

## Employee Wellness: Doing it the Right Way (Part II)

Successful company wellness programs are social and they're fun. Nobody has to tell kids to run and play with their friends. The best ones tap into our inner school kid. *Employee Benefit News* lists 10 ideas from companies that are doing wellness right. Five of them were presented last month, with the remainder appearing here.

❖ **Talk about what works.** Co-workers' success stories encourage more people to hop on the healthy bandwagon. Smith Brothers shares health tips and best practices through its weekly newsletter and in the break room.

❖ **Focus on more than physical health.** Motley Fool hosted a "Financial Wellness Day" for its employees with classes on subjects such as buying a home or living cheaply. Bazaarvoice strongly encourages volunteerism as a step toward mental wellness.

❖ **Create designated "areas of health."** Hack Reactor has a strict rule that forbids work-related talk in its break room. Instead, employees can listen to meditations, play board games, or do yoga.

❖ **Encourage group activities.** Bazaarvoice supports and publicly recognizes team efforts such as recreational sports leagues that bring together groups of employees. The firm provides company-branded uniforms or money toward shoes and equipment.

❖ **Don't ignore traditional benefits, but don't rely entirely on them.** Find any helpful-but-forgotten wellness benefits, such as gym discounts and health risk assessments, and tie them into the wellness program. You Earned It quickly discovered that tying incentives to a gym membership doesn't work for everyone. Instead, it created an incentive bonus that covers anyone's activity preference. For instance, the company recognizes small decisions, such as the choice of employees to walk to lunch rather than drive.

### Summary

Wellness isn't drudgery. Done right, it's the best part of the week in every workplace. ■

Source: *Employee Benefit News*.

### Quick Ideas

## Traits for Resolving Conflicts

The following are the important traits of managers and employees who understand how to resolve conflicts constructively.

❖ **They understand the individual's needs.** Does the person need to vent? Brainstorm solutions? Effective conflict resolvers know what both parties want, and if they don't know, they find out.

❖ **They are collaborative listeners.** Listening is crucial, but effective conflict resolvers take it a step further and support the other person.

❖ **They are more interested in a good solution than a hasty one.** Effective conflict resolvers recognize that while it's important to not drag your feet, neither do you want to be so anxious for a resolution that you'll settle for anything. Do that and you'll simply revisit the issue later on. ■

Source: *Dina Beach Lynch, former ombudsman for Fleet Bank.*

## Something We Should Know About?

Send your announcements, press releases and news tips to *Employee Assistance Report*, (715) 445-4386 or email [mike.jacquart@impacttrainingcenter.net](mailto:mike.jacquart@impacttrainingcenter.net).



# EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE REPORT

supporting EAP professionals

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Volume 19, No. 12  
December 2016

## Raising Awareness of Your EAP

It's amazing the number of people who are puzzled about what an EAP is or what it does. If you mention it as, "that 800 number you call for help at work," they have an idea what you mean, but even then just vaguely. Why is this all too often the case? Patricia Herlihy, PhD, a noted EAP researcher, theorizes: "One reason might be that EA professionals work so hard at being confidential and keeping everything private that they have never learned how to really promote all of the good work that they do."

*"Go through life with your eyes wide open."*

- Kelly Nies,  
ThedaCare at Work

### Get out There

It's one thing to be modest, but EA professionals also need to "get out there." Think of it this way, you can be *informational* about your EAP and its services without coming across as being too *promotional*. In fact, Thomas McNulty, president of Success Stories, Inc., states that, "You must be visible and constantly raise the profile of EAPs in the workplace."

Moreover, while confidentiality is certainly important, bear in mind that Millennials aren't worried about this issue like older people – probably to a fault! There needs to be a happy medium in which practitioners protect the rights and identity of clients, while still striving to be more "open" about EA services like people in this age group are accustomed to.

