January 2020 Spotlight on Employee Assistance

Jodi Jacobson Frey establishes EAP Fund at University of Maryland
Professor Frey, Associate Professor, Chair, EAP Sub-specialization, created the EAP Fund as a pathway to raise money to support our students and programming related to ensuring the future of the EA and Social Work in the Workplace fields. The University typically enrolls 15 or more MSW students each year pursuing the EA sub-specialization; however, many other students are interested in the program, but cannot afford to complete it without some financial assistance. The EAP Fund, with its goal to raise money for student scholarships and other related EA programming, is one way we can work together to provide students with the necessary financial support. Gifts can be made online: https://ssw-umaryland.givecorps.com/causes/13872-employee-assistance-program

Five predictions for corporate diversity work in 2020
With the election coming, we need to help facilitate respectful, open-minded conversations about political issues. Politics are on the minds of most employees, and directly impact the lives of many. With a 2019 survey by Clutch revealing that seventy-one percent of people think it’s important for businesses to take a stance on social movements, not saying anything is no longer an option. By creating space for different perspectives, we can help bridge divides and create a sense of belonging for all employees. Read more: https://www.forbes.com/sites/rebekahbastian/2020/01/03/five-predictions-for-corporate-diversity-work-in-2020/#43cd84896ce7

Mental health and intellectual disability facilities market-industry report published
Merck Animal Health publishes study of wellbeing and mental health among U.S. veterinarians

Conducted in collaboration with the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), the study found that veterinarians are very concerned about high stress levels (92%), high student debt (91%) and suicide (89%) in the profession. Despite new awareness around wellbeing and mental health in veterinary medicine, the study showed veterinarian wellbeing on average has not improved since a similar study was conducted in partnership with the AVMA and funded by Merck Animal Health in 2017. Read more: https://www.merck-animal-health-usa.com/pdfs/vca/articles/veterinary-wellbeing-study-2020.pdf

5 apps and resources to tackle workplace bullying and harassment

Companies around the world are facing the silent epidemic of workplace bullying. Unsurprisingly, 61% of bullies are bosses. Their goal is to push employees to leave the company voluntarily through isolation, threats and intimidation, to name a few. The effects are long-lasting and adversely impact an individual's psychological and emotional well-being. Here are five powerful applications and resources employees can take advantage of when they’re being bullied and feel they have nowhere to turn to for help. Read more: https://www.forbes.com/sites/heidilynnekurter/2020/01/16/5-powerful-apps-and-resources-to-tackle-workplace-bullying-and-harassment/#4ca0546a7331

Which employers are the best of the best?

Here’s a hint: the employer coming in first place on Glassdoor’s list of 100 “Best Places to Work” has been on the list five times prior. Of the 2020 recipients, 31 employers are first-time honorees. But they’re all on the list because their employees believe these companies have gone out of their way to create a dynamic culture. Read more: https://www.benefitnews.com/list/which-employers-are-the-best-of-the-best

EA Professional Spotlight

Name and Position
Jim Nestor - Senior Advisor - First Responder Program - Caron Foundation. (Editor’s note: Jim was also the 2019 recipient of the prestigious EAPA Lifetime Achievement Award.)

What do you like best about working in employee assistance?
Organizational development and adapting to the changing needs of the workplace for both our employees and supervisors. When I started in the field, we focused our assessments on alcohol abuse, safety and productivity.

Nowadays, we have to educate our stakeholders about the importance of all mental health issues affecting both the workplace and the family and demonstrate to corporate leaders their unintended impact on job performance. Those changes challenged us to grow our programs to provide management services (training and education), critical
incident response (workplace specific and disaster impacts), peer services (workplace community of support), as well as Wellness and Chaplain services.

EA programming has always been positioned to assist both executives and employees to address the body/mind/soul needs of human beings that inform policies that enhance organizational values, vision and mission.

**What was your first job in employee assistance?**
My first position was Regional EAP Coordinator for Conrail. This position presented opportunity for growth as I learned the new regulations for drug testing and the importance of assessments, referral resources and labor relations compliance. It also helped me realize the importance of applied psychology for critical response from train accidents to line of duty deaths in law enforcement.

**What is the most challenging part of your job?**
Almost 35 years later, it continues to be the importance of recognizing that both employees and management are of one; and EA services must be threaded throughout the organization as a positive alternative to poor performance. At the New Jersey State Police, the EAP was developed by Bern Beidel and had a solid foundation for its time. This helped my next 25 years of “changing” the services to Office of Employee & Organization Development (OEOD) adding the Office of the Attorney General, 6,000 more employees and covering 5 additional units to EAP: Management Assistance, Peer Advocate, CIS, Chaplains and Wellness.

**What inspires you?**
People – those served that are grateful for our service. Also, Jody Nestor, Vince Lombardi, Bern Beidel, and Bill W.