

# EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE REPORT

Celebrating  
**20**  
Years of Service!

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supporting EA professionals

## EA Digital Archive

### *Virtually Weaving Past, Present & Future*

By Jodi Jacobson Frey, PhD, LCSW-C, CEAP; and Patricia A. Herlihy, PhD, RN



Soon after Dr. Jodi Jacobson Frey, Associate Professor, accepted her new position as Chair of the Employee Assistance Program Sub-specialization at the University of Maryland, Baltimore, School of Social Work (UMBSSW), she began receiving requests from soon-to-be retiring leaders in the field of employee assistance (EA) asking if they could mail boxes of EA-related articles, books and other materials to her office for preservation and future use with EAP students. As she glanced around her very small University office, she knew immediately that she personally lacked capacity to house these historical artifacts.

#### Digital Proves Key

Around the same time, Dr. Patricia Herlihy, Founder, Rocky

Mountain Research, who has had a long-time passion for archival research and field preservation, was seeking a partner and funding to create an archive for the EA field. While almost everyone she spoke to thought an Archive for the field was a great idea, they lacked the necessary resources to make it a reality. Dr. Herlihy shared her frustrations with Dr. Frey at a conference meeting, and she echoed the need to create a permanent place for EA-related research, documents and other materials.

Soon after this discussion, Dr. Frey was online at the University of Maryland, Baltimore, Health Science and Human Services Library site and saw a newly posted electronic ad for the University's Digital Library. Upon closer examination, she realized that the UMB was transitioning their physical archives to digital versions and as they say, the rest was history.

Dr. Frey connected with Ms. Na Lin, MLS, Head, Resource Sharing & Repository Services and Ms. Maria Pinkas, MLS, Metadata Management Librarian, to discuss the possibility of creating an online or completely

digital archive for the EA field. They were thrilled to be a part of this ground-breaking project and promoted the newly developing archival site internally as a model for the University's Digital Archive.

Drs. Frey and Herlihy joined forces and worked closely with the library staff and MSW

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students, including Ms. Lauren Bloom, MSW, MPP to create what is now known as the Employee Assistance Digital Archive (henceforth, Archive). This year, Mr. Myat Nyunt, 2<sup>nd</sup> year MSW student specializing in EAP, has joined the Archive team. Dr. Frey hopes to engage EAP students each year to work collaboratively on building and promoting the Archive.

### Archive Launched

The Archive was officially launched in spring 2013 when Drs. Frey and Herlihy announced the new program at an annual conference of the Employee Assistance Society of North America (EASNA). While the launch was announced at EASNA, the Archive is not affiliated with one particular professional organization.

In fact, the decision to house the Archive at UMB was in part due to the unique program that Dr. Frey chairs. The EAP sub-specialization that she chairs is the only MSW program in the country dedicated and focused on preparing MSW students for entering the

EAP field. It made sense that UMBSSW would house the EA Digital Archive especially since they had both the resources and interest to make it come to life and continue to grow and thrive.

### Enthusiastic Supporter

One enthusiastic supporter of the Archive, and an original member of the *Thundering Hundred* captured the heart of what we were trying to accomplish in the following comment:

“As the EAP field evolves and grows to meet the challenges of the world-wide 21st century work forces; program administrators, practitioners and researchers increasingly require archival resources to learn of the variety of models across cultures and consumers. So too, do policy makers and consumers. Archives are also essential for the development of robust and accurate academic and technical literature. The University of Maryland has stepped up to the challenge. I am pleased to recommend the support and utilization of the University of Maryland EA archives.”

*Tom Delaney, MPA, MSW, March, 2016*

### Archive's Impressive Growth

Since the Archive's initial launch in 2013, it has grown by leaps and bounds. The online collection is home to over 1,500 articles, submitted by over 400 authors from around the world. In addition, over 3,000 people have visited the Archive website since its inception as global users seek to learn and use the Archive for research and personal learning. The Archive represents a single, online, free, and public place where EA historical and

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current papers, presentations and other multi-media can be shared. One does not have to be affiliated with the UMB to use or submit to the Archive.

