



Accreditation **of** **Employee Assistance** **Programs**

R. Paul Maiden, PhD ■ Editor

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ABOUT THE EDITOR

R. Paul Maiden, PhD, is Director of the School of Social Work at the University of Central Florida in Orlando. He teaches Social Policy, Macro Practice, Interventions with Substance Abusers, Strategies in Employee Assistance Programs and directs study programs to Russia and South Africa. He has also taught Strategic Change Management in Public Affairs, and Ethics in Public Affairs in the PhD program. Additionally, he developed and coordinated the graduate addictions certificate program and was also graduate coordinator of the MSW program prior to being appointed director. From 1986-1999 he was Chair of the Occupational Social Work Program at the Jane Addams College of Social Work at the University of Illinois–Chicago. As program chair he developed curriculum in substance abuse treatment, employee assistance programs, managed care, and occupational policy and services. Additionally, he had responsibility for developing and serving as faculty liaison for all EAP field placements as well as coordinating a post-masters EAP certificate program. From 1993-1997, Dr. Maiden directed a U.S. Information Agency funded faculty exchange program with the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa, where he has been a visiting scholar on several occasions. He has also guest lectured at the University of Pretoria, the University of Natal in Durban and the University of Zimbabwe in Harare. He also initiated and directed a masters and doctoral scholarship program for members of the South African Black Social Workers Association. Other faculty positions include the Virginia Commonwealth University and Abilene Christian University (Texas) and Doctoral Fellow at the University of Maryland.

Dr. Maiden has presented papers and conducted training at numerous national and international conferences. He has published extensively in the areas of employee assistance programs, substance abuse, workplace legislation, evaluation of work-based human services, AIDS in the workplace, alcohol abuse and domestic violence and managed behavioral health care. He is the editor and a contributing author of *Global*

Perspectives of Occupational Social Work (2001), *Employee Assistance Services in the New South Africa* (1999), *Total Quality Management in EAP* (1995) and *Employee Assistance Programs in South Africa* (1992). He is currently the editor of the *Employee Assistance Quarterly* and is on the editorial board of the *EAP Digest*.

Dr. Maiden is a principal of Behavioral Health Concepts, Ltd. He has consulted with a wide range of organizations and employers in the public and private sectors in the development, administration and evaluation of employee assistance and managed care programs, workplace policies and educational programs on drug testing, family medical leave, HIV/AIDS, harassment and disabilities, training and development of treatment providers in managed care, and organizational development and change.

For the past 14 years Dr. Maiden has consulted with numerous organizations in Southern Africa on the development of employee assistance programs to address workplace alcohol, drug, and mental health problems, HIV/AIDS and related health care costs. He also coordinates similar efforts between U.S. companies doing business in South Africa. He has led several delegations of health and human service and education professionals to examine the health, education and welfare delivery systems in Southern African countries and developed a health care trade mission to South Africa for the U.S. Department of Commerce's International Trade Administration. He has traveled extensively in South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe and Swaziland. He is also currently involved in workplace substance abuse and domestic violence projects in Russia and recently received a Senior Fulbright to develop EAP curriculum and field-based training and consultation in the petroleum industry.

Dr. Maiden is a licensed clinical social worker and has been an active member in the National Association of Social Workers for 25 years. He is a long-time member of the Employee Assistance Professionals Association and is the past president of the Illinois Chapter. He is also a member of the Employee Assistance Society of North America. He holds a masters of social work from the University of Tennessee and a PhD from the University of Maryland School of Social Work.

Preface:

Certification, Licensure, and Accreditation in Employee Assistance Programs

All reputable educational institutions, organizations, and professional practitioner groups are recognized by independent and autonomous accreditation, licensure or certification and therefore for recognition and status through some form of national accreditation. Professional practitioners such as physicians, lawyers, psychologists and social workers are sanctioned to practice while adhering to specified standards and codes of ethics, practice skills and ongoing professional development which is often recognized and acknowledged through state-administered licensure. Certification is another substantial measure of ascertaining specific competencies and skills required to successfully apply knowledge, tasks and responsibilities involved in specific job descriptions and work assignments.