### Strategies for Raising EAP Awareness

There are a number of ways in which an EA professional can raise awareness of the EAP, some traditional, others more "outside the box". The following are some suggestions:

❖ **Work with the media to promote the EA profession and your EAP.** Media love having local professionals they can contact to comment on stories about important workplace, behavioral, and related topics. When Robin Williams took his life in 2014, editors wanted to talk to *local* mental health experts about this issue, such as explaining the warning signs of suicide. These are areas that EA professionals know all too well, *but advice like this is a revelation to those who don't work in behavioral health!*

How would the media know how to contact YOU? Make an

appointment to meet with a local editor or producer and let them know you are available for an interview, comment, or quote when your area of expertise is in the news. A 30-minute meeting might suffice, and think of the visibility! Why can't it be *you* whose comment appears in print or on TV or radio? But the squeaky wheel gets the grease!

Do you like to write? What about penning a regular column about important mental health and

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## Do You Have a Marketing Plan?

“Marketing” is basically just a fancy word for enhancing awareness of your services. Does your EAP have a marketing plan? In this day and age, this needn't be expensive. As stated in the main article, email blasts, blogs, and videos are examples of relatively low-cost ways to increase awareness of your EAP, and in turn drive more business.

What if you are a small “one-man band” EAP and don't have a marketing staff person? You might consider delegating or contracting with professionals, such as editors and graphic designers who have the skills to meet your needs. Contracting with individuals who can put their editorial and design skills to work for you is a wise investment in your EAP. After all, it's easy to waste loads of time trying to do it all yourself, only what you come up with probably won't end up looking good!

First, you should come up with a checklist that spells out what you want. For instance, would you prefer marketing efforts that utilize social media only? More traditional marketing materials that include a simple brochure, and a list of your services? Some combination? (If you only need the design piece, and not copy, a local technical college may have graphics students who need experience and will work for a very nominal fee.)

Once you decide what type of marketing initiative would serve your EAP best, an edit/design team can work with you on an affordable plan that will meet your specific needs.

*If you are interested in materials that will look professional and polished, in terms of content, pictures, and an overall look – and in turn, drive awareness and increase utilization of your EAP – consider contacting the editor of this newsletter.*

related topics in a local newspaper? Philip Chard, CEO of Empathia, Inc., and Charles Austin, an EA professional with WE Energies in suburban Milwaukee, are among those doing just that! Or if social media is more your thing, what about writing a weekly blog?

The point is, regardless of whether it's a TV or radio interview, column, blog, or even just a simple comment or quote for print media, *the free exposure will raise awareness of both the EA profession and your individual EAP.* It's a win-win!

❖ **Get on a local speaking circuit.** Don't get pigeonholed into only hanging out with EA colleagues or just networking at EAP events. Utilize or join Chamber of Commerce, civic groups (think Lions, Rotary, etc.) and others to raise awareness of an issue or about EAP in general. Joining a business association related to EAP, such as the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) is another possibility, suggests Lori Wessel, a critical incident specialist with Holy Family Memorial EAP in Manitowoc, Wis. Besides, organizations like these are always looking for speakers at their meetings, and that could be *you*. These are good ways of getting more comfortable talking about and promoting your particular EAP.

❖ **Think big picture – you never know where networking might lead.** One Chamber of Commerce in Wisconsin worked with an EA professional to offer reduced rates for the EAP's services. But if the EAP practitioner hadn't belonged to the Chamber, the opportunity would have never presented itself.

### EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE REPORT

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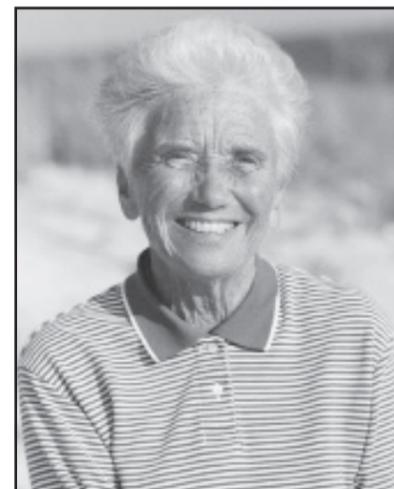
Another EAP was able to tap into a new market by working with several school districts in Wisconsin in order to offer EA services. The districts were “cutting back on social workers” and yet the need was still there. As a result, the EAP was able to step in to provide its services to families and students. The initiative required “fine-tuning” in order to work in schools, but it's

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### Clinical Perspective

## The Older You Are, the Happier You Are

Despite the physical ailments that come with age, older people are



actually happier than younger adults, according to a study published in the *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*.

