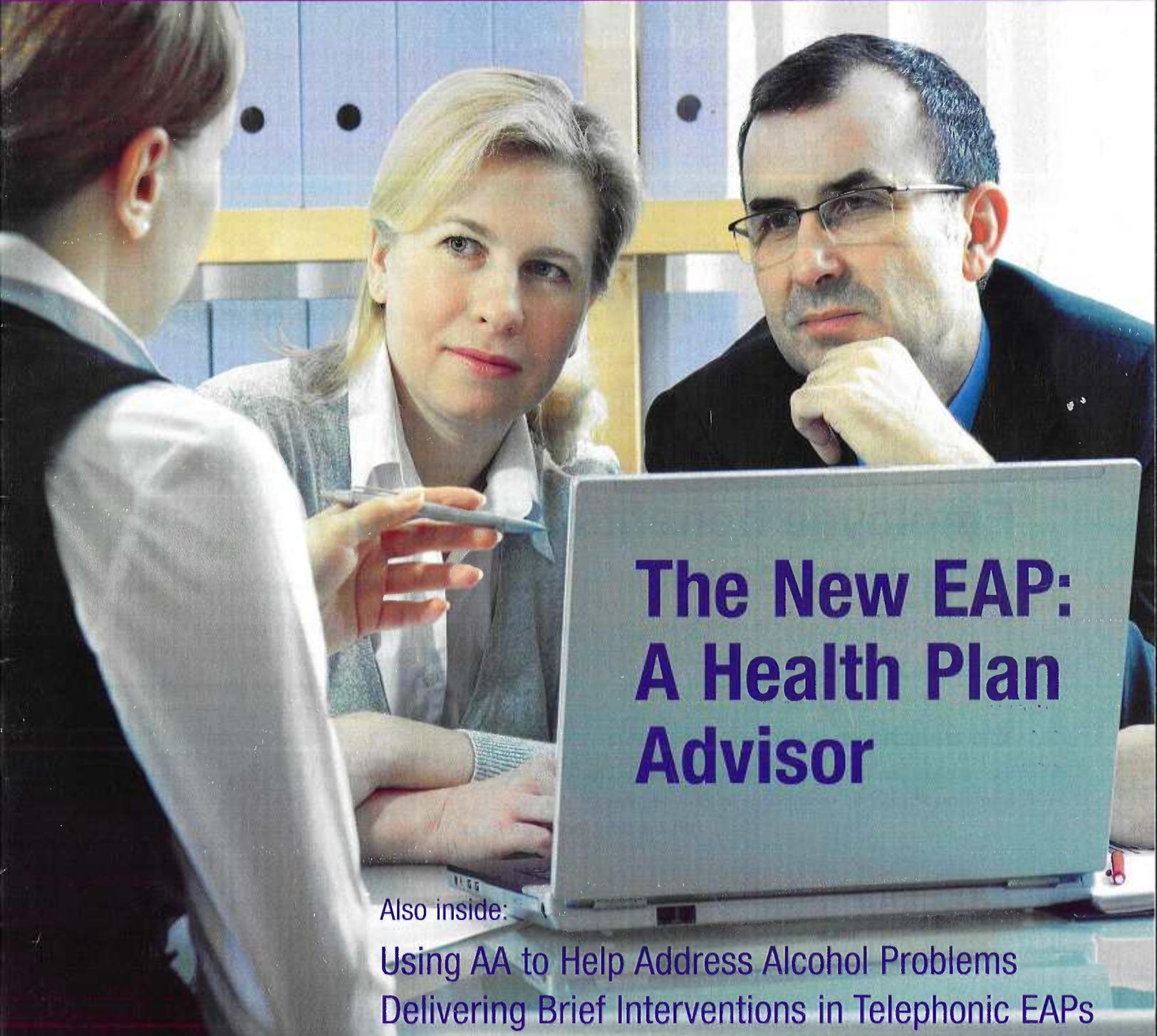


Journal of **Employee Assistance**

The magazine of the Employee Assistance Professionals Association

VOL. 40 NO. 3 • 3RD QUARTER 2010



The New EAP: A Health Plan Advisor

Also inside:

Using AA to Help Address Alcohol Problems

Delivering Brief Interventions in Telephonic EAPs



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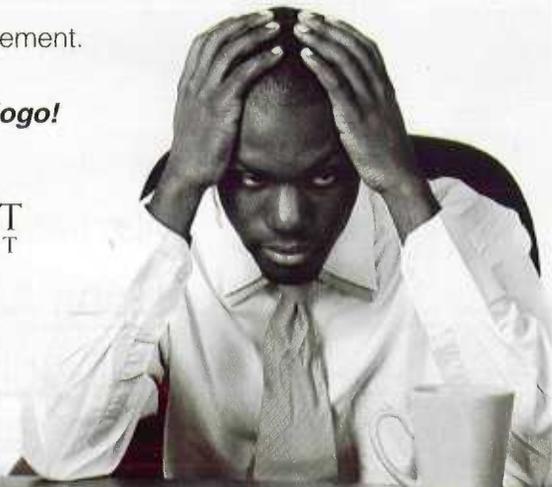
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Cover Stories

Using Mutual-Help Groups to Address Alcohol Problems 5

by John F. Kelly, Ph.D., and Julie D. Yeterian, B.A.