The field of employee assistance programming has evolved over four decades to a point where certification is available through the Employee Assistance Professionals Association (EAPA), the leading trade and membership group representing employee assistance practitioners. Licensure of EAP practitioners is also occurred in a limited number of states. Organizational accreditation of employee assistance programs has also continued to evolve. The first program accreditation was devel-

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oped by the Employee Assistance Society of North America (EASNA), a model adopted late by the Council on Accreditation (COA). An alternative EAP program accreditation procedure was also developed by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) which is conducted in conjunction with social service agencies also offering employee assistance services.

This volume addresses the evolution of practitioner certification and the development of a comprehensive system of employee assistance program accreditation.

The history of EAP certification, licensure and accreditation is presented by Eddie Haaz, John Maynard, Steve Petrica, and Charlie Williams in "Employee Assistance Program Accreditation: History and Outlook." This article examines certification and accreditation in the EAP field in the U.S. and Canada by EAPA and EASNA. They note that the two professional associations, driven by divergent philosophies, have evolved differently in their approach to accreditation. These two organizations share the conviction that control of standards is essential to the self-definition of a professional field, and has implications as well for marketing and governmental regulation. They suggest that accreditation has an important role and should define acceptable standards in the emerging employee assistance environment, which now also includes managed behavioral health care, work life, and international programs.

Stephanie Pacinella, Assistant Director of Standards Development and Performance Measurement, at the Council on Accreditation (COA), in her article "Developing Standards for Accreditation" suggests that standards for development is a continuous process that relies on an inclusive, consensus-building methodology to ensure that standards maintain relevance in an ever-changing field. This article provides an overview of the framework for the COA's EAP standards, and details the steps in the standards development process that resulted in both the first and current editions of the *COA EAP Standards and Self-Study Manual*.

Tim Stockert, EAP Manager at the Council on Accreditation (COA), in his article "The Council on Accreditation Employee Assistance Program Accreditation Process" describes accreditation as a time-limited,

facilitative step-by-step process that involves an internal and external review of an organization's policies, procedures, and practices based on standards of best practice. This article provides an overview of the steps in COA's EAP accreditation from application to reaccreditation.

Paula M. Cayley, Ulrike Scheuchl, and Anne Bowen Walker of Interlock Employee and Family Assistance Corporation of Canada present one of two case studies depicting firsthand experiences of preparing for and guiding their organizations through accreditation. They note that the process of accreditation was an extensive, often challenging, but ultimately exhilarating experience. It provided opportunities to grow as a company and led to the development of a number of new and improved systems and practices. The Interlock group attempt to define their strategy that led to achievement of accreditation and offer some useful guidelines for future applicants.

The second accreditation case study presented by Tina Thompson, Vice President of Employee Assistance Programs and Addictions Services at Magellan Behavioral Health, outlines her company's successful accreditation effort. Thompson discusses Magellan's experience and lessons learned while going through such a process.

Dale Masi, Director of the EAP specialization at the University of Maryland, in her article "Issues in International Employee Assistance Program Accreditation," emphasizes the dramatic growth and the development of the profession beyond the Employee Assistance Professionals Association (EAPA). She also discusses international EAP approaches to accreditation and identifies some of the potential cross-cultural limitations of American model EAPs. She describes the recent development of worldwide guidelines which have been sponsored by numerous EAP groups and suggests that these guidelines might be a pathway or intermediary step to accreditation for those international EAPs that may not be prepared to undergo formal COA accreditation.

This volume on EAP accreditation concludes with an article, "The Future of Credentialing and Accreditation in Employee Assistance Programs," written by current EASNA president Louise Hartley and EAPA

president Don Jorgensen. These two EAP organization leaders examine future issues facing employee assistance programs and discuss the value and relevance of both program accreditation and individual practitioner certification.

