



July 2016 EA Industry Spotlight

OSHA Drug-Testing Standard Challenged in Court

The new Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standard limiting safety incentive programs and enabling the agency to post online employers' injury and illness data was challenged July 8 in federal court by several employers groups. The National Association of Manufacturers' general counsel, Linda Kelly, summed up the opposition: "The Department of Labor is putting a target on nearly every manufacturer in this country by moving this regulation forward. To read more, check out <http://www.bna.com/new-osha-injury-n73014444007/>

And the newest employee benefit is....

CommonBond, a startup known for student loan refinancing, is offering a platform employers can use to make contributions to their workers' student loan payments. The move was made possible in large part by CommonBond's acquisition of Gradible, a company that allows borrowers to compare student loan repayment options. With the new technology, CommonBond will become part of a growing cottage industry of startups billing themselves as middle men for companies who want to offer student loan help as a perk to employees. Learn more here <http://www.marketwatch.com/story/this-employee-benefit-could-become-as-popular-as-the-401k-2016-07-19>

US House of Representatives passes most significant mental health reform bill in decades

Last week, the House of Representatives passed one of the most significant bills targeting mental health reform since 1963. The Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act will help address holes in the US mental health system by providing more hospital beds for people dealing with a mental illness who will need short-term hospitalization. The bill will also require that the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) establish an interagency committee to create evidence-based findings into systems of care. HIPAA provisions may also be reinterpreted in the bill to further permit parents access to their seriously mentally ill child's medical information and treatment plan when their child is 18 years or older. Read more here <http://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/house-passes-most-significant-mental-health-reform-bill-decades-n611106>

Chestnut Global Partners to expand Workplace Outcomes Suite (WOS) to assess CIR effectiveness

The Division of Commercial Science of Chestnut Global Partners (CGP) is adapting the EAPA endorsed WOS to measure EAP outcomes in responding to critical incidents. The tool would establish industry benchmarks to quantify the effectiveness of Critical

Incident Response to mitigate employee distress or trauma following a workplace critical incident or disruptive event. For more information go to https://www.slideshare.net/slideshow/embed_code/key/wEsSgZGTV4j2Va

EA Professional Spotlight

Name and position

Tim Sumiec, Manager of Field Operations with Empathia, Inc.

What do you like best about working in the employee assistance field?

The best part about working in the EA field is the people. I have limited client contact but I have the privilege of connecting with providers from across the country and sometimes throughout the world. I work hard to find providers that have a strong EA background or are doing EAP work themselves. It is exciting to “speak the same language” with these providers and share experiences and best practices.

In more remote areas, it is harder to find providers with EAP experience, so I love having the opportunity to talk with them about how EAP work differs from their private practice, and the different learning opportunities that EAPA has to offer. But regardless of whether they have EAP experience, I am amazed at the work these counselors do, whether it's seeing a difficult client, providing trauma response or giving training services.

Whether I talk to them once or multiple times, I build a connection with many of the providers in our network. I consider many of them friends and greatly appreciate their willingness to respond urgently to the various difficult situations that we face.

What was your first EA job?

I started at Empathia, then known as National Employee Assistance Services (NEAS), as an EAP counselor in 1990. In that position, I handled client phone intakes and made referrals to providers, legal and consumer credit counseling services. At first, it was just a job that allowed me to move back to the Milwaukee area. I had no idea what an EAP was. I had to learn how to talk to clients and how the workplace impacted them and the services we offered.

Although NEAS initially wasn't actively involved in EAPA, they did support the CEAP, so I received that certification as soon as I became eligible. I also was one of the first employees to attend EAPA chapter meetings on a regular basis. I remember feeling a bit out of place at first, until a union brother, Joe Kraus, gave me a big hug and took me under his wing and encouraged greater involvement. It wasn't long before I was the Treasurer and then the Vice President of our chapter.

At NEAS, I accepted a job as the Manager of Field Operations in 1994. In this position, I supervised and grew our affiliate network across the country. Back then, I was the whole Field Operations team.

Fast forward to 2016, I am still in the same job, very much enjoying myself and the providers we work with, as well as managing a Field Operations team of employees. I don't have the longest tenure at Empathia (we changed our name around 2010) but there are now only a handful of employees that have been around as long as me. So, my first EA job is the same one that I currently find myself in. I am not as green as I was in 1990, but I am still learning every day.

What is the most challenging part of your job?

The first challenge is to keep up with the push to continually make things easier, better, and faster, while striking a balance with protecting confidential information. The staff, my team and some wonderful IT people are a great help in this area. The second challenge is to build the best "EAP" network I can and keep them happy with at least some EAP referrals. Unfortunately, the industry that we live in thinks that bigger is better and doesn't value quality as much as quantity.

When you are not busy working, what inspires you?

My incredible wife, Jen, and my children Abby, 16 (adopted from Russia), Molly, 12 (adopted from China) and Leo, who just turned one! My family keeps me young and teaches me life lessons every day. My family means everything to me, having given me an appreciation of the beauty both inside us and in this wonderful world that we live in.

