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EAPA Introduces New Certificate of Recognition

By Jan Price

Today, the majority of employee assistance (EA) assessment and clinical services are provided by EA program vendors who utilize a network of mental health professionals. This model allows convenient access to EA program services and may offer counseling services beyond the typical assessment, referral and short-term assistance provided by EA programs.

However, these networks are made up of thousands of mental health professionals in private practice that may *not* have any EA-specific training. As a result, the Employee Assistance Professionals Association (EAPA) has developed a new entry-level certificate of recognition – the Employee Assistance Specialist, Clinician (EAS-C).

“Training for clinicians who are providing EAP services without prior EAP education or experience is greatly needed in the field,” said Jodi Jacobson-Frey, PhD, LCSW-C, and Chair, EAP Sub-specialization. “This course provides a solid introduction to the EAP profession and encourages providers to seek additional, more advanced training and CEAP certification in the future,” added Jacobson-Frey, assistant professor with University of Maryland School of Social Work.

Background

EAPA’s mission statement, “*To promote the highest standards of practice and the continuing development of EA professionals, programs, and services,*” positioned the association to address this concern. During the fall of 2012, a task force convened to begin developing a certificate program for network affiliate providers. Members envisioned creating a foundational, role-specific, certificate program that could be obtained in a single training day. The training was created and piloted at the first Texas State EAPA Conference on February 28, 2013.

The response was overwhelmingly positive. Thirty-seven affiliate providers attended the training and will be the first EAS-C certificate holders. The creation of this certificate program will allow widespread introduction of EAPA’s Standards and Code of Ethics to EA service providers who might otherwise not be introduced to the EA body of knowledge. Many attendees had never attended an EAPA meeting prior to this training, but left with usable tools and an understanding of their role(s) within an EAP system.

Benefits

There are many benefits to the EAS-C program:

- * For affiliate providers, the information includes tips for partnering more effectively with EAP vendors, which typically leads to more referrals.
- * Certificate holders are listed in a searchable database on EAPA’s website marketed specifically to network managers.

- * EAP vendors benefit by having more network providers who understand the scope of EA services and the relationship between the client work organization and the EA program vendor.
- * Savvy EA program vendors who adopt the EAS-C as part of network credentialing will be able to use the EAS-C as a mark of distinction.
- * Finally, the EAS-C provides client work organizations with a simple metric they can include in request for proposals to benchmark the competency of an EAP vendor's network.

In summary, the six-hour training course provides a framework for EA service provision that focuses on the partnerships between client work organizations, EA program vendors, and affiliate providers.

"I am very excited to see this training come to fruition. While all providers within Ceridian's network are required to complete a training on EA services and expectations during the credentialing process, this training is more comprehensive and includes specific training on the dual relationship of the EA practitioner in working with both the individual and the client company," said Patrick Williams, Director of the EA Provider Network for Ceridian LifeWorks. "This training presents a tremendous opportunity for EA vendors across the country to identify providers who are interested in enhancing the quality of their EA services as well as providing these professionals a greater chance to expand their practice as they become more valuable for EA programs to include in their networks."

Stepping Stone to CEAP®

Although the EAS-C provides *recognition* by EAPA, it is *not* a credential. The widespread promotion of the EAS-C certificate program will introduce the Certified Employee Assistance Professional (CEAP®) credential to an entirely new population. The EAS-C is a stepping stone to the CEAP® for individuals who meet the experience requirement to obtain the CEAP® credential. The CEAP® remains the only credential that demonstrates mastery of the entire EA body of knowledge.

For More Information

EAPA is utilizing a variety of strategies to introduce the EAS-C training course. Chapters are sponsoring EAS-C training days across the United States, and will be offering the training on an ongoing basis. In addition, EAPA is developing relationships with training providers to extend the association's training capacity. Live and on-demand online versions of the course will be available in 2014.

Because of the experience and mission of the association, EAPA is well positioned to provide this training across the United States, and by 2015, across the globe. For more information and to view a current schedule, visit www.eapassn.org/EASpecialist.

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SIDEBAR

EAS-C Task Force

EAS-C Task Force members are as follows:

- * **Judy Beahan**, LMSW, Clinical Manager, Crisis Care Network

- * **Judi Braswell**, LPC, CEAP, Vice President, Business Development, Behavioral Health Systems
- * **Suzan Clark**, M.Ed., CEAP, Director, LifeSolutions Operations and Service Center, University of Pittsburgh Medical Center
- * **Jodi Jacobson-Frey**, PhD, LISW-C, CEAP, Associate Professor, University of Maryland School of Social Work
- * **Lyne Taylor Genser**, LCSW, Private Practice
- * **Robert Intveld**, LCSW, Director, Robert Douglas & Associates
- * **Margaret Kelly**, LCPC, CEAP, Vice President, EAP & Network Development, Bensinger, DuPont & Associates
- * **Fran Peltier**, Provider Relations Coordinator, First Call EAP
- * **Tim Sumiec**, CEAP, Manager of Field Relations, Empathia
- * **Carlton Weinstein**, M.S., CEAP, Provider Relations Specialist, Cigna
- * **Patrick Williams**, LMFT, CEAP, Director, Provider Network Services, Ceridian US