Researchers analyzed data collected from a random sample of 1,546 people from ages 21 to 99 in San Diego. After a phone interview, participants completed a survey about their physical, cognitive and mental health.

Older people were physically more disabled and had more cognitive impairment than younger ones, but in mental health, the advantage flipped. People in their 20s and 30s reported having the highest levels of depression, anxiety and

stress, plus the lowest levels of happiness, satisfaction, and well-being. Older people, surprisingly, were the happiest.

Why? After the turbulence of adolescence, “real life” begins, with its many financial, educational, romantic and career-oriented demands, including constant peer pressure to succeed.

Conversely, older people are much better able to brush off stress and accumulate a valuable thing called wisdom: being emotionally stable and compassionate, knowing yourself and being able to make smart decisions. ■

### Clinical Perspective

## Rude Behavior is Contagious: Study

Incivility in an often politically charged workplace can spread like a virus from one employee to another, according to a study published in the *Journal of Applied Psychology*. Researchers say that incivility, otherwise known as rude or unsociable behavior, can leave employees feeling psychologically fatigued, and that exhaustion can cause them to mistreat other workers. This cycle can lead to a workplace that some may consider emotionally abusive.

Researchers asked 70 employees to complete a survey tallying incidents of incivility and its

effects for 10 business days. The results suggest workers exposed to uncivil behavior are more likely to behave unkindly themselves. Even among employees who wanted to be friendly and polite, workplace bullying sapped their energy and patience, leading them to behave in aggressive ways.

Researchers also found incivility was more common in workplaces perceived as political (defined as the drive for workers to do what is best for themselves rather than what is best for the company).

The study's authors suggest offering staff clear feedback about appropriate workplace behavior

can reduce the perception that a workplace is politicized, thereby reducing workplace aggression. This feedback can be either formal or informal. ■

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## Suicide Initiative is Making Inroads

Two leading suicide prevention advocates recently joined forces to create a partnership to raise awareness of mental health in the construction industry and help companies implement effective suicide prevention efforts.

The *Construction Working Minds* initiative was formed under the auspice of the Carson J Spencer Foundation's *Working Minds* program, which focuses on suicide prevention in the workplace. Sally Spencer-Thomas, CEO and co-founder of the foundation, and Cal Beyer, executive committee member of the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention, spearheaded the start-up.

The movement started to pick up more steam once it captured the attention of the Construction Financial Management Association

(CFMA). Beyer was active in this association, and he brought the group's president and CEO Stuart Binstock on board to partner with *Construction Working Minds*.

"This has been such a lightning rod because it kind of woke people up to an issue that they really were not aware of before," Binstock told *Construction Dive*, an industry newsletter.

Since the CFMA came on as a partner, the association created the Construction Industry Alliance for Suicide Prevention, and its Phoenix chapter held the first construction industry suicide prevention summit in April 2016. The summit drew more than 100 attendees from construction companies and mental health service providers who had the opportunity to speak openly about their experiences with suicide.

After the success of the Phoenix event, the CFMA plans to hold similar summits in the coming months and into 2017. To read more visit <http://www.constructiondive.com/news/construction-industry-suicide-prevention/424738/>. ■

**Editor's note:** *Suicide will be discussed in greater detail in the January 2017 Brown Bagger insert.*



### In the News

## The Zika Virus: Preparedness is Key

With the Zika virus so prominent in the news, worksite wellness initiatives should relay reasonable prevention steps to employees but also keep the threat in perspective.

"Employers should be prepared and proactive in protecting employees," said Rebecca Bernhard, a labor and employment attorney in Minneapolis. "Due to the extensive coverage of Zika and the serious health concerns for those who may have children, employers are wise to consider how they will address

any problems associated with the Zika virus."

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has urged organizations that employ outdoor workers to be aware of the risks of exposure to Zika through mosquito bites and to train workers on how to best protect themselves.

However, "while it's important to know what laws guide an employer's response, it is also wise not to overreact," Bernhard said.

