

COUNCIL ON ACCREDITATION

STANDARDS AND SELF-STUDY MANUAL employee assistance programs

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Welcome to COA EAP Accreditation

Since 1977, COA has focused on a single goal: to use accreditation to help organizations become stronger - stronger in terms of the services you provide and stronger in terms of your organizational and management structure.

COA accreditation tells your clients that you have received independent, nationally recognized validation of your organization's credibility, integrity, and achievement. *That is the power of accreditation.*

In addition, COA accreditation is a unique management tool. It provides you with a framework to ensure continuous quality improvement by identifying specific strengths and areas in need of improvement in your governance, operations, and services. And because COA accreditation is a *partnership* between our two organizations, you will receive all the tools and technical assistance you need to successfully complete the accreditation process.

Thank you for choosing COA, and congratulations on becoming a part of our family of excellence.

Sincerely,

Richard Klarberg
President and Chief Executive Officer

Foreword

Founded in 1977 by the Child Welfare League of America and Family Service America (now the Alliance for Children and Families), COA has grown to include the sponsorship of the Association of Jewish Family and Children's Agencies, Catholic Charities USA, the Foster Family-Based Treatment Association, Lutheran Services in America, Prevent Child Abuse America, National Council For Adoption, National Foundation for Credit Counseling, and the National Network for Youth.

Although COA has been accrediting employee assistance programs (EAPs) since 1987, COA's 2nd Edition EAP Accreditation Standards (Standards) that follow reflect the very best and very latest practices in the employee assistance field. These new and revised Standards are based on a thorough review of information gathered from the EAP field, accredited EAPs, peer reviewers, and other important stakeholders. Like all of COA's accreditation products, the Standards relied on extensive consensus-building processes that ensured that all relevant stakeholders had an opportunity to impart their comments. These processes included the establishment of the EAP Standards Advisory Panel to represent the broad range of perspectives from across the EAP field in relation to EAP best practices. The combined input COA received from its various stakeholders contributed to the final document, COA's *EAP Standards and Self-Study Manual, 2nd Edition*.

The final product is an all-encompassing blueprint of best practices in the EAP field that addresses:

- Administration and Management, including EAP policies and legal compliance;
- Management of EAP Human Resources, including personnel practices and affiliate engagement;
- Health and Safety, including quality of the service environment and office safety;
- Finance, including financial information relevant to EAP services and financial accountability;
- EAP Legal Liability, including issues related to insurance coverage and affiliate agreements;
- Contracts for EAP Services, including program plans, account management, and reports to customer organizations;
- Quality Improvement, including internal quality monitoring, outcomes measurement, external audits, and information management;
- Personnel and Affiliate Competence, including competence of counselors and affiliates, and credential requirements;
- Staff Supervision and Training, including training content and supervision of staff and affiliates;
- Professional Practice, including protection of client rights, confidentiality protections, and ethical considerations related to web-based services;

- Intake, Assessment, and Service Planning, including special practice requirements related to intake, assessment, outreach, and referral processes; and
- Service Delivery, including, specific practice principles that undergird quality in each of the EAP services delivered in today's market.

EAPs that seek accreditation under these Standards will be able to be accredited for the following core EAP services:

- Employee Education and Outreach;
- Information and Referral, and Assessment and Referral;
- Training of Supervisors, Managers, Human Resources, and Union Representatives;
- Management/Supervisory Consultation; and
- Follow-up Referrals.

In addition, EAPs may be accredited for the following EAP services, as applicable:

- Short-Term Counseling;
- Critical Incident Stress Management;
- Organizational Development;
- Drug-Free Workplace Services; and
- Work-Life Services.

INQUIRIES

COA welcomes all questions and suggestions regarding our EAP Standards. Please contact the Director of Standards and Evaluation at COA, 120 Wall Street, 11th floor, New York, NY 10005.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The EAP Accreditation Program is the result of the collective wisdom of the top leaders in the EAP field. The development of these Standards could not have occurred without the immeasurable expertise and commitment provided by Dr. Dale Masi, Professor of Social Work at the University of Maryland School of Social Work and President and CEO of Masi Research Consultants. She contributed significantly to the creation of these Standards through conducting an extensive analysis of existing literature in the EAP field. Furthermore, Dr. Masi provided technical advice and support to COA's Standards and Evaluation staff during the concentrated drafting phase of these Standards.

As in every aspect of COA's work, the preparation of this manual was truly a team effort! In that regard, many organizations provided excellent suggestions for new standards and for

improvement of existing material. The members of several leading industry groups, but most especially the Employee Assistance Society of North America (EASNA), the Employee Assistance Professionals Association (EAPA), the EAP Roundtable, and the EAP Joint Industry Alliance, are to be thanked for their important input into this document. EASNA lent their informed vision for the EAP field to the review of draft material, and has subsequently endorsed these Standards. COA would also like to acknowledge the important contribution made by the US Department of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) for their ongoing support of EAP accreditation.

We are especially indebted to the members of our Employee Assistance Program Standards Advisory Panel, whose names follow. They supported the development and refinement of these standards through hours of meetings and reviewing drafts, all at their own expense. Additionally, COA peer reviewers, staff from accredited agencies, and many others contributed their time and expertise to this manual through suggestions for revision. Many, many thanks to you all.

Finally, this manual could not have reached fruition without the monumental commitment made by COA's staff. We appreciate the time and effort devoted by Timothy Stockert, whose skill and commitment ensured the manual's smooth course to production. COA's Standards and Evaluation's prolific and talented staff are also to be commended for their work in developing this product. We are extremely grateful to Stephanie Pacinella, Assistant Director of our Standards and Evaluation Division, for her unwavering dedication and leadership in the manual's revision process. A special thanks goes to Nicole Hazard, our former Director of Standards and Evaluation, whose adept standards development skills and expertise were invaluable, and to the support staff, whose commitment and enthusiasm are at the heart of COA.

Richard Klarberg
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New York, New York
January 2003

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