



Employee Assistance
Professionals Association

National Survey Finds Trend Toward Integration of Employee Assistance and Work/Life Fields

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Research

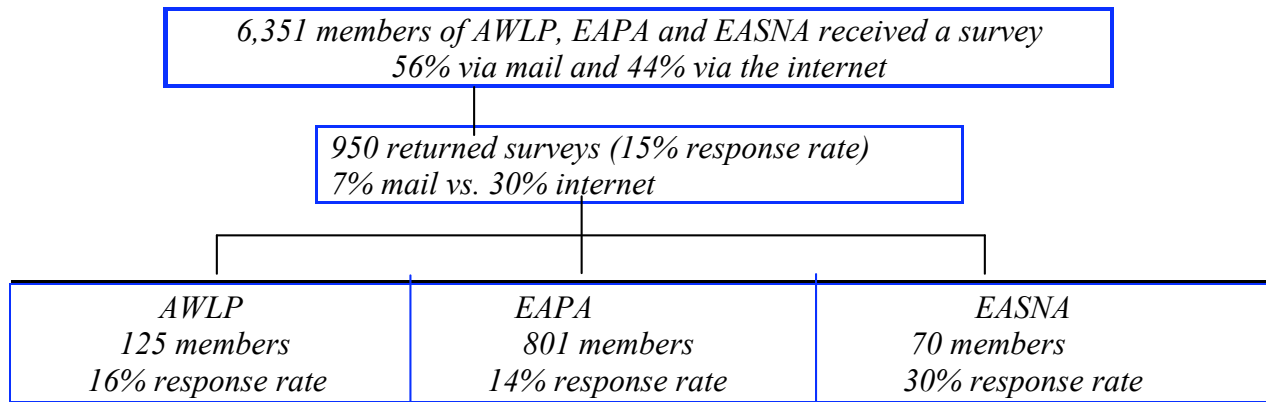
Introduction:

The Employees Assistance Professionals Association (EAPA) has been tracking the development of the EAP and W/L fields for the last ten years. Due to the New Economy and resulting changes in the workforce, EAPA felt that it was a critical time to revisit the issue of whether some form of collaboration or integration of EAP and W/L benefits might be advantageous for both employers and employees. Thus EAPA began a three-phase project to study in-depth the issue of integration. This brief summary focuses on the key findings of the first phase of this endeavor.

As the research evolved, it became clear that the concept of integration is even more complex than initially thought. EAP and W/L programs may be part of the same department, or report to the same manager, which is one form of integration. But there is a more subtle and perhaps more powerful integration when there is true collaboration of effort... no matter where the programs reside. The research question of attempting to capture the level and type of integration present was a daunting task. We had to rely on self-report of the respondents regarding their perceptions and understandings of the concept of integration

A crucial key to the success of the *Employee Assistance and Work/Life Professionals Survey* was the collaboration of the Alliance for Work/Life Professionals (AWLP), and the Employee Assistance Society of North America (EASNA) with EAPA. Through these individuals, outreach was made to include their respective associations and memberships in this survey. Doing so enriched the methodology, survey design, sample, and ultimately, the findings of the study. The following figure describes the overall response rate for this study:

Figure 1



Research Question

What are the current practices and future directions of the Employee Assistance and Work/Life fields in relationship to integration of services?

Key Findings:

- ♣ Approximately 1 in 6 survey respondents considered themselves both an EA professional and a Work/Life professional, and this finding was consistent across all three associations
- ♣ There is a significant level of collaboration/integration at the service level. The overlap of services in general tends to be in the non-core areas of each profession, except among what may be called a “New Breed” of professional who seems to provide services across core areas of both professions.
- ♣ Respondents generally agreed that collaboration or some form of integration is better for the employee and employer than two separate, focused programs. They expressed ambivalence, however, about the impact of collaboration on professional identity and the identity of each practice field.

Comments:

This Phase I of the EAPA Work/Life Committee Research project was an extremely important piece in enlisting the voice of those professionals out in the field on the front lines. But it is important to acknowledge the limitations of this phase in isolation. Only 16% of the population of AWLP, EAPA, and EASNA members responded to this first survey. Perhaps they are individuals more interested (pro or con) in the issue of integrating EAP and Work/Life programs.

Phase II will sample the universe of external vendors in both the EAP and Work/Life field. Again there will be bias in terms of marketing issues, but combined with the initial study phase, it will begin to flesh out a more complete picture of the future of these two fields. Then in Phase III a replication of the Boston University Study will be conducted. This final phase will hopefully answer the question about what companies want and are willing to pay for in the current economy. The combination of all these phases should shed some light on the issue of whether integration of EAP and Work/Life programs is a viable and preferred form of helping employees lead productive lives both at work and at home.

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WEB Sites and Other Resources

Literature:

National Report on Work and Family

<http://www.bpinews.com/hr/pages/rwf.htm>

Work and Family News Brief

<http://www.workfamily.com>

Work-Family Research Newsletter

<http://www.bc.edu/bc.org/avp/csom/cwf/granteepage/caplan.html>

Professional Organizations:

Alliance for Work/Life Professionals

<http://www.awlp.org>

College and Universities Work and Family Organization

www.cuwfa.org

Employee Assistance Professionals Association

<http://eap-association.com/index.html>

Employee Assistance Roundtable

<http://earoundtable.org>

Employee Assistance Society of North America

<http://www.easna.org>

National Council on Family Relations

<http://ncfr.org>

The Society of Human Resource Management

<http://www.shrm.org/index.html>

World@ Work

www.worldatwork.org

Research Institutes:

Families and Work Institute
<http://www.familiesandworkinst.org>

Boston College Center for Work and Family
<http://www.bc.edu/cwf>

The Kunz Center for the Study of Work and Family
<http://ucaswww.mcm.uc.edu/sociology/kunzctr>

Conference Board
<http://www.conferenceboard.org>

Regional Work/Family Organizations:

Purdue University
Midwestern Work-Family Association (MWFA)
<http://www.cfs.purdue.edu/CFF/cff.html>

San Diego
Work-Life Coalition of San Diego
<http://www.worklifesanddiego.org>

Boston
New England Work and Family Association (NEWFA)
<http://www.bc.edu/newfa>

San Francisco
One Small Step
<http://www.onesmallstep.org>

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