

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE REPORT

supporting EAP professionals

Mental Health of Vets a Growing Concern

Thousands of American soldiers are returning home from Iraq and Afghanistan as their tours of duty end. As a result, the mental health of returning military personnel — and their workforce productivity — needs to be a high priority for HR and EAP professionals, according to Jodi Aronson Prohofsky, Ph.D., senior vice president with Cigna Behavioral Health (CBH).

“The impact will likely be stunning, and civilian employers as well as the military will need to use available resources to help these men and women transition back into life in the U.S., whether as a civilian or as a professional member of the military,” Aronson Prohofsky said.

The *Journal of the American Medical Association* supports her findings. A March 2006 *Journal* study concluded that nearly one out of every five service members (19%) returning from Iraq report having mental health problems, which are often associated with combat experiences.

Furthermore, the study revealed that 35% of Iraq war veterans used

mental health services in the year following their return to the U.S. Moreover, other studies have shown that many veterans require, but *aren't* receiving assistance. This is due, at least in part, to percep-

“...it's critical to help veterans know how to access EAP and Department of Veterans Affairs services, and other resources...”

tions that seeking help is a sign of weakness, which veterans feel in turn may hurt their military careers.

This is unfortunate given the fact that a statement like the following is not unusual: “When my son-in-law came back from Iraq, even a paper bag in the street would startle him. He felt naked without a gun,” said Cindy Graves, whose son and son-in-law both served in Iraq. “A lot of people aren't aware of the resources available. It will make an impact for people by just letting them know there's someone available to help.”

Consequently, it's critical to help veterans know how to access EAP and Department of Veterans Affairs services, and other resources to deal with areas such as stress, depression, increased use of alcohol and other drugs, nightmares, marital problems, extreme sensitivity to noise, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Communication is Key

But veterans can't use resources if they don't know they're available, so Aronson Prohofsky said it's crucial for EAPs to enhance awareness. “Remind the veteran of the benefits,” she said. “This is key. For example, we (Cigna) have a resource guide. While clearly not exhaustive, it is helpful.”

Other options include sensitivity training or directing staff to a good article on the subject of veterans returning to the workforce.

(Editor's note: This topic was also covered in the September 2005 *EAR*.)

“Certainly, even sensitivity training doesn't replace having been there (to Iraq or Afghanistan),” Aronson Prohofsky stressed.

Yet another possibility is to set up a telephone question hotline for veterans and family members. Cigna did this last year to tie in

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with the Nov. 6-10 Veterans Awareness Week. "Our staff said this was very helpful," she stated.

Welcome the Returning Soldier

"Our veterans need to hear 'Welcome home — thank you for your service to your country,'" she noted. "We feel this is a way a business can help re-integrate our nation's soldiers back into daily life, whether that is at civilian or stateside military jobs."

According to Aronson Prohofsky, one of the best ways of doing that is for the returning soldier and his/her workplace manager to have a "welcome back" conversation. She added that it often works best if the individual's immediate manager or supervisor holds the meeting.

"First and foremost, help the individual understand what's transpired in the workplace while he/she was gone," Aronson Prohofsky stated. "For example, who might have done their job while they were gone, what might have changed, etc. This can be set up similarly to what is done when an employee is out ill for an extended period. It just needs to be applied to this particular situation. In addition, remember that family roles may have changed as well."

Such meetings also serve as excellent segues into other conversations between employee and manager.

"This will set a tone that opens up a line of communication," Aronson Prohofsky said. "For example, what were the veteran's experiences like while he/she was gone? What have they learned that might help them on the job?"

Helping Veterans Adjust

Helping veterans adjust to the realities of work and daily living is another crucial aspect of assisting

returning soldiers, according to Aronson Prohofsky. The transition from military to civilian life can be much greater than a non-veteran might realize. In the brutal realities of a war zone, nothing and no one can be trusted, anything can be wired to a bomb, and life-and-death decisions rely upon automatic reactions to potentially lethal threats.

