

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE REPORT

supporting EAP professionals

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Bonus!
2012
Article
Archive

EAPs Across the Globe

Highlights from 2012 World Conference

Editor's note: In today's budget-strapped economic climate, it is not easy for EA professionals to attend EAPA's Annual World EAP Conference. As a result, the intent of this article is to present some of the key findings from this important gathering in order to enlighten *EAR* readers (and EAPA members) who were not able to make it. Watch for more in-depth articles in future issues of both the *Employee Assistance Report* and EAPA's *Journal of Employee Assistance* (edited and laid out by Impact Publications, publishers of this newsletter).

“**E**mbarking on a new voyage: embracing the currents of change” was the theme at the Annual World EAP Conference, held Oct. 17-20, 2012 at the Hilton in Baltimore.



Editor Mike Jacquart poses with Jenny Espinoza Soto of Buenos Aires, Argentina.

DAY ONE

My attendance began with the *EAPA Marketplace Grand Opening Reception* on Wednesday evening. The gathering is a great way to meet the conference vendors to see what products and services they offer. Some of the many organizations represented included: Aetna, American Substance Abuse Professionals, Boys Town National Research Hospital, Crisis Care Network, Hazelden, and SAMHSA.

DAY TWO

❖ **Herschel Walker**, former NFL star running back and 1982 Heisman Trophy winner presented the *opening keynote*. In addition to his gridiron accomplishments, Herschel also discussed his battles with dissociative identity disorder (DID), formerly known as multiple personality disorder. Herschel discussed how the disorder actually played an integral role in his accomplishments, and how he learned to live with DID. His talk was truly inspirational, and you didn't have to be a football fan to appreciate it.

With more than 50 sessions, the most difficult decisions at the conference involved choosing which sessions to attend. Those I went to on Day Two included:

❖ **Quick Click to a Healthy Mind: How Online Screening Impacts Modifiable Behavior** — Presented by *Candice Porter*, MSW, LICSW, attendees learned about the considerations involved in providing online mental health screening.

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Porter discussed how her organization, Screening for Mental Health, conducted a phone survey that asked participants how likely they would be to seek help for depression – whether for themselves or someone they know. A key finding: More than half (55%) of participants in the survey sought help within three months of the screening.

According to Porter, successful screening programs:

- Support the workplace culture;
- Are individually tailored;
- Offer health risk screening; and
- Provide organizational leadership.

Porter added that key screening components are:

- Confidential;
- Accessible 24/7;
- Non-threatening; and
- Clearly identify resources.

“Anonymous online screenings are an effective way to reach employees who underestimate the effects of adverse mental health and are unaware of the resources available for help,” said Porter.

For more information, visit www.mentalhealthscreening.org.

❖ **Are EAPs Better Onsite or Offsite?** – Offered by *Dave Sharar*, *John Pompe*, and *Matt Mollenhauer*, presenters discussed, among other areas, the strengths and limitations of onsite and offsite EAP services.

Pompe, assistant medical director with Caterpillar, Inc., began the session by asking the elusive question, “What defines an effective EAP?” Is it utilization? An employee’s clinical improvement? Overall satisfaction? Vendor profits? With responses that would be all over the board, Pompe pointed out that the EAP needs to be business relevant. “The outcome is in the eye of the beholder,” said

Pompe. “The EAP has to know what the customer wants. Moreover, there has been more focus on outcomes by researchers.”

Such research led to creation of the Workplace Outcome Suite (WOS), a free tool that is helping EA professionals better gauge outcomes, according to Sharar, researcher and managing director of Chestnut Global Services. “About 400 EAPs are using the five-item version of WOS,” Sharar said. Those items are: Absenteeism, Presenteeism, Work Engagement, Life Satisfaction, and Workplace Distress. “We are working on a second cluster with new scales like health care utilization,” he added.

(Editor’s note: For more on the WOS, see the August 2011 issue of *EAR* and/or the 4th quarter 2010 issue of *JEA*.)

What about comparing the onsite and offsite models? According to Mollenhauer, also with Chestnut, internal (i.e. onsite) EAPs are more flexible but require expertise to supervise. External (i.e. offsite) EAPs, however, are less costly for small or medium-size organizations, but they are also less engaged in the workplace culture.

“There is little evidence to support one model over the others,” Mollenhauer said. “In terms of outcomes, getting the client to the counselor is the goal. The environment may not matter. From a results standpoint, the location of the counselor is not a big variable.”

