kind of research clear to employers, EA professionals can make a stronger case for financial support of EAP initiatives.

These ideas are well worth exploring as the economy improves and EAPs turn their attention to considering new initiatives and strategies. In the short term, however, the recession is still with us, and EAPs have many opportunities to provide valuable assistance to both organizations and workers. As Kathy Greer discusses in her article, EAPs can work to improve the resiliency of human resources professionals, who often deal with difficult behavioral situations that they cannot discuss with others because of confidentiality issues. EA professionals understand the stress this can cause and how to reduce its impact.

The two other articles in this issue address concerns that reflect the broad nature of performance problems that

EAPs confront. One concern, alcohol abuse, is the behavior that launched the EAP movement; the other, social media abuse, is a recent phenomenon. Both present an opportunity for EA professionals to rethink how they can best serve their clients and become valued partners in the evolving workplace.

By the time you read these articles, the 2009 EAPA World Conference will be upon us. If you're in Dallas, I encourage you to talk to me or one of the panel members and share your thoughts about how to improve the *Journal* and increase its value to EA professionals.

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Back to the EAP Core Technology

As a founding member of EAPA (then known as ALMACA), I read with great interest the 3rd quarter 2009 issue of the *Journal of Employee Assistance* and particularly the articles titled "Do 'Free' EAPs Offer Discernible Value," "The New EAP Purchasing Realities," and "Commodity or Craft: The Choice is Ours."

I get the feeling there is a struggle for survival of the EAP movement as we have known it for the past several years. I am not surprised at the problems the industry faces, in that we have lost the proper focus in our attempt to become more sophisticated and clinical in our

approach to providing EAP services.

All of the founding members of ALMACA came with a broad variety of business backgrounds. Not one of the founders was from the clinical disciplines—they were businessmen and union people with a strong interest in alcoholism. The National Council on Alcoholism arranged for the first meeting of ALMACA.

Through case studies in companies and concurrent studies by Harrison Trice (with Paul Roman), it was determined that an EAP could be most effective when it had the active support of corporate management. Management

training in relationship to the EAP became the method of gaining that interest.

Through the guidance of many people, particularly Paul Roman, EAPA adopted the EAP Core Technology and then a certification process that included a significant percentage of knowledge related to the business side. With the takeover of EAPs by insurance companies, there became less of a focus on the business aspect, and EAPs began to lose their relationship inside the business relative to cost savings and job improvement.

If EAPA is to remain viable, it needs to refocus on the business side and re-establish its relationship with corporate management. Back to the EAP Core Technology!

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