Consequently, it's very important that counselors and other co-workers not assume they understand the issues the individual is experiencing if they have not served in the military.

"Today's soldier is experiencing a tremendous amount of distress due to the fact that, unlike other wars, there is no real front line (in Iraq and Afghanistan)," she said.

In summary, Aronson Prohofsky concluded: "As an employer, once you have a 'welcome back' conversation, set objectives and refer the individual, if necessary, to the EAP. In particular, focus on workforce expectations and productivity." ■

Editor's note: For more information on CBH and its services, visit www.cignabehavioral.com. For additional information on this topic, contact Jon Christenensen, MS, Msed., at (414) 530-6575 or jonc@onbelay.us. Jon is a veteran, CEAP, and LPC with OnBelay Workplace Services in Racine, WI.

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Evaluating a Geriatric Care Manager

Every year, millions of families rely on professional geriatric care managers (professional nurses and social workers trained in assessment, care planning, and care management of older adults) to help provide the best possible care to their aging loved ones.

The first step toward enlisting the services of a professional care manager should be a careful evaluation of the individual's experience and credentials. The checklist of questions below will help you interview a care manager to determine whether she/he is suited to your loved one's needs:

- **Credentials** — Are you licensed by the state? What is your background? Do you have a degree? How many years of experience do you have in geriatric care management? Do you belong to any professional associations? How many clients do you have? Can you provide a few client references (names and phone numbers)?

- **Services** — What specific services do you provide? Are you available 24 hours a day (by pager or telephone)? Do you perform an initial needs assessment for each client? Do you meet with family members as part of the assessment? How often do you update family members on the status of the care recipient? Can you help locate alternative living arrangements, if the need arises? Will you personally perform an on-site assessment of each potential alternative living facility? Will you assist with the actual move to a facility?

- **Fees** — What is your fee for an initial assessment? What is your hourly fee? What do you estimate your total average fees would be for one month? ■

Source: LifeCare®, Inc., which serves 1,500 client companies with 4.5 million individuals. For more information, visit www.lifecare.com.

Resources

 ***Courage After Fire: Coping Strategies for Returning Soldiers and Their Families***, by Keith Armstrong, Suzanne Best, and Paula Domenici, \$14.95 list price, Oxford University and Ulysses Press (www.ulyssespress.com). Authored by three mental health professionals with many years of experience counseling veterans,

Courage After Fire provides strategies and techniques for the soldier's challenging journey home.

 ***War and the Soul: Healing Our Nation's Veterans from Post-traumatic Stress Disorder***, by Edward Tick, \$19.95 list price. One reviewer wrote that this book

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- Celebrity CEOs aren't a good idea;
- Comparing EAP models; and
- Future of EAPs.

Editor's Notebook

Regardless what you think about the war in Iraq, I think you'd agree that it's important to support our troops overseas.



After all, they are the ones putting their lives on the line to defend our great nation.

Several years ago, Jon Christensen was kind enough to offer his observations about returning soldiers to *Employee Assistance Report*. As both a veteran and CEAP, he offered perspectives that non-veterans cannot.

This is an important point that Jodi Aronson Prohofskey of Cigna Behavioral Health understands well. She notes that even sensitivity training, for example, doesn't replace the perspective of someone who's actually been in combat in Iraq or Afghanistan.

With waves of veterans returning home, the likes of which America hasn't seen since the Vietnam years, it's an issue that can only be expected to increase.

It's unclear when troops will be returning home for good, but it IS clear that the effects of soldiers' experiences overseas will be seen for years to come.

Fortunately, the topic of veterans returning home to families and the workplace, is an issue the EAP is well-suited to help address. Until next month. ■

Mike Jacquart

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“will make a major impact on the healing journey out of PTSD...both personally and clinically. This is a must read.”

📖 ***Purchaser’s Guide to Clinical Preventive Services: Moving Science into Coverage*** is a new guide designed to help employers improve the health of their employees and their families, as well as potentially reduce their healthcare costs. For more information, visit www.businessgrouphealth.org.