❖ **Finding Chi: Providing Culturally Competent EAP Services in Asia** — Presented by *Ian Shakespeare*, senior vice president with Asia Pacific, PPC Worldwide, and *Paul Yin*, psychologist and cross culture expert, this was an extremely informative session as well as being important to the profession as a whole, given

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the growth of EAP in China. (After the United States, China had the next most attendees at the World EAP Conference – with 24.)

Describing the importance of cultural competence, Shakespeare said, “EAP likes to educate, but in other countries, EAP must learn first, not educate.” The more a country and its values differ from the West, the greater the degree of difficulty in overcoming cultural differences, he added.

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According to Shakespeare, effective cultural competence:

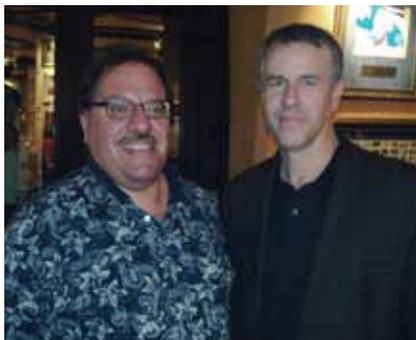
- Acknowledges and embraces differences;
- Reduces risk factors;
- Establishes positive self-image;
- Creates new beginnings; and
- Maximizes opportunities.

According to Yin, cultural barriers include: different attitudes toward laws; religion; and the nature of the relationship between the worker and management. Moreover, while EA professionals may like to tout their certifications when seeking to attract clients, Yin said that, in China and other Asian countries, it's much more important for practitioners to solicit TRUST first. A certificate hanging on a wall tends to mean little to the typical Asian, Yin stated.

DAY THREE

❖ **Employee Layoffs and Terminations: When Hostility or Violence is a Concern.** There wasn't a chair to be found at this extremely informative session, presented by *Bruce Blythe*.

Blythe, chairman of several crisis care organizations, is widely recognized as an expert on this subject. Blythe repeatedly made the point that HR, security and other individuals involved in possible critical incident escalation absolutely have to



Mike with Dave Sharrar, managing director of Chestnut Global Partners.



Editor's Notebook

Business travel – do you like it or hate it? Personally, I greatly enjoy it since I don't do very

much of it. But, like beauty, "biz travel lies in the eyes of the beholder."

Travel TOO MUCH, like some of the EA professionals I spoke with at the recent World EAP Conference, and it can be very stressful. I can certainly see where hotels and airports would tend to look alike over time. I can't relate to an 8-hour (or longer) flight either! Fortunately, some organizations and hotel chains are beginning to address this overlooked cause of work-related stress. See the "Stress of Business Travel" article in this month's *EAR*.

This year's conference featured multiple sessions on technology

and veterans returning to the workplace. As always, EAPA did a great job putting together this important gathering.

In addition to this month's overview article, in-depth articles on some of the important conference sessions are in the works for 2013. Other articles to watch for this year include: Grief in the workplace, veterans in the workplace, and how painkiller abuse is affecting EAPs. As always, YOUR ideas are always welcome, too! Just shoot me an email. Happy New Year to all.

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anticipate the scenarios that not only "could" happen – but which very well "MIGHT" occur.

"An 'I don't want to think about it' mindset doesn't work," said Blythe. "If the incident is going to escalate, what are you going to do about it? Where will a confrontational meeting be held? When? Where should you be sitting in the room? You have to be willing to delve deeper. Getting managers to think about what they're going to do, and how they're going to react, ahead of time, is vital," Blythe stated.

Are EAPs at risk of being sued when hostile situations occur? "Any involvement puts the EAP in a position of liability," Blythe stressed. "The question the EAP must ask itself is, 'Are you defensible?' My advice is to document, document, and document."

❖ **Sports EAPs: Enhancing Use and Integrating Services with Medicine and Psychiatry** – Presented by *David McDuff*, M.D., team psychiatrist for the Baltimore Orioles and Baltimore Ravens, this session offered useful strategies for developing EAPs that are accepted and utilized by athletes, coaches, and their families.

Such staffing, McDuff said, needs to be multidisciplinary, including psychiatry, social work, an addiction specialist, and even the team chaplain.

In terms of implementing an EAP when one *isn't* in place, McDuff noted, "It's tough to 'get in' – but if you demonstrate a need, there tends to be a strong buy-in."

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Good Management CREATES Good Employees – Part II

By Charlyne Meinhard

Bad managers are everywhere. Many are new to managing others or they may have been promoted reluctantly into management. Good technical managers can be bad at managing others when they have not received management training or mentoring by a *good* manager.

What to Do About It

Three decades of research provide seven key behaviors of managers that encourage good employees and help them become top performers. We examined three of them last month – the remainder appears in part II of this article. (Together, the suggestions will spell C-R-E-A-T-E-S).