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Editor
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Employee Assistance Program Accreditation: History and Outlook

Edward J. Haaz
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SUMMARY. Accreditation is a means of verifying the professional competence and programmatic integrity of an employee assistance program (EAP). This paper examines the history of the accreditation of

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EAPs in the United States and Canada by the two dominant professional associations in the field, and makes some observations about the outlook for EAP accreditation. The two professional associations, driven by divergent philosophies, have evolved differently in their approach to accreditation. However, they share the conviction that control of standards is essential to the self-definition of a professional field, and has implications as well for marketing and governmental regulation. Accreditation thus has an important role in those areas, and should define acceptable standards in the emerging employee assistance environment, which entails such issues as managed behavioral health care, work-life, and international programs. Accreditation may also help advance thinking about current tensions in the field, and thus help shape its future. *[Article copies available for a fee from The Haworth Document Delivery Service: 1-800-HAWORTH. E-mail address: <docdelivery@haworthpress.com> Website: <<http://www.HaworthPress.com>> © 2003 by The Haworth Press, Inc. All rights reserved.]*

KEYWORDS. Accreditation, CARF, CEAP, COA, EAPA, EASNA, employee assistance, managed behavioral health care, work-life

INTRODUCTION

A profession, classically understood, is “a calling requiring specialized knowledge and often long and intensive preparation . . . maintaining by force of organization or concerted opinion high standards of achievement and conduct, and committing its members . . . to a kind of work which has for its prime purpose the rendering of public service” (Lawyers Title Ins. Corp. v. Hoffman, 1994; Georgetowne Ltd. Part. v. Geotechnical Servs., 1988). Entry to professional practice is generally restricted, either by state licensure or by the certification of a competent body of peers in the field, or both. Although it is unusual among other professions, the institutions in which health and human services professionals practice (e.g., hospitals, outpatient programs, rehabilitation facilities, HMOs, and social service agencies) are themselves often ac-

credited. As employee assistance has emerged as a field with its own body of theory, knowledge, and skills, criteria for its competent practice have also developed, both for individual professionals and for the organizations in which they work. In this paper, the authors examine the history of the accreditation of employee assistance programs (EAPs) in the United States and Canada by the dominant professional associations in the field, the Employee Assistance Professionals Association (EAPA) and the Employee Assistance Society of North America (EASNA). This review of the history will permit us to make some observations about the outlook for EAP accreditation.

Employee assistance emerged in the 1940s out of the occupational health field. The first services, known as Industrial Alcoholism Programs (U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1971), had the humanitarian and pragmatic business goals of identifying poorly performing employees with alcohol problems, helping them find appropriate treatment, returning them to productive employment, and thereby strengthening company productivity. As practitioners observed that employee productivity could be impaired by a range of personal problems beyond alcoholism, the field broadened from constructive confrontation-based Occupational [Alcohol] Programs (U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1974) to more comprehensive employee assistance programs (Wrich, 1974). This transition marked a significant change. Once led by successfully recovering alcoholics from all walks of life, the shift resulted in an increased number of “degreed professionals” being attracted to the field. These individuals (most frequently members of one of the mental health professions) had the training to assess and intervene in a variety of emotional and behavioral problems. As they developed their workplace practice, many of them broadened their focus from alcohol-specific problems, training, and policies, to address a wide range of employee problems. Thus, the move began toward the so-called “broad brush” employee assistance identity, to the genesis of separate employee assistance professional associations, and eventually to the development of EAP standards.

The development of two distinct professional associations therefore bespeaks the diversity among practitioners as employee assistance

evolved into a recognized profession. This diversity is evidenced by the shift from EAPs being staffed primarily by people of various occupational backgrounds who entered the field in part because of their personal experience of recovery and their concern for alcoholic coworkers, to increasing levels of staffing by professionals with advanced mental health training but minimal training or experience with the “recovering community.” The earlier occupational programs tended to concentrate on “troubled employees” with performance problems caused by alcohol or drug abuse. The broad-brushed approach to employee assistance services which evolved later (and which continues to evolve) encompasses an ever-increasing range of workplace performance issues. These important differences are rooted deep in the history of the field (CONSAD, 1999), and they have influenced the evolution of EAP program standards, organizational accreditation, and professional credentialing.

