



## Third Key Finding: The Conceptual Model Level

*Respondents’ comments indicated that there is a general consensus that collaboration or some form of integration is better for the employee and the employer than a single focused program. However, they expressed ambivalence about the impact on professional identity, and on the integrity of each practice field.*

Respondents were asked five qualitative questions regarding their thoughts and suggestions concerning the issue of integration of EAP and W/L Programs. W/L practitioners did not frequently comment that W/L programs were integrated with EAPs. Instead, they indicated that EAP and W/L programs report to different leaders in the workplace, or that the programs are distinct, but overlap to assist employees who have needs in both service areas. On the other side, EAP practitioners reported that EAP and W/L are equal, though separate, collaborators on behalf of employees in those settings where the programs both exist. But EAPs view integration of W/L and EAP as the expansion of EAPs to incorporate and deliver work/life resource and referral services like child/eldercare, legal services, and financial assistance. Interestingly, those respondents that offer both EAP and W/L services, while making some of the above comments, more commonly spoke about EAP and W/L as distinct programs. They seemed to use the term “integration” to mean offering different services, such as EAP, W/L, and Wellness under the broader umbrella of corporate health services.

## Recommendations

The results of this study report that integration of EAP and W/L programs has already arrived on some fronts. There appears to be a New Breed of EA and W/L practitioner who identifies themselves as “Both”. Then there is the overlap of services that both EAP and Work/Life professionals provide. Finally, in their own words, respondents report a belief that integration is better for both the employee and the employer.

The ambivalence and confusion surface when one asks: how to go about the process of integration, whether integration is an effective model for all organizations, and what are the implications for each of the separate professions. All three professional organizations AWLP, EAPA and EASNA are committed to further exploration of this topic. There are two more phases of this research endeavor. In Phase II we will explore current practices and future directions in the vendor population; and Phase III will involve in-depth surveys of the corporate organizations and their views on the issue of integration of services. Perhaps then we will be better able to answer the question of how to decide if integration is the wave of the future.

*The Employee Assistance and Professionals survey was generously sponsored by...*