Just within the past six months, the Archive has forged some important partnerships that have resulted in an ever-growing compilation of historical and current works in the EA field. Highlights of recent additions

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### Quick Ideas

## EARs now Online – Check it Out!

It was announced in a recent issue that *EARs* are now online on the EA Digital Archive. URL to the collection is as follows:

<http://archive.hshsl.umaryland.edu/handle/10713/39/simple-search?query=ea+report>

The Archive is housed by the University of Maryland School of Social Work. ■

to the EA Archive are described below.

### EAP Journals Available in Archive

Recently, Mike Jacquart, Editor of the *Employee Assistance Report (EAR)* agreed to archive all issues of the EA Report in the Archive. Additionally, Archive creators worked closely with EAPA leadership to secure an agreement whereby all EAPA-published journals (years 1977 through 2011) can be uploaded to the Archive.

Many are already there and available to view or download. EAPA publications include *ALMACAN*, *EAPA Exchange*, and *Journal of Employee Assistance*. There is also an agreement with EASNA that all *EASNA Research Notes* are immediately submitted to the Archive upon publication.

In addition to EAPA-published journals, the Archive will soon have issues of *EAP Digest*, the *EASNA Source*, and the *Labor Management Alcoholism Journal*.

### Keeping EA History Alive and Well

Dr. Herlihy leads several efforts to document and preserve the history of the EA field through her archival work via her consulting company, Rocky Mountain Research (RMR). Individuals and organizations have generously funded her time to work on historical projects that continue to build on the collection of historical items in the Archive.

In addition Patricia spends a fair amount of time promoting the Archive throughout the field along with Jodi's constant efforts to market and clarify the goals of this global repository. One of the important pieces recently acquired in the Archive includes, *Project 95 - Broadbrush: Lessons for 2017 -*



### Editor's Notebook

While readers will receive this newsletter much sooner, in terms of our production schedule we've just completed our 20<sup>th</sup> year of publishing *Employee Assistance Report*.

I wish to thank key contributors to *EAR* this year: Anna Mittag, Tom Shjeren, Lou Servizio, Todd Donalson, Matt Mollenhauer, Robert Mines, Whitney Stone, Mel Burt-Gracik, Steve Baue, and Jennifer FitzPatrick. Everyone is busy in today's fast-paced society, but the individuals who go "above and beyond" to write insightful articles for this publication are absolutely essential, and their time is greatly appreciated.

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Just a few of the articles you can expect to read in *EAR* in 2018 include a recap of some of the key presentations from the 2017 World EAP Conference in Los Angeles, better understanding returning service members, and what to do when an employee dies suddenly at work.

\*\*\*\*\*

Finally, a quick reminder to kindly direct any changes to your subscription to [mjacquart@writeitrightllc.com](mailto:mjacquart@writeitrightllc.com) or call 715-445-4386. Thanks for reading.

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a brief history of contemporary alcohol use in the workplace and EAP written by Mr. James T. Wrich, an EA field pioneer and member of the original EAP Thundering 100. This article can be accessed at: <http://hdl.handle.net/10713/6951>.

Another important, recent addition to the Archive is the final collection of video interviews conducted by Dr. Dale Masi, with assistance from Dr. Frey, which comprise part of the EARF-funded history project documenting the EAP history of the U.S and Canada. All interviews are with leaders from the EA and Work/Life fields including: John Burke, MA; Dale Masi, PhD; Fran Rodgers, MA; Dave Sharar, PhD; Carl Tisone, MS; Jim Wrich; Rick Csiernik, PhD; and Rita Fridella, MBA. All eight videos can be viewed online through a new and improved streaming process incorporated

into the Archive or they can be viewed on the EAPA website at <http://www.eapasn.org/EAPHistory>.

### Hot Topics

In addition to their historical work, Drs. Frey and Herlihy work diligently to encourage submissions from today's EA leaders to include content on present day issues relevant to EAPs. For example, we are excited to have a new submission written by Dr. Bernie McCann on EAPs and the opioid addiction crisis (<https://archive.hshsl.umaryland.edu/handle/10713/7065>).

Additionally, Dr. Herlihy and co-authors expanded on an original article focused on military sexual trauma which continues to be a favorite article for viewing. She recently submitted a White Paper entitled: *Sexual Violence in the Workplace*

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(<http://archive.hshsl.umaryland.edu/handle/10713/7129>).

Another interesting recent addition is early findings from research completed by Drs. Frey, Dave Sharar, John Pompe and students from the UMB. Together, they conducted qualitative research on the experiences of internal and hybrid EAP managers (<https://archive.hshsl.umaryland.edu/handle/10713/6541>).