Research is beginning to show that attendance at Alcoholics Anonymous meetings increases the odds of recovery and improves mood and well-being.

The New EAP: A Health Plan Advisor 8

by Zachary Meyer, M.A.

The enactment of health care reform in the United States provides EAPs with the opportunity to play a new role: helping workers select health plans that suit their needs.

Delivering Brief Alcohol-Related Interventions in Telephonic EAPs 16

by Gregory L. Greenwood, Ph.D., M.P.H.; Eric Goplerud, Ph.D.; Tracy L. McPherson, Ph.D.; Francisca Azocar, Ph.D.; Eugene M. Baker, Ph.D.; and Sherri Dybdahl, M.A.

A pilot program showed that EAP call centers using tested protocols can better identify unhealthy drinking behaviors and deliver interventions tailored to risk levels.

Features

Helping Adoptees Reconnect with Their Birth Parents 10

By Teresa J. Petersen, LCSW, CEAP, SAP

As more adopted children desire to learn about their biological parents, EAPs will need to learn how to minimize the impact on the workplace.

Taking the Pareto Path to ROI 12

by Mark Attridge, Ph.D., M.A.

Some studies have shown that EAPs have a positive financial impact that offsets their cost, but few of these studies have been published in peer-reviewed journals.

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“Employees have long relied on EAPs to help them address behavioral and mental health issues affecting their work, and providing reliable information about health plan options would be a natural extension of this role.”

“The New EAP: A Health Plan Advisor”

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Framing a New Vision

by Maria Lund, LEAP



Maria Lund

How do we stay relevant when it's hard to figure out what really matters? How do we drive change when it seems there's too much change taking place already?

First we experienced the worst economic downturn in more than half a century, one that decimated workplaces, drove thousands out of their homes and into bankruptcy, and spawned anger and desperation throughout the world. Then, just when it seemed we had begun to adjust to this uncertain environment, things got worse—political tensions flared in Thailand and on the Korean peninsula, immigration anxieties heated up in the United States, budget crises erupted in Greece, Spain, and Ireland, an oil well exploded in the Gulf of Mexico, and Israel diverted aid ships headed for Gaza, provoking condemnation from friends and foes alike.

EAPs are supposed to be a source of stability in times like these. Even as depression, substance abuse and financial stress slowly infect workplaces, EAPs are expected to remain emotionally immune from outside troubles and help workers and family members recover from their problems.

Are we unaffected by the world's ills? Of course not. Employee assistance professionals are as vulnerable to economic uncertainty and workplace stress as anyone else, though our work and expertise can provide us with insights on how to be a valuable resource in these difficult times. We can achieve much by modeling good personal and workplace practices for those we serve, and we can augment our traditional services by—

- Working to promote resiliency among our customers and clients;
- Inspiring and reassuring customers

and clients about the future; and

- Partnering to help create new visions for health and productivity.

These are challenging goals even in the best of times; now, they are professional imperatives. We must take maximum advantage of our understanding of human behavior and the workplace to not only stay relevant, but also help drive change.

Change may seem like a hard sell in an environment like this. It feels like the old economic and political orders are crumbling, so we instinctively seek out familiar symbols and institutions and cling to them for comfort. The EAP Core Technology, the certified employee assistance professional (CEAP) credential, and the program standards and guidelines—these are the foundations of our profession, and we draw on them for sustenance when challenges threaten to overwhelm us.

But nothing in the canons of our profession prohibits us from being change agents and framing a new vision of workplace health and productivity. In fact, our history shows that when we leave these roles to others we risk blurring our identity and becoming less relevant to our clients.

Some of the articles in this issue of the *Journal* underscore this point. Zachary Meyer of Ceridian proposes a vision of EAPs as health care advocates, helping workers choose health plans that best meet their needs. Researchers at OptumHealth and George Washington University present the findings of a public-private partnership that tested an alcohol screening and brief intervention model and found it to be effective when delivered by telephonic EAPs. And John Kelly of Harvard University sheds new

light on 12-step treatment programs, which may well experience a rebirth as health care reforms take effect.

EAPs have survived managed care, outsourcing, technological change and other challenges, and we will survive the uncertainties of today as well. Survival, however, should not be our goal. We can inspire a new vision for an uncertain world, building on our traditions and embracing a broader understanding of the needs of our customers and clients. I welcome your views of what this vision should be. ■

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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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