📺 ***The Power of Positive Presentation*** are instructional videos designed for human resource executives or managers or supervisors charged with delivering employee recognition presentations in their company. For more information, call (800) 999-3462 or visit www.mcfawards.com.

📖 ***It’s Called Work for a Reason! Your Success is Your Own Damn Fault***, by Larry Winget, \$26, Gotham Books, www.penguin.com. This author would rather offend than coddle as he uses a straight-talk approach to appeal to readers not normally drawn to self-help books.

📖 ***Helping Abuse and Traumatized Children: Integrating Directive and Nondirective Approaches***, by Eliana Gil, \$30, Guilford Press, (800) 365-7006,

www.guilford.com. Written for mental health professionals, this book discusses different techniques for dealing with traumatic experiences.

📖 ***Mum’s the Word: A Mother’s Lessons in Leadership***, by Steve Gilliland, Impact Books, www.impactstore.com. This book offers a unique and fresh perspective on leadership inspired by a mother’s love, commitment, and influence. ■

Project Management is Crucial

By Pam Peacock

When the numbers are crunched and the bottom-line is analyzed, there’s often one word that rises to the top: productivity.

How can companies be more productive? Today’s chief information officers (CIOs) are focusing on project management, as one of the keys to productivity. According to CIO Magazine’s *The State of the CIO 2006*, CIOs are hiring individuals with project management and business-process management skills. These two skills, along with application development, are the top three skills desired most from new hires, according to the survey.

What do managers need to look for when hiring project managers? One indicator is the PMP®, the project management industry’s certification. The PMP ensures that the candidate understands the key principles and processes of project management and has passed the PMP examination.

If you want to groom rising stars in your organization to become project managers, consider the CAPM exam. This is a Certified Associate in project management and is a good primer for less experienced managers who may later become PMPs.

Our philosophy is to create a life cycle of learning around project management and make it part of your organizational culture. At the top of the organization, your senior executives need negotiation

skills. They need to know how to communicate through conflict and grow and manage a skilled team of project managers.

If your organization is focused on the bottom-line, (and whose isn’t?), this is your time to look at your organization holistically and make project management a priority. Here’s a checklist that highlights ways project management can boost your bottom-line:

- 1) Align business goals with organizational output;
- 2) Support business continuity/risk management efforts;
- 3) Manage costs;
- 4) Support IT process improvement;
- 5) Improve employee satisfaction;
- 6) Develop leadership and business skills that instill pride;
- 7) Develop a productive and profitable business culture;
- 8) Support privacy initiatives;
- 9) Support knowledge management and leverage of intellectual assets; and
- 10) Support regulatory compliance.

You have nothing to lose but time and money. ■

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Pam Peacock is a PMP and the CEO of Cheetah Learning. For more information, visit www.cheetahlearning.com.

Renegotiating with Integrity

By Marc Freeman

Negotiating is part of life. Most of us don't realize how often we negotiate deals and relationships. While negotiation is an essential skill, *re*-negotiating is more complicated. It involves altering, revising, or changing a previous negotiation.

If you have ever missed a deadline and must explain why you were late, you now have to renegotiate your previous commitment. *How* you renegotiate is critical.

We often don't think very highly of people who fail to keep their promises or commitments. Nevertheless, we *can* renegotiate successfully — whether we're the ones who must break a commitment, or we're the ones on the receiving end of a broken commitment.

First, we must admit that we are renegeing on a promise or agreement we've made. We shouldn't fool ourselves into thinking we are not breaking or changing a promise or commitment.

Second, while the renegotiation process can be tricky, there are five principles that will greatly increase the probability that everyone will be pleased with the results:

1. The Critical Path

Principle: Follow the Critical Path to renegotiate properly.

The Critical Path involves a number of steps. The Common Ground is when both parties have committed to renegotiating. You go to your landlord because you need to break your lease because you lost your job and can't afford the payments anymore.