### The Future Looks Bright

Having a single, online, free, and permanent public place to store and share historical and current papers, presentations, and other multi-media about the EA field is generating considerable interest and support. Many organizations and individuals have been incredibly supportive in helping to populate the Archive and increase awareness of the Archive as a resource for EA research and knowledge building.

All of us who work on the Archive each day appreciate all who have contributed, used the Archive, and helped to spread the word. The Archive can be as good as the field wants it to be. With more people submitting and using the Archive, it will continue to grow and thrive.

Readers with questions about the EA Archive, have historical material that you would like help uploading, or want to know about ways in which you can support the EA Archive, please go to [www.eaarchive.org](http://www.eaarchive.org) or contact Dr. Jodi Frey directly at [jfrey@ssw.umaryland.edu](mailto:jfrey@ssw.umaryland.edu) or Dr. Patricia Herlihy directly at [pherlihy@rockymountainresearch.us](mailto:pherlihy@rockymountainresearch.us). ■

# Don't Fear Performance Reviews

❖ **Prepare for the meeting.** Get ready for the discussion by asking your supervisor for a copy of the assessment form that will be used.

❖ **Showcase accomplishments.** Highlight any awards you've received since the last formal work review. This will show the

supervisor how your efforts have helped the company.

❖ **Make it a two-way conversation.** The supervisor will inform you about any areas where you need to improve and areas where you are doing well. Don't hesitate to ask questions about the assessment, or to request support or guidance.



❖ **Share your ideas.** Discuss what you hope to achieve with the company in the future, and be sure to set goals.

❖ **Follow through.** Regularly review the goals and keep your supervisor informed of progress. ■

Source: OfficeTeam ([www.officeteam.com](http://www.officeteam.com)).

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# Be on Your Best Holiday Behavior

By Colleen Rickenbacher

Michelle and her husband, Don, planned to attend her company's holiday party. It was her first year with the organization, and they were looking forward to making the best possible impression. Unfortunately, they made some serious mistakes.

First, they forgot to RSVP, and Stephen, the host, and Michelle's regional manager, was forced to bring in additional seating to accommodate them.

Second, Michelle and Don brought their hosts a gift of wine; however, they didn't realize that Stephen and his wife abstained due to their religious beliefs. At the end of the evening, Don ended up having too much to drink and accidentally spilled red wine on the carpet. Instead of getting off on the right foot, these mistakes damaged Michelle's reputation at the office.

The key to success when attending any office function or event is preparation and planning. Here are some etiquette guidelines:

❖ **Attending office parties** — You should attend. At the very least, make an appearance and find the host or hostess as soon as possible to extend your thanks for the invitation. Don't make an obvious exit, and never tell anyone you're leaving because you have another party to attend. It will give the impression the other party is better.

❖ **When to arrive** — Get to your party or other engagement

within 15 minutes of the designated start time. You don't have to be the first to arrive, but food or other plans may be geared around the starting and ending time of the event, so you never want to be overly late, either.

❖ **Don't talk only about business** — Parties should be networking opportunities only. You may approach someone to set up a future meeting and exchange business cards, but leave it at that. Remember, people also love to talk about their families, hobbies, etc., not just work.

❖ **Food and alcohol** — Drink and eat moderately. Continuously eating and drinking may mean you won't be invited again. The key is moderation. Your focus should be on talking and mingling, not seeing how much you can eat and drink.

❖ **Buffets** — Along similar lines, avoid looking like a chowhound if the event involves a help-yourself buffet. You can go back again, but don't stack your plate so high you need help. If the entire table is going through the buffet line, try to start at the same time. Start eating when at least two or three people have returned to the table.

❖ **Party gifts** — You should always bring a gift when invited to someone's home for the holidays, or any time of the year. The exception to this rule is if you have a weekly or monthly get together. Bring something that you know the host and hostess would enjoy.

If you are not familiar with their home or décor, stay on the safe side with a bottle of wine (if they drink!), candles, or a small non-personal gift.

❖ **Gift giving at the office** — Holiday gift giving can be tricky with various celebrations and religious beliefs. A nice card showing appreciation is always welcome — or give something homemade, like cookies. Another nice gesture is to get your co-workers to chip in together on a gift. Respect other traditions and religious beliefs. It doesn't mean you have to exclude people from holiday parties and gift giving, but give them the option whether they want to participate.