Managers become better at their jobs when they learn to:

A = Adopt an open climate.

Before getting valuable guidance from his boss, “Tim” would spout the company statement of “open-door policy,” then sputter when no employee would approach him about issues or concerns. His boss encouraged him to set specific times to meet with each employee each week. Tim is now more accessible, and his employees feel empowered to list their questions and issues to cover in their weekly 30-minute individual meetings.

T = Transcend the goal of making a profit.

Previously, “Jen” hammered cost-savings so much that her

employees began taking short-cuts on time and quality. She saw a bigger picture once she read and discussed the company’s annual report with her director. Jen now heightens employees’ awareness of their role in customer perception and long-term satisfaction. Employees respond readily to meeting and beating customer expectations. They are more committed to accuracy, completeness, and timeliness.

E = Encourage flexibility and innovation.

Before his “field trip” to key client sites, Tim demanded that his employees follow the same pattern of processing orders established years ago. Seeing and hearing client problems in real-time opened Tim’s eyes to the need for his department to change. Tim now regularly initiates problem-solving discussions with employees. They

are energized by the opportunity to contribute and often surprise him with practical solutions that he never would have thought of on his own.

S = Strengthen employee strengths.

A significant step forward into good management for Jen and Tim was learning to set individual goals for employee development. Complaining in public about faults previously dominated their interactions with employees. Private discussions on performance strengths now have Jen and Tim working positively with each employee. Building a strength-development plan offers more insight into each employee than either of them imagined. ■

Charlyne Meinhard is a speaker, trainer, and chief results officer of Next Level Consulting. She is also the author of “Change Agents to the Rescue!” and “Ahead of Change.” For more information visit www.NextLevelForYou.com.

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Dealing with Anger in a High-Pressure Job – Part II

By Jude Bijou

Whether it's fast-paced work, difficult work, too much work, or a stressful office populated by difficult personalities, many employees have jobs that leave them feeling frustrated, resentful, and angry.

The following strategies should help EA professionals who are assisting highly stressed workers. Additional ideas were presented in part I of this two-part article.

❖ **Get yourself to the nearest bathroom.** When the employee is ready to "lose it," the individual should excuse himself/herself, head to the nearest bathroom, and lock the door. To release anger, the employee should push against a wall as hard as possible – or grab

the bathroom stall door and shake – or jump up and down, stomping feet and shaking one's fist.

❖ **Purge the rest of one's anger at home.** The stressed-out worker should pound a mattress with one's fists or scream into the pillow – whatever will help release feelings of anger.

❖ **Let the tears flow.** According to Minnesota research scientist William Frey, crying can help trigger stress hormones out of our bodies. This is one of the reasons we feel much better after a good cry.

❖ **Reprogram thoughts.** A side effect of workplace anger is blame, on the one hand, and feeling victimized on the other. This person

must interrupt destructive thinking about how people and things "should be" and accept "what is." The individual should repeat to one's self: "People and things are the way they are, not the way I want them to be." If the employee says this often enough, it'll become automatic.

Summary

Expressing emotional energy and focusing on acceptance reduces anger and restores balance. It'll help the individual think clearer and better able to either calmly accept "what is", or be able to say or do what's necessary in order to resolve the situation. ■

Jude Bijou, MA, MFT is a respected psychotherapist, professional educator, and workshop leader. Learn more at www.attitudereconstruction.com.

Workplace Survey

Communicating Benefits Still Difficult

In an era of easy access to real-time information on a daily basis, employers understand that more frequent communication about employee benefits is expected. But research shows they're still struggling to achieve key objectives in this area.

Of the 298 benefits professionals polled by Benz Communications, 78% cited communicating with employees year-around among their biggest challenges, yet just 28.9% are actually doing so.

Also, despite 55.6% of the 2012

Inside Benefits Communication survey respondents believing their benefits communication efforts improved during the past three years, 45.4% still aren't satisfied with their current communications strategy.

Other key findings include:

❖ Employers' top goals include executing a successful annual enrollment strategy (60%) and increasing workers' use of preventive care (48%). However, less than one-quarter (24%) report meeting these goals last year, while 18.8% weren't sure.

❖ Less than one-quarter (24.7%) are connecting their benefits strategy to their company's bigger business strategy; while fewer than one-half (46.9%) even try.

Overall, the results of the survey reveal that "companies are missing a huge opportunity to improve the success of their benefits programs and use their benefits communications to meet their larger strategic goals," Benz said. ■

Source: Employee Benefit News.