The landlord agrees to think about a solution. Now you can move forward because you have a Common Ground with the landlord. The landlord offers you a discount if you can give him some assurances. Now, you have created a Plausible Solution.

Next, the Comfort Zone involves working out the details of the Plausible Solution: e.g., how much rent you can afford, versus how much is the landlord willing to deduct.

Once you've arrived at a Comfort Zone agreeable to both parties, you must put it in writing. This written document, once signed, is the Settlement. Deals and agreements often change dramatically during this process.

2. The Secret of the Orange Ball

Principle: Know who is in control of the Orange Ball, and how to get it back.

We refer to the person in control as the one holding the "Orange Ball." Someone has to be in control in order for the renegotiation to move forward. If you don't know who has the Orange Ball, it will be difficult to drive the renegotiation in your direction.

Using the previous example, the landlord suggests that he accept half-rent for four months, and that you would pay an extra \$200 each month until the discount is paid. He has the Orange Ball. Next, you tell the landlord you can't afford the terms of his settlement, but you can handle an additional \$50. You settle on an additional \$75 and then you ask for six months instead of four months. The landlord agrees. You've

controlled the Orange Ball and redirected the renegotiation.

3. Hit the Refresh Button

Principle: Never overreact or act impulsively — take a deep breath and listen.

Listen. It shows respect, and allows you to better evaluate what's being said. Be pleasant — demonstrate understanding for the other person's point of view. Don't verbally attack anyone.

Use humor — If you can laugh together you can renegotiate almost anything. Humor is a great way to create an easier and more productive relationship.

4. Transcend the Details

Principle: Go beyond the details in order to stay on the Critical Path.

It is important to not get bogged down in details that don't help create a settlement. Focusing on details that don't move the renegotiation forward will always impede the process.

5. Call in the Cavalry

Principle: Make sure you have the right person renegotiating, at all times. If not, Call in the Cavalry.

Bringing in a third party to renegotiate on your behalf can be critical to creating a settlement. Creating a buffer between you and the other party can help to provide a quicker settlement than trying to do everything yourself.

If we have to break our promises or commitments, let's behave properly — with insight, forethought, and compassion. It works both ways. ■

Marc Freeman is author of the upcoming book "Renegotiating with Integrity: It's Not Business, It's Personal." He has worked with companies all over the world, helping them to renegotiate hundreds of millions of dollars in contracts. For more information, contact Marc at marc@marcfreeman.com or call (641) 472-2727.

Multi-Tasking Needs to be Taught

By Dr. Ron Knaus

Today's employees are under more stress than ever before. A recent Harris Interactive poll found that one-third of workers ages 25 to 39 feel burned out by their jobs.

Additionally, doctors' offices are seeing more stress-related illnesses than ever, including anxiety, depression, insomnia, adult ADHD, backache, and migraines. In fact, primary care physicians report that between 70% and 90% of their patients are seen because of underlying emotional stress.

So what is causing all of this turmoil? Over the past 10 years businesses have become lean, mean machines by reducing personnel and increasing the workload for those "lucky" enough to remain on the job. An increased workload forces the worker into multi-tasking. While multi-tasking may be effective for a short period of time, over the long term, multi-tasking causes excessive stress.

Multi-tasking is a must-have skill for any employee, yet results are showing that most workers feel they are being asked to do too many tasks. Why the disconnect? Because people have never learned exactly how to multi-task. That's right, multi-tasking is a *learned* skill. By learning how to multi-task efficiently, you can dramatically reduce your workday stress, increase your productivity, and enjoy your work again.

The Keys to Success

Contrary to popular belief, multi-tasking is not about "piling on the work" to the point of exhaustion. Rather, it's about

"By learning how to multi-task efficiently, you can gramatically reduce your workday stress, increase your productivity, and enjoy your work again."

training the brain to channel energy in an efficient and effective manner so you can accomplish more in less time. And, believe it or not, one of the hallmarks of learning to multi-task is to actually slow down to accomplish more! The following are some techniques that will help:

- **Practice how to multi-task.** Whether you're learning how to play the piano, or use a computer program, practice is essential to mastering the skill. Practice makes something seem routine, and when something is routine, it's no longer stressful. Examine your daily tasks, and then pick a few routine ones you can start with. As you master doing multiple routine things, move on to slightly more difficult tasks. Gradually work up to the number of tasks you normally do.