❖ **Client gift giving** — Be careful here, too. Your intention should be a gift they will enjoy and appreciate, not a lavish or outrageous gift that will "outdo" the competition. The gift should be sent to the office, and it should be business appropriate.

## Summary

The morale of the story — always be on your best behavior, no matter what the situation. Understanding the proper ways to socialize will do more than build contacts — you just might make some of the most important connections of your career! ■

*Colleen A. Rickenbacher CMP, CSEP, CPC, is a business etiquette expert and author of "Be on Your Best Business Behavior," and "Be on Your Best Cultural Behavior." This article originally appeared in the December 2013 issue of EAR.*

# Keys to Improving EAP Utilization

**M**ore than 97 percent of large companies in America (over 5,000 employees) offer employee assistance programs, for those needing a professional to talk over personal or family issues with. Even 75-80 percent of medium-sized and smaller companies make EAP services available to employees. These are usually free, even to employees who don't opt for the company's health insurance plans.

"For many organizations, better supported employees can translate into improved productivity, decreased absenteeism and greater employee satisfaction," explains Valerie Keels, special expertise panelist with the Society for Human Resource Management in an email interview.

But despite their low or no cost, only roughly 7 percent of North American employees take advantage of EAP services. Why is that? Here are the top reasons.

❖ **Employees don't know what EAPs are.** Like most industries, there's a lot of jargon floating around in human resources (HR). As such, a lot of employees

don't really understand what EAPs are all about, which could be to their own detriment.

❖ **EAPs are difficult to navigate.** Although EAPs offer a lot of potentially helpful assistance, all that information can be hard to wade through. The burden usually falls on HR professionals to communicate the various features of an EAP program. "I believe EAPs are underutilized because they're often bundled onto other products and services and subsequently poorly communicated," says Sarah Dowzell, co-founder of NaturalHR. EAPA notes that small-to-mid-size companies are likely to have better participation rates, probably because communication is more effective.

❖ **Employees are concerned about divulging personal information.** Even though EAP services are

confidential, employees are worried that the information may somehow be leaked to management. In fact, EAP participation rates are usually better in companies where the management is considered trustworthy. In any case, employees should know that information divulged to an EA professional will *only* be released to their supervisor with the employee's permission.

❖ **Some employees consider their problem too small to be addressed.** EAPs are not only for people dealing with substance abuse or mental illness. They can also help employees needing a will drawn up or help with their diet. HR could increase EAP participation rates by reminding employees such services exist and are free to use. Not every EAP service will have the same offerings so check with your provider or HR department. ■

## EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE REPORT

### Upcoming Cover Stories Include...

- Military and EAP
- Unexpected deaths at work
- Workplace Outcome Suite

## In the News

# Perspectives Purchases Step Ahead

**P**erspectives Ltd., a leader in workplace health and productivity, announced the acquisition of Step Ahead Counseling, EAP Inc., further enhancing its reach and capabilities across Indiana.

The acquisition of Step Ahead will afford Perspectives an opportunity for expansion and continued

business growth. Perspectives will increase its network of clinicians and offer its entire array of workplace services including organizational consulting/development, Crisis Incident Response, and an interactive website for participants to get services directly from the web to Step Ahead customers. ■

# 'Happy' Holidays? Not for Everyone

By Karla Wheeler

The loss of a loved one, especially an employee at a small, tight-knit company, can dim the brightest of holidays. However, there are some practical steps EA professionals can take to help boost morale and keep productivity from plummeting.

## Choose Rituals Wisely

Decide which holiday departmental rituals and customs feel right, and which ones seem too stressful. Some traditions, such as a couples' dinner and dance event at the same country club where everyone has partied for years, might seem like a downer for the group. Fun-loving Marianne will be missed, and her bereaved husband would probably feel uncomfortable attending solo.

Ask employees for alternative suggestions, perhaps an event held on a Saturday or Sunday afternoon, with parents and children invited. Such camaraderie would likely be very healing, especially for Marianne's family.

## Memorial Gifts

Rather than the time-worn gift exchange among employees, ask staff to consider giving a gift to a cause or charity that was important to the deceased employee. If Marianne was an animal lover, you might choose the local humane society. Compassionate initiatives, like donating to a charity, help employees work through the grieving process.