EAP ACCREDITATION IN EAPA

For over twenty years, EAPA (and its institutional forerunner, ALMACA) has been a leader in the establishment of meaningful standards of practice in the employee assistance profession. The diversity of settings within which EAP services are provided, the myriad of backgrounds brought to the profession by employee assistance practitioners, and the spectrum of skills required to deliver expected results have made this effort a challenge.

The organization was founded April 27, 1971, as the Association of Labor and Management Administrators and Consultants on Alcoholism (ALMACA, the name being changed to EAPA in 1989), and received initial support from the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA). ALMACA began the groundwork for accreditation in 1978 and 1979, a process that reached a turning point in 1981. That year the first Standards for Employee Alcoholism (or Assistance) Programs were drafted by a committee representing ALMACA, the National Council on Alcoholism, NIAAA, the Occupational Program

Consultants Association, and the American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO).

The employee assistance field grew significantly during the 1980s. In 1985, Drs. Paul Roman and Terry Blum published a paper (Roman & Blum, 1985; Roman, 1991) in which they identified six components of the EAP “core technology” (see Appendix A). According to Roman and Blum, these six functions constitute the necessary central activities of an EAP and combined they define the unique difference between EAPs and other workplace, self-help, or professional initiatives. Recognition for individual practitioners was planned in 1985 and formalized in 1987 with the establishment of the Employee Assistance Certification Commission (EACC). The EACC is an autonomous body created by EAPA to administer the Certified Employee Assistance Professional (CEAP) credential. The first CEAP examination was held in 1987, and the credential was awarded for the first time that year. In 1988, the ALMACA Board of Directors adopted a specific definition of an EAP:

An EAP is a work-site based program designed to assist in the identification and resolution of productivity problems associated with employees impaired by health, marital, family, financial, alcohol, drug, legal, emotional, stress or other personal concerns which may adversely affect employee job performance.

Also in 1988, the ALMACA Board formed the Program Standards Committee to update and revise the 1981 standards, incorporating the new definition and the core technology. The name of ALMACA was formally changed to EAPA in 1989.

The EAPA Standards Committee began to issue a series of documents. “EAPA Standards for Employee Assistance Programs” (1990) set forth program standards, organized into six functional areas: program design, evaluation, implementation, management and administration, direct services, and linkages. In 1992, the “EAPA Standards for Employee Assistance Programs, Part II: Professional Guidelines” was published. This document added essential and recommended components to the 1990 standards.

From its earliest days, the EAPA Standards Committee recognized that market forces often resulted in services being sold as EAPs that did not meet the accepted standards of the profession. Discussion focused on the possibility of developing a program accreditation process based on the EAPA Standards, and in 1992 the Program Accreditation Subcommittee was formed within the Standards Committee to explore this issue. The subcommittee (which later became an EAPA standing committee) began work on the “EAPA Self-Administered Assessment Form for EAPs,” which was published in 1994. The “EAPA Glossary of Terms” was also published that year. The publication of “EAPA Guidelines for International EAPs” in 1996 was the culmination of efforts by representatives from 14 countries to develop employee assistance guidelines applicable in countries and cultures worldwide.

Also in 1996, the EAPA Standards Committee began a comprehensive review of the “EAPA Standards and Professional Guidelines.” The resulting revision, published in 1999, reflected important developments in the field. It provided guidance on issues that were potential sources of confusion, or that were important for differentiating acceptable from unacceptable EAP practices. The 1999 edition, incorporating an updated definition of an EAP, was organized into seven major sections: program design, management and administration, confidentiality and regulatory impact on protective rights, EAP direct services, Drug Free Workplace/Substance Abuse Professional direct services, strategic partnerships, and evaluation.