Remember that learning takes time. People often jump into a new role or responsibility without gradually gearing up their workload. Then they wonder why they feel stressed and can't multi-task effectively. You need to take a

step back and teach your body and mind how to work up to the desired production level.

- **Know when a task requires undivided attention.**

Switching focus repeatedly actually reduces your memory recall. Think of your brain like a computer. If you have numerous windows open on your screen so you can quickly jump from program to program, you may find that your computer has a higher tendency of locking up. The same thing happens in your brain. When you're performing multiple tasks that require your undivided attention, your brain gets overloaded, as it can only process information so fast.

Therefore, do not multi-task if the assignment requires your full attention. Only after that task is complete should you go back to routine tasks. This step will actually save you time in rework, as you're more prone to make mistakes when your brain is overloaded.

- **Use a tool to help you multi-task.** To keep from overtaxing your brain, write down items you can refer to quickly. For example, if you have a list of items you need to refer to often (such as pricing or shipping information or keyboard shortcuts) put the list next to your phone or computer for quick recall. Not only will others think you are brilliant because of your amazing

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ability to rattle off information, but you won't have to waste brainpower on mundane information. You can then use your brainpower for true multi-tasking purposes.

- **Take a brain break.** Most employers offer full-time staff a lunch break and two 15-minute breaks throughout the day. Do you take yours? Most people don't, and as such, they're not giving their mind a true break from the stresses of the day. Use this break time to walk around the building, sit outside, or just close your eyes and meditate.

If you really can't afford a break in your day, then "turn off your mind" as you walk to the water cooler or restroom. Give your mind some kind of break from workday tasks. To function at peak levels, regular breaks are essential.

Do More with Less Stress

Multi-tasking is a part of our business world. If you really want to succeed, you need to learn how to multi-task so it doesn't overwhelm you and cause unnecessary stress. Learning how to maintain your highest level of mental functioning is your key to multi-tasking success. ■

Dr. Ron Knaus is a physician, psychiatrist, and sports medicine physician who works within the medical profession and corporate world, helping them reach peak performance levels. His clients include celebrities, professional athletes, and business executives. For more information, contact Dr. Ron at rknaus@peakenergyinstitute.com or (727) 215-8104.

Quick Ideas

'What's Your Name Again?'

Overcome Memory Worries

By Roger Seip

If you live in fear of forgetting prospects' names, sometimes within mere seconds of being introduced to them, you're not alone. Surveys show that 83% of workers worry about their inability to recall people's names.

Ironically, while most of us hate having our names forgotten or mispronounced, most of us claim that we just "aren't good at remembering names" or putting faces together with names.

The trouble is, straining to recall a name may make someone be perceived as being either unfocused, easily distracted, or not very bright! What can you do? The following are some ideas.

- 1) **When you're first introduced to someone, look closely at his or her face and try to find something unique.** By looking for a memorable characteristic in a new face, you're incorporating the visual learning style. Just be sure to keep your thoughts to yourself! It's not a good idea to tell someone new that they have a big nose!
- 2) **Concentrate on listening to him or her.** Repeat his or her name in a conversational manner, such as "Susan. Nice to meet you, Susan." Be sure to give a good firm hand-

shake, which establishes a physical connection.

- 3) **Create a mental picture of someone's name.** Many people have names that already are pictures: consider Robin, Jay, or Dawn to name a few. Some names will require you to be more creative to form a picture. But don't get so caught up in this process that you think, "Oh, that's not a very good picture." If an image doesn't come to mind right away, do it later.
- 4) **At the end of the conversation, repeat the prospect's name one more time, but don't overuse it.** Use the person's name at the beginning of the conversation, and then again at the end.
- 5) **Write it down.** Keep a name journal or log of people you meet, and review it periodically.

