
eap *perspectives*

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Solutions Employee Assistance Program

A Good Way To Use Your EAP

By George "Bud" Wassell, MS, LPC, CEAP

One of our customers really knows how to use Solutions EAP. I bumped into him at a Chamber of Commerce breakfast and wasn't aware that he had used the EAP. He shared with me how talking to one of our counselors really helped him with two specific life situations he wasn't sure how to handle.

Now, it's always nice to hear compliments about our counselors and from what he said she did a great job and he was very satisfied with the outcomes. But, the point of this story is how he used our service. The EAP can be in the unique position of helping with a life or work situation while it's relatively small and therefore, manageable. But most people tend to wait until the problem has grown out of control and is reaching crisis proportions.

The first time he talked with the counselor, it was about his college age son. If any of you have kids in college, I'm sure you'll relate to this. When his son came home from school on breaks, he continued to live as if he was in school. In other words, he came and went as he pleased, stayed up till dawn and slept past noon. Basically, he was doing the opposite of everyone in the



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family. Conflicts arose because of this lifestyle and some behavior that his parents didn't agree with and didn't want going on under their roof.

The "Dad", our client came to EAP counseling for help with the situation. After consulting with our counselor, getting some coaching on communication and formulating ground rules and a plan, he felt more in control and better prepared to discuss the "problem" with his son. In fact, he reports that it worked and they were able to have a very constructive dialogue that resulted in a good mutual agreement and minimal disruption to the family. And they created an adult-to-adult communication style to use going forth.

His other "problem" involved his wife after she was diagnosed with cancer. She was understandably upset and trying to deal with the impact of the diagnosis. He told me he just didn't know how to respond to her. He didn't know the "right" things to say or do to help and support her. And of course, he had some pretty strong feelings about the situation too that were most likely affecting his way of relating to his wife. So again he met with our counselor (yes, you can use the EAP more than once a year if it's a different issue) and they strategized about what to say and what not to say. They also talked of how to say certain things.

He says this greatly improved their communicating about a very difficult and emotionally charged health situation. It gave him confidence to communicate directly and openly with his wife and this opened up the communication for her as well so that she could hear as well as be heard.

It sounds so simple in retrospect, but think about all the difficulties and misunderstandings that were avoided in both these situations. Give us a try for any of life's challenges, small or large.

Call the EAP for *free & confidential* counseling and referral. Family members are welcome.

1-800-526-3485

www.solutions-eap.com

Solutions EAP is a program of Middlesex Hospital and Behavioral Health Connecticut, LLC.

Solutions
FOR PEOPLE IN THE WORKPLACE



Are You A Leader?



Do you recognize yourself in this leadership skills checklist developed by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, Senior Executive Service?

- Vision** The ability to establish a vision that integrates goals, priorities, values, and other factors of the organization. This includes the ability to manage change while maintaining and striving to improve customer service and program performance; to create a work environment that encourages creative thinking; and to maintain focus, intensity, and persistence, even under adversity.
- People Skills** The ability to design and implement strategies that maximize employee potential and foster high ethical standards in meeting the organization's vision, mission, and goals.
- Results-Driven** The ability to stress accountability and continuous improvement, to make timely and effective decisions, and to produce results through strategic planning and the implementation and evaluation of programs and policies.
- Business Acumen** The ability to acquire and administer human, financial, material, and information resources in a manner that instills trust and accomplishes the organization's mission, and to use new technology to enhance decision making.
- Build Coalitions/Communication** The ability to explain, advocate, and express facts and ideas in a convincing manner, and negotiate with individuals and groups internally and externally. It also involves the ability to develop an expansive professional network with other organizations, and to identify the internal and external politics that affect the work of the organization.

Stress Tips & Bright Ideas

Periodically photocopy the contents of your wallet (not money – it's illegal!) and store it in a safe place. If your wallet is lost or stolen, you will have record of everything that is gone. There is a lot of stuff in your wallet. Beyond credit cards you might have receipts, phone numbers, membership cards, insurance information, discount cards, smart cards with cash balances, and items you may never otherwise recall.

Photocopy
Your Wallet's
Contents



EAP???

Is the EAP Confidential?

The EAP service is strictly confidential. No one will know you've contacted the program. Your name is not reported to your employer. Records are kept separate. The records are informal and are not part of your medical or personnel records. In fact, no one has access to the EAP records except for the EAP staff. The EAP is bound by the strictest legal and ethical guidelines and cannot release any information without the employee's written permission. State and federal laws, however, mandate that in cases of child abuse, elderly abuse, or where a person may be a threat to his or someone else's safety, the counselor must notify the proper authorities.

Can Family Members Use the EAP?

Any employee and/or their family members can access the EAP. We use a broad definition of family. Family members do not have to be dependents or immediate family members to use the EAP. Generally, anyone in the employee's household may use the EAP. Either the employee or family member may initiate the process by calling for an appointment.

Is There A Cost for EAP?

There is no cost to you or a member of your family for the direct counseling you receive from an EAP Counselor. If you are referred to a treatment resource beyond EAP Counseling, there generally will be costs. However, these costs may be offset, at least partially, by your insurance plan. We will inform you up front what your out of pocket costs will be.

Complaints May Be Gold!



Complaining customers —ouch! See complaints as opportunities to improve your product or service and you could reduce your stress while helping your organization. L.L. Bean and Starbucks made understanding complaints part their strategic plans and won more customers, created more products, and doubled employee morale. Shift to this winning strategy by taking three steps: (1) separate the message of a customer complaint from the feeling of being blamed; (2) get everyone in your workgroup to view a complaint as an opportunity, not as a "who-done-it" investigation; and (3) see disappointed customers as people offering you the secret of your business's success. Use such opportunities to discover more of what they want.