Meanwhile, the State of Florida Occupational Program Committee (FOPC) was developing an accreditation process for EAPs in Florida, assisted by Donald F. Godwin, former Chief of the Occupational Program Branch of NIAAA. The Workplace Research Branch of the National Institute on Drug Abuse awarded a contract to FOPC in 1989 to support a field test of the new process. In 1990, the EAP at the Honeywell plant in Tampa became the first program to be accredited by the FOPC. In 1991, EAPA reviewed the FOPC protocols for their usefulness as a national model, and decided that their best understanding would come from firsthand observation of the protocols being applied. Members of the EAPA Accreditation Committee went to Florida in

1993 to be trained as FOPC site reviewers and to participate in accreditation site visits at two programs. By doing so they were also pilot testing the FOPC protocols for possible adoption by EAPA. Their training and on-site experience were supported by the Workplace and Prevention Branch of CSAP, of which by that time Don Godwin had become Chief.

To build on the insights gained from this experience, the Accreditation Committee held informational discussions with five national accrediting bodies: the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO), the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA), CARF (Commission on Accreditation on Rehabilitation Facilities), the Rehabilitation Accreditation Commission, American Accreditation Programs, Inc., and the Council on Accreditation for Children and Family Services (COA). The Accreditation Committee held an intensive two-day meeting in early 1994 to discuss what it had learned and to explore options for moving forward. Their deliberators considered the following.

Should EAPA Continue to Pursue Accreditation?

An accreditation process becomes important when the purchasers of professional services are limited in their ability to determine whether the services meet appropriate standards. Accreditation provides assurance that knowledgeable professionals have reviewed the services and found them to meet applicable standards. Accreditation is therefore the logical extension of a standards development process. Once standards are agreed upon, the accreditation review determines whether a particular entity has successfully operationalized them in its services.

EAPs thus fit the profile for accreditation. An EAP is a set of services for which professional standards have been developed, but most corporate and individual customers of EAPs don't have the means to determine whether any individual program meets those standards. At times, the term "EAP" may be used inappropriately to refer to sets of services that clearly do not meet EAPA standards. Since the term is unprotected, there is currently no way to prevent this from happening. Accreditation, then, would help define employee assistance practice and distinguish

true EAPs from other sets of services that do not meet the standards of the profession. The process of accreditation provides a template to improve EAP services, and may help demonstrate to organizational decision makers why a particular activity is important and why staff time, expertise, and resources need to be allocated to it.

On the other hand, at the time there was reason to believe that in the absence of a viable accreditation process, government might take responsibility for defining employee assistance programs and standards. By 1994, when the Standards Committee met, this was already underway in several states and in federal regulations. Lawmakers do not have the time to become as knowledgeable about employee assistance issues as might be hoped, and they necessarily respond to political pressures. To avoid ill-conceived regulation and to maintain control of the profession the Committee concluded that it was in the best interest of the EAP field to develop a meaningful accreditation process.

What Actually Should Be Accredited?

EAPA Standards define an EAP as a work site-based program. The individual standards include some items that are properly the responsibility of EAP professional staff, while other items are the proper responsibility of the work site, that is, the host organization. Still others can only be achieved jointly by employee assistance professionals and elements of the host organization. An external EAP vendor may well provide services to one organization in which the EAP is fully integrated and operating according to the standards, while at the same time providing services to another organization in which the EAP fails to meet standards. The quality of any EAP, and its compliance with EAPA standards, is therefore a product of the interaction between the professional staff and the host organization. Ideally, accreditation should apply, and be awarded, to the specific programs arising from the joint responsibility and interaction of the vendor and host organization. As a practical matter, however, this may not be feasible for vendors operating EAPs in multiple host organizations. Therefore, the Committee considered that the external vendor organization itself, or the overall internal program,