With few reports of mosquito-spread Zika in the U.S., "employers

can focus more on preventative measures to limit the potential spread through exposure to bodily fluids," she said. "In general, workers who are exposed to mosquitoes while on the job, or to the blood or other bodily fluids of infected individuals, may be at risk for acquiring Zika while working."

For more information, visit <https://www.shrm.org/resource-sandtools/hr-topics/benefits/pages/zika-wellness.aspx>. ■

Source: *Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)*.

Awareness... cont'd from Page 2

another example of how traditional networking is only the tip of the iceberg.

Additional business opportunities can present themselves at doctor's offices, the grocery store, and ball games. Be alert to these possibilities, and be ready to explain the services that you offer. Kelly Nies, an EA professional with ThedaCare at Work in Oshkosh, Wis., points out that a dental hygienist once asked her about her company's EA services. "Go through life with your eyes wide open," Kelly stresses.

❖ **Have an elevator speech ready.** If someone asked, "What does your EAP do?" would you know what to say in roughly 30 seconds? The following are a few ideas that EA professionals have used:

- "Someone is available to talk to *live* [not automated], 24/7, but if in doubt call our 800 number."
- "Anything worth losing sleep about, is worth coming in for."

❖ **Utilize social media.** Some people are intimidated about getting involved in social media, but don't underestimate how much Millennials use these platforms to communicate. If you are on social media, how often? It should be on a regular basis to remain current. Some EAPs have a designated staff member whose job is to be in charge of social media.

Another EAP recognized it was behind the times when a prospective client who "googled" the organization uncovered information that was 10 years old. But it's never too late to get started.



### Editor's Notebook

I have been editing this newsletter for 12 years, and I've been editing EAPA's quarterly magazine, the *Journal of Employee Assistance*, for six years. And yet, it still isn't unusual to run across people who ask me, "What is an EAP?" "What does it do?"

Or think of 9/11. It's easy to recollect pictures of the firemen and police officers who were assisting with survivors – but have you heard any stories about the good things EAP did in the wake of this tragedy? I know for a fact some of you were in New York that tragic day, but unless you're either in the EA field or exposed to it (like me), chances are pretty good you never heard about the work EAP did in coping with the aftermath of 9/11.

I don't think it has to be this way!

Are employees of your corporate clients mainly only aware of your EAP through things like 1-800 posters and brochures? If so, why? And even if your EAP is doing more than that, chances are there are still other things you could be doing to boost awareness of your services.

There are many, many ways of enhancing awareness of your EAP, but as EA professional Kelly Nies points out, *your eyes need to be wide open to the possibilities*. If they are, chances are you will come up with ideas you hadn't thought of before. Hopefully, the ideas listed in this article were a start. Good luck.

*Mike Jacquart*

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How can an EA professional utilize social media? The following are a few suggestions:

- "Like", "comment" on, or even "share" an item you find interesting on Linked In pertaining to your field. It'll help get your name out there while showing you are current on various issues. As noted earlier, you'll be *informational*, without being too *promotional*.
- See anyone you know? Connect with them to grow your network.
- Blogging can be a great tool. However, don't get started if you're not willing to make a regular commitment to write since regular posts are crucial.

❖ **Don't be afraid to try other outside-the-box ideas.** Email blasts and videos are examples of relatively low-cost ways to increase awareness of your EAP, and in turn drive more business. Or what about updating your marketing kits by including customer testimonials (or even videos), and story boards (sounds better than "case studies" doesn't it)? Other examples include but are not limited to:

- Billboards;
- Radio ads;
- Coming up with a catchy phrase. The Carson J Spencer Foundation's Man Therapy initiative uses, "You can't solve mental health with duct tape"

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# Unprecedented Change in Treatment Raises Questions

By Pete Nielsen

With the passage of the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act, implementation of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, California's Section 1115 waiver, and possible adoption of the Adult Use of Marijuana Act by California voters in November, we are on the precipice of unprecedented change in the addiction treatment industry.

Although increased focus and funding are positive developments, there are many potential problems that might arise if careful planning does not accompany these historic changes. Workforce shortages, insufficient treatment facility capacity, and oversight issues are of primary concern.