## The Empty Chair

At a December staff meeting, leave the deceased employee's chair in its usual spot. Everyone is feeling the impact of the empty chair, so why not take time to acknowledge this loss? Ask each employee to say something about Marianne, if they are comfortable doing so.

For instance, they might share a funny or fond remembrance – or, perhaps a co-worker will want to express some of the many reasons that Marianne is missed. Validate each person's approach, and reaffirm that together you will all get through this time of sadness.



## Grief is a Process

Perhaps the most important thing to remember is that each of us heals from a major loss in our own way and on our own timetable. Camaraderie and support can be powerful healers in an office. But while one worker might have deep faith from which to draw to sustain him/her, another person might feel "rocked to the core."

Be aware of triggers that can bring on a grief attack. For instance, perhaps a long-time customer calls to wish Marianne happy holidays and needs to be told of her recent passing. Be gentle and honor where each employee is in their journey through grief.

## Grief Support Meetings

If the emotional trauma of the death is adversely affecting productivity in certain employees, grief support meetings led by the EAP may be helpful.

## Receive the Joy

Even when a recent death has turned our world upside down, it's still okay to enjoy the holiday season. When we're mourning, we sometimes feel guilty about laughing and having a good time. Give yourself permission to experience those moments of joy. You will be honoring the memory of the employee. ■

*Karla Wheeler is the founder of Quality of Life Publishing Co., a direct outgrowth of her personal and professional hospice experience.*

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## EAPA Introduces Cannabis@Work

Marijuana is no longer just an issue for employers in a few states. As marijuana use, both medicinal and recreational, continues to become legally accepted in the U.S., and it may ultimately be removed as a Schedule I drug under the Controlled Substances Act. This will change how employers approach cannabis at work.

Several major societal trends are converging to make cannabis in the workplace one of the biggest challenges facing employers and employee assistance professionals. The toolkit is the first in a series of publications intended to give EA professionals information to assist their companies and clients.

The toolkit is organized in sections starting with the foundation

of employer policies. Areas addressed are:

- Employer policy;
- Safety;
- Compliance;
- Productivity;
- Flexibility;
- Legislation and litigation; and
- Employee rights.

This first installment covers policy issues and safety concerns. EAPA encourages all EA professionals to use the info in these first two sections of the toolkit to help you assist your organizations navigate the complex and challenging area of Cannabis@Work.

The toolkit can be downloaded at <http://www.eapasn.org/Portals/11/Docs/Cannabis%20@%20Work/Cannabis.pdf>. ■

Source: EAPA.

## Resources

📖 *The Membership Economy: Find Your Superusers, Master the Forever Transaction, and Build Recurring Revenue*, by Robbie Kellman Baxter, McGraw-Hill Education, \$28, [www.membershipecconomy.com](http://www.membershipecconomy.com). According to the author, any business that loves their products, processes, or employees more than their customers is at risk.

🔗 *PsyberGuide*, <https://psyberguide.org/>. There are thousands of mental health apps. This site helps users choose the right ones. The site features a product guide.

🔗 *Faces & Voices of Recovery*, <http://facesandvoicesofrecovery.org/>. This site was launched on the premise, “that all Americans have a right to recover from addiction to alcohol and other drugs.” Links include a news section, share your story, resources, and more.

🔗 *Job Accommodation Network Webcasts*, <https://askjan.org/webcast/>. Available at no cost, JAN webcasts educate managers, employees, on disability etiquette, assistive technologies, management techniques, and the latest on accommodations and the employment provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

🔗 *National Association of Area Agencies on Aging*, <https://www.n4a.org/>. This organization’s primary mission is to build the capacity of its members so they can help older adults and people with disabilities live with dignity and choices in their homes and communities for as long as possible. An eldercare locator is among the key resources offered. ■

## In the News

### Morneau Shepell Garner Prestigious EARF Award

Morneau Shepell’s International Student Support Program (ISSP) received the 2017 Employee Assistance European Forum (EAEF)’s Innovation of the Year Award for thought leadership and innovation because of the mental health support it provides to international students.

The ISSP provides instantaneous support for students with 24/7 chat through an app, online and by telephone, as well as ongoing support through telephone and video counseling. This means that students who are away from home can be matched with a counselor that speaks the same language and understands the cultural context. ■