People can't remember names for one main reason: they're just not paying attention. This process forces you to think, but it's worth it as it'll enable you to close more deals and increase your bottom line. ■

Roger Seip is the president of Freedom Speakers and Trainers, a company that specializes in memory training. To learn more, visit www.deliverfreedom.com, call (888) 233-0407, or email info@deliverfreedom.com.

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Meeting EAP Challenges Head On

With businesses facing more challenges than ever, it's imperative for EAP professionals to demonstrate why they're indispensable by devising strategies that market their services as cost-effective solutions for their business clients.

"I've never seen economic and political challenges to this degree. They (businesses) are struggling to figure out how they're going to compete in a global economy," states Sheila Monaghan, author of *Developing an EAP Strategy*.

With factors such as layoffs, outsourcing, and frequent staff turnover, Monaghan adds that: "There's an erosion of everything we know in companies. What is going to happen to the workforce when they're (age) 52 and their job is going away? How are we going to prepare them (employees) for that?"

As a result, it's not enough to rely on what's worked in the past. Today's EAP professionals are consultants, not just counselors. And while there are advantages to work-site EAPs, many companies are outsourcing more and more work. This means that if an EAP doesn't appear to offer a clear benefit, and if it's "nameless and faceless" it's highly vulnerable to being eliminated as a budget-saving move.

"The question is whether EAPs today are still delivering value," adds Ken Collins, a behavioral healthcare consultant. Collins points to a survey conducted by "Open Minds", a firm that tracks industry trends, that found that most corporate executives are no longer sure

what EAPs are supposed to do.

Think Like a Businessman

EAP professionals still have opportunities to demonstrate their value and carve effective niches *if they have effective, customer-driven strategies*. Perhaps the first step to developing a good strategy is to think more in terms of marketing than just as an EAP.

According to Monaghan, this means working *on* your business, not just *in* your business (the EAP field). This mindset parallels successful executives, who have to work hard *on* their businesses to create strategies that effectively serve customers.

"The customer must see us as relevant," Monaghan says. For example, she says that EAPs need to develop credibility, present strategies, and demonstrate the ability to deliver diverse needs. "Explain why what you do is not HR work," she adds.

Issues such as eldercare, economic concerns, and returning soldiers, are just some of the examples of services EAPs need to increasingly market to potential customers. But regardless of the specific service, Monaghan notes that EAPs, "should strive to be seen as *the* premier source of professional competence that can handle the most difficult and complex workplace situations."

Outline What You Will, and Won't Do

It's tempting for EAP professionals who want to become more important to their clients to take on additional functions. However, they run the risk of actually becoming *less*

important because the customer is not as clear about the EAP's purpose, according to Monaghan. "Don't be afraid to refer something elsewhere. You can't be everything to everybody. They (management) will love you if you're honest," she says.

This is where principles and strategies are important because they enable the EAP to maintain focus by emphasizing strengths and distinguishing themselves from the competition.

Additional Strategies

While it's vital for the EAP to develop a strategy to identify and meet customers' needs, maximizing support for the EAP also needs to be an ongoing process, states Kirk Harlow, who, at the time of this writing, was president of Decision Stat, a management consulting firm. Harlow says that EAP support can be strengthened by:

- **Increasing knowledge of EAP and its services** — Whether this is done through fact sheets for new employees, Intranet websites, in-house newsletters, or some other means, the key is to introduce people to the EAP because once people use it initially, they often want to learn more about it. It's especially important to introduce managers to EAP services. The key is to "get out there" and explain what you do, Harlow says.
- **Promoting quality through testimonials and outcomes studies** — Testimonials need not use names, but they should include success stories of how an EAP worked in a specific situation. Also, be sure to follow up on any surveys as opposed to just letting them sit on a shelf.

In summary, while EAPs have been good at providing health-related services, they must increasingly be aligned with a business purpose.

Editor's note: This article originally appeared in the February 2004 EAP. ■