Drug Abstinence Now Considered Optional

Compared to a survey conducted nearly 20 years ago, about twice the number of addiction counselors now find it acceptable for at least some of their patients to have a drink occasionally – either as an intermediate goal or as their final treatment goal, according to a new study published by the American Psychological Association.

Researchers surveyed 913 members of the National Association of



Alcoholism and Drug Addiction Counselors from across the U.S. About 50% of respondents said it would be acceptable if some of their clients who abused alcohol wanted to limit their drinking but not totally give up alcohol. In the earlier survey in 1994, roughly 25% of respondents found moderate drinking acceptable for some of their clients.

“Individuals with alcohol and drug problems who avoid treatment because they are ambivalent about abstinence should know that – depending on the severity of their condition, the finality of their outcome goal, and their drug of choice – their interest in moderating their consumption will be acceptable to many addiction professionals working

in outpatient and independent practice settings,” wrote study co-authors Alan Davis, MA, and Harold Rosenberg, Ph.D., both with Bowling Green State University.

However, for clients diagnosed with alcohol or drug *dependence* – which is considered more severe than alcohol or drug abuse – respondents to the new survey were *less* accepting of clients aiming for limited or moderate substance use. Specifically, at least three-quarters of respondents said they would not approve of limited or moderate consumption for clients with alcohol or drug dependence, as either an intermediate or final goal. ■

Additional source: Medical Xpress.

Conference... cont'd from Page 3

One factor unique about sports EAPs is that getting clients to come to a practitioner's office (alone) doesn't tend to work. “You will be waiting and waiting,” he stated. “You have to be seen in the clubhouse.”

McDuff concluded, “If you don't have a passion for sports, don't do this. You'll be working nights, weekends, etc. One thing I like is you never know what's next.”

DAY FOUR

Afternoon “super sessions” (2 hours as opposed to one hour) included workplace suicide prevention, several on ethics, and the one I attended, **Social Media**,

Online Technologies and Apps – What's Next for EAPs?

A distinguished panel of tech-savvy professionals (*Marina London, Michael Klaybor, Pablo McCabe, and Barbara Veder*) explained to the audience how online technologies are being harnessed for EAP and clinical practice today, and challenged the group to consider the expansive reach of the web-enabled EAP of tomorrow.

“It's the Wild West out there,” London said. “Technology is outpacing licensing. But we need boundaries. We need to protect ourselves.” In terms of applying social media to one's practice, London suggested that EA professionals:

- Become educated;
- Observe others;
- Ask questions; and
- Remember that social media is free.

Last, but certainly not least, attendees got to relax and cruise Baltimore's Inner Harbor.

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Addiction

Faces & Voices of Recovery

www.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 recovery resources, publications, and more.

Addiction

National Council on Problem Gambling

www.ncpgambling.org

The mission of this organization is to increase public awareness of pathological gambling, and to ensure the widespread availability of treatment for problem gamblers and their families.

Crisis Management

Federal Emergency Management Agency

www.fema.gov

Links include Hurricane Center forecasts, a search function for open shelters, and state-specific disaster information.

Crisis Management

Tips for People with Special Needs

<http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/epr/Public/medneeds.pdf>

Presented by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, this site offers numerous preparedness tips for people with special medical needs.

Domestic Violence

National Coalition Against Domestic Abuse

www.ncadv.org

This organization works to eliminate domestic violence and empower battered women and children. Links include tips on getting help, news and updates, international organizations, and more.

Domestic Violence

Safe at Work Coalition

www.safeatworkcoalition.org

Links include information on laws and legal issues, local and national resources, success stories, and educational materials.

Employee Assistance

Federal Occupational Health

www.foh.dhhs.gov/library/factsheets/IntEAP.pdf

Affiliated with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Federal Occupational Health extends EAP services beyond U.S. borders to assist federal employees and their families abroad.

Mental Health

International Society for Mental Health Online

www.ismho.org

This is an international community exploring and promoting mental health in the digital age. Members meet online to discuss current issues and collaborate on projects to further its mission.

Technology

Online Degrees.com

www.onlinedegrees.com

This leading education site recently launched “The Social Job Search,” an infographic exploring the new trend of social recruiting.

Veterans Assistance

Military HOMEFRONT

www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil

This is the U.S. Department of Defense website for official Military Community and Family Policy information, designed to help troops and their families, and service providers.

Veterans Assistance

Wounded Warrior Project

www.woundedwarriorproject.org

The purpose of this site (and project) is to raise awareness and enlist aid for the needs of injured service members.

Workplace Advocacy

U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

www.eeoc.gov

EEOC conducts enforcement litigation under terms of the Americans with Disabilities Act, Equal Pay Act, and others.