How Millennials Embrace Mindfulness

The leaders of successful businesses and organizations in the 21st century will be Millennials who master and practice mindfulness in everything they do.

Jon Mertz, author of the book *Activate Leadership*, explains how mindfulness has become the most important unifying principle in the stability and sustainability of the future.

Mertz explains that being mindful requires the upcoming leaders to become adept and intimately familiar with several key factors that together represent a whole new paradigm in leadership and management. These include:

1 – *Work hard to build, create, survive, and excel.*

Personal Action: Each morning, contemplate the day ahead. Fast forward to the end of the day and identify what completed actions will make your soul smile. Write down those completed items and then identify the activities to do and schedule them into your calendar.

Leadership Practice: Create space for team members to do their work, including think space, heart space, and technology space. Each space empowers team members to solve problems, align on organization purpose, and collaborate effectively with team members.

2 – Engage in tough conversations with empathy and action (don't put them off).

Personal Action: Notice your breathing patterns to keep focused on what matters most in conversations. Rather than reacting, mindful leaders respond with thoughtful questions and calm interactions. Many tough conversations will happen between generations and within your own generation. Focus on your breathing to respond in thoughtful ways and resolve challenging situations in a productive manner.

Leadership Practice: Encourage team members to discuss mistakes made. Discussing mistakes openly enables team members to be more empathetic – listening to what did not work, lessons learned, and emotions expressed. Learning organizations gain strength, and strength is gained by approaching tough situations with open empathy and resolution.

3 – Nurture relationships that matter through good and challenging times.

Personal Action: Carve out time each month to contribute to a community organization. By doing community work, new relationships are developed to keep you centered in your local community. This is not about networking; it is about practicing your relationship skillset in extraordinary ways.

Leadership Practice: Encourage team members to find a local social good organization to get involved with and have them spend at least 4 hours a month doing work in their community. We can get stuck in our relationship skills. Community work serves to enhance your relationship building skills while keeping teams focused on what matters most in good and challenging times.

4 – Be nice when everything tempts you not to be nice.

Personal Action: Take time to contemplate. Some may meditate. Some may pray. Some may get lost in thoughts while running. Whatever works, take the time to re-center, and use these practices at least five times per week. From within self-compassion springs. From self-compassion, compassion for others rises. A strength in our presence develops this way.

Leadership Practice: A quiet strength of character exists in being humble and nice. Encourage these behaviors. Highlight them. In humility, work is done that is helpful to move your business forward in productive ways. Being nice doesn't mean low expectations. Too often, we want to play to the crowd and say outrageous things to incite. Instead, we need to stand out by saying and doing things that are helpful. Our hands are meant to be extended in a helpful way; it is why we have arms and elbows. We are designed to do the work, hug each other, and extend a helpful hand.

5 – Always get up, no matter what, to create something better than the day before.

Personal Action: Resiliency comes from within, along with our community support. With practices of contemplation, we build resiliency to survive the challenging times and

navigate the good times with a stronger sense of purpose and direction. Leaders and entrepreneurs who thrive find their inner resiliency. To build this resiliency, go to nature. Take a hike. Go river rafting. Ski. Snowshoe. Bike through the mountains. Nature is resilient. From your interaction with nature, you will refresh and strengthen.

Leadership Practice: Communicate with clarity and transparency. Talking about the good times is easy. Being open about the challenges, dips, and misses is difficult but necessary. To build a resilient culture, be transparent in what is good and what isn't. Be clear in what problems need to be solved and how each person's talents are needed to move the company forward in achieving its mission.

6 – *Strive less, enable more.*

Personal Action: Be actively present for others. Practice being present in your home by listening closely to your spouse, partner, kids, and friends. Turn off all devices and have a conversation. Take the same practice into your workplace by not being distracted during one-to-one conversations. Practice being undistracted.

Leadership Practice: Set the tone for the culture by communicating why the company needs to move from Point A to Point B. Do your part but do all the parts. Hire great talent, and let them use their talent to enable the strategic direction. Support your teams with encouragement, tools, plans, measurements, and celebrations. Work to ensure others know you trust them through the successes and lessons learned.

7 – *Align your wisdom through trust.*

Personal Action: Identify what things make your soul, heart, and mind be at home. When all three align, trust and confidence develops. Move forward fully with these things. No matter in work or outside of work, do the aligned things. Self-trust blooms here.

Leadership Practice: Knowing whether a strategic choice may be a good one happens when our heart, mind, and soul are aligned around it. Motivating a company around a strategic choice requires appealing to all three, too. When it comes to leading strategy, discern these connection points. Close the strategic gaps:

- **Heart:** Our heart is into the change, yet many questions remain unanswered. We need to tap into the minds of different team members and think through the scenarios more deeply.
- **Mind:** Our mind has come to a logical conclusion. However, our heart is not into the path forward. We need to explore what is missing to tap into the passion of our organizational culture. If passion about a direction is missing, we need to identify the motivating forces.
- **Soul:** An inner confidence and comfort level needs to be present in what we are about to embark upon. There will be a certain nervousness, and that is normal when something new is being done. We need to be present in that moment, using our heart and mind to re-center.