Christine Vestal, in an article published in *Stateline* in April 2015, articulated the impact of California's inability to license AOD counselors. "Between now and 2020, the addiction services field will need to fill more than 330,000 jobs to keep pace with demand, of which more than half are the result of people retiring and switching to other occupations," Vestal wrote.

This staggering number has a tremendous impact for California. Even worse is that a majority of funding sources require treatment centers to have treatment plans and diagnoses signed off on by licensed professionals as a condition of reimbursement. To meet the requirements for

licensed staff, treatment facilities specializing in AOD treatment often will deliver services with licensed mental health professionals from other disciplines who require a mere 15 hours of drug and alcohol training—a phenomenon that defies logic to many treatment leaders.

In order to address workforce shortages, lack of access to care, and other system shortcomings, legislation needs to be created that would create a simple and self-sustaining licensure program for California. From families suffering while loved ones go untreated, to politicians on the national stage, the drumbeat for more treatment has never been louder. ■

*Pete Nielsen, MA, CADC II, is CEO of the California Consortium of Addiction Programs and Professionals (CCAPP). Additional source: "Addiction Professional" magazine.*

(check out <http://www.carsonjspencer.org/programs/man-therapy/>) and/or

- A 5K run/walk to promote awareness of your EAP, perhaps tied in with an important anniversary or observation such as "Mental Health Awareness Month". Include a slogan of your EAP on T-shirts. Find a few clients to fund the cost of the shirts by printing their names on the back. A run/walk will also promote physical fitness!

### Summary

Many options for raising awareness of your EAP were presented in this article. Some of them were outside the box, while others were more traditional. But whatever you decide, raising awareness is key. As an EAP practitioner, you do *great work!* Why hide it? ■

*Additional source: Mike Jacquart, editor of "Employee Assistance Report," the "Journal of Employee Assistance," and a frequent blogger and LinkedIn contributor.*

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# Ideas for Staying Ahead of Conflict

In light of the recent news of tragic shootings and workplace violence around the country, employers are left wondering how they can protect their operations and employees from such events. Rightfully so — employers also have a duty to protect their employees, clients and customers from harm and can be held liable for failing to do so.

Recently, the State of New York enacted legislation making it a felony to assault certain public sector employees. While private employers don't have such sweeping authority, there are several steps they can take to ensure safety in the workplace.

- ❖ **Establish a workplace violence policy.** Policies must

mandate a zero tolerance message and should require employees to report threats and comments that suggest suspicious or concerning behavior. All threats must be taken seriously until fully investigated and a determination has been made.

- ❖ **Consider background checks.** State and federal laws may prevent individuals convicted of certain crimes from being employed in specific fields (i.e. individuals working in a skilled nursing care facility may not be convicted of aggravated assault). In industries that have no such prohibitions, employers can still use background checks to evaluate a candidate for trustworthiness and

indications of risk to others, and they may exclude a candidate, so long as an individualized assessment of that person's background in line with his or her contemplated job responsibilities is performed.

- ❖ **Make full use of your EAP!** Employers should expect employees at times may encounter difficult periods in their lives that could serve as triggers for violent and disruptive behavior. For this reason, employers are encouraged to consider making full use of their EAPs. ■

*Sources: Lexology, Dinsmore & Shohl LLP.*

### Workplace Survey

# More Employers Updating Workplace Violence Policies

More than half (52%) of employers have updated or implemented a "zero tolerance" workplace violence prevention policy in response to mass shootings at U.S. workplaces in recent years, according to a survey conducted by the labor law firm Littler Mendelson, and as reported in *Safety Health*.

For the survey, researchers contacted 844 in-house counsel, human resources professionals, C-suite executives and others

from a variety of industries. Key findings included:

- Forty percent of employers have developed an emergency response plan, as well as a pre-employment screening process.
- Thirty-eight percent have conducted employee training sessions about how to recognize and respond to a potentially violent situation.
- Thirty-three percent have performed a safety and security audit.

- Twenty-eight percent have conducted active shooter response training.

"Unfortunately, even though workplace violence – and particularly active shooter instances – are statistically rare, no employer is truly immune, so taking preventative action can help save lives," said Terri Solomon, a Littler shareholder with experience counseling employers on workplace violence prevention. ■