Workplace Advocacy

Working America

www.workingamerica.org

Working America, a community affiliate of the AFL-CIO, combines the strength of 10 million union men and women – and millions of workers *without* the benefit of a workplace union who share common challenges and goals.

Workplace Wellness

Griefwork Center

www.griefworkcenter.com

This site, run by an organizational wellness expert, offers numerous resources designed to help those who may be experiencing compassion fatigue.

Workplace Wellness

Work Life Balance

www.worklifebalance.com

This site features “Five Steps to Better Work Life Balance,” a training program designed by one of the pioneers in the field. ■

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The Stress of Business Travel

According to a new study by a corporate travel agency, business travelers suffer especially acutely from stress.

Using data gleaned from 6,000 travelers, Carlson Wagonlit Travel (CWT) found that unpleasant “surprises” like flight delays and luggage loss were the highest trigger of stress, especially for female travelers who were also more fazed by “routine breakers” like not being able to eat healthy.

However, women also felt decidedly less stressed about flying economy than men.

CWT’s “Travel Stress Index” also found that frequent fliers (over 30 trips per year) get most stressed from “lost time”, with factors relating to the reimbursement of expenses, and from flying with a non-preferred airline, adding to their unease.

Because senior air warriors in particular travel so much, their stress levels have no time to drop before they set off on another trip. This is why, CWT says, there’s a

big difference in stress between frequent and occasional travelers.

“When people are travelling, it’s not just about bags and all the rest of it – it’s about the whole process: Separation from your family for a period of time; the hassle of the airport; travelling ‘cattle class’; problems with hotels – it does accumulate,” said Cary L. Cooper, an organizational psychology professor.

Stress-Reduction Strategies

❖ **Consider whether “cheap” flights really pay** – According to Cooper, companies seldom do cost-benefit analyses on whether to send people long-haul cheaply, or on business class.

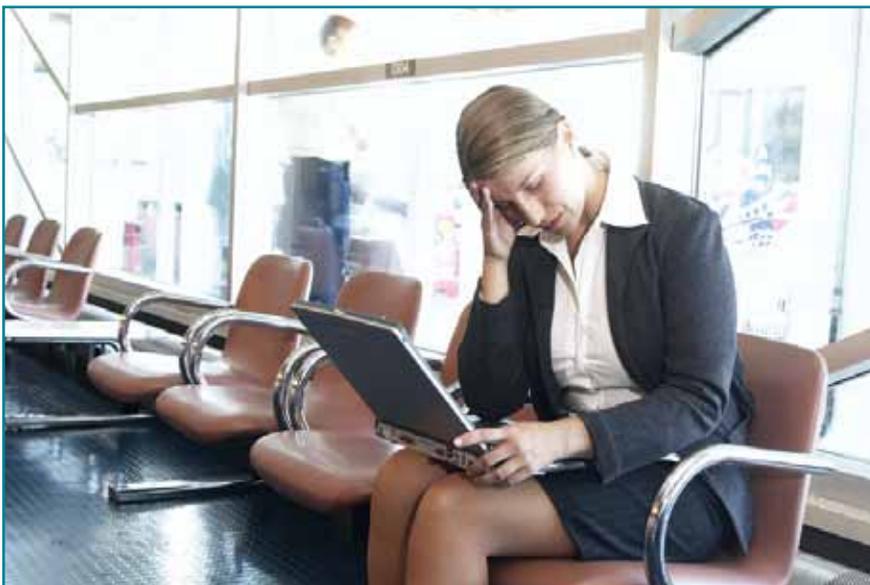
“Is there a difference on a traveler’s attitude, tiredness or performance? Businesses think they’re making a saving; but what they really get is someone in a really tired, exhausted state going to do a deal and what happens?”

❖ **Implement adaptive travel policies** – Vincent Leburnetel, co-author

of the CWT report, recommends that organizations take their employee travelers’ work-life situations into further consideration. For example, they need to “segment between those who are single, couples, and those with children, and who experience a lot of stress travelling over the weekend or in trips of more than three days.”

❖ **Ask about hotel innovations** – Too much time spent alone was cited as a key factor of stress among frequent travelers. As a result, Fairfield Inn & Suites are using the results of their research to increase co-working hubs in guestrooms for colleagues to share. Like a number of other chains, Fairfield is also working on ensuring that their lobbies “create spaces that inspire and encourage people to gather.” Communal tables are also being added, as are plug sockets so people can meet informally. ■

Additional sources: Reuters, EAP NewsBrief, a service of EAPA.



Resources

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