The EAP/Behavioral Health Carve-Out Connection

Elizabeth Levy Merrick
Constance M. Horgan
Deborah W. Garnick
Dominic Hodgkin
Kathleen Keck
Robert E. Cenczyk

This study examines the prevalence, characteristics, and interrelationship of Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) and managed behavioral health care insurance benefits ("carve-outs"). Based on our survey of Fortune 500 firms regarding 1999 behavioral health arrangements, over 90% had an EAP (typically externally contracted) and over one-third had a behavioral health carve-out. EAP arrangement (internal, separate contract, integrated contract) was associated with EAP benefit level. EAPs and carve-outs are interrelated in some important ways, though not in outpatient benefit levels. Both can offer substantial benefits to workers and their dependents, and are particularly important during this time of unusual stresses.

KEYWORDS. Employee Assistance Programs, behavioral health, carve-outs, managed care
Ideas on Best Practices for Employee Assistance

Program Policies

Rick Csiernik

Policies are the foundation upon which Employee Assistance Programs are created. Despite this, little literature exists concerning what should be included in a formal policy. An outline is provided recommending attributes that would be of value to include and a mechanism to evaluate new and existing policies. The best practices guideline includes what should be included in an opening statement of principles and what procedures should be put in place for referral, monitoring and evaluation. Recommended responsibilities for program development are also included, as are recommendations regarding functions for different positions within the workplace with respect to an EAP.

KEYWORDS: EAP policy, EAP program development, best practices

A Review of Canadian EAP Policies

Rick Csiernik

A review of 154 Canadian EAPs found that 136 organizations had developed formal policies governing the program while 24 had not. Organizations with a policy were larger in size and were more likely to be unionized. They were also more likely to have had their EAP initiated by a joint labour-management committee and to use peer supports and internal resources to deliver EAP services. Of those EAPs without a policy, a disproportionate number had been developed during the 1990s. EAPs that had not developed a policy were also more likely to have begun exclusively by management and were more likely to rely on a third-party provider for clinical and administrative services. Of the 130 programs with EAP policies, 80 provided copies to be analyzed. Policies ranged in size from one to 31 pages with varying levels of comprehensiveness. Using the EAP Policy Best Practices Guidelines, policies scored between 3% and 73% with a mean of 36.7%. The introductory statement of principles, including discussions of the range of problems to be covered, confidentiality and union management endorsement, was typically the strongest area of the policies. Areas that typically required enhancement were program development and EAP program roles. The comprehensiveness of the EAP policy was correlated with the size of the organization but not with program utilization. Public sector policies tended to be more comprehensive though only 26 of the 80 policies received a score of 30% or greater.

KEYWORDS: EAP policy, Canada, program evaluation

Employee Assistance Program Utilization: Developing a Comprehensive Scorecard

Rick Csiernik

In the EAP field, utilization rates are an important concept routinely used as a descriptor of EAP success, yet there has been little formal research conducted in this area. In a study of 154 Canadian EAPs, 102 organizations reported their utilization rates along with how they defined both utilization and a case. Mean utilization rate was 9.2% with utilization being greater in organizations with a union where labor was involved in establishing the program, providing assistance in accessing the program and in managing the program through participation on a joint labor-management committee. Utilization rates were also found to be greater where there was an EAP policy in place and where ongoing program promotion occurred. However, what was also discovered was that most of these statistical conclusions were questionable as there was a lack of consistency in how utilization rates were calculated by various organizations, nor was there any agreement on what even constituted a case. This brings into question the utility of EAP utilization rates in any comparative program monitoring or evaluation. A comprehensive EAP Utilization Scorecard is offered as a response to this situation. The scorecard counts the actual number of employees, retirees and family members who use the EAP, either face-to-face, through telephone counselling or via e-counselling. Also presented is the idea of a new calculation, penetration rate. This value would include counselling offered by the EAP along with the other services, including group counselling, critical incident debriefings, consultations and mediations, workshops and seminars, peer referral contacts and telephone inquiries. This approach would provide a more comprehensive understanding of what EAPs do and would also allow for longitudinal program comparison as well as comparisons between programs.

KEYWORDS: EAP utilization, research

Effects of Program Characteristics on EAP Utilization

Richard M. Weiss

Various elements of EAPs have been described as crucial to successful program functioning. Using negative binomial regression analysis, this study examined the impact of program features on utilization in a large sample of EAPs. Findings indicated that, among widely recommended features, the existence of a written policy and its broad distribution, adequate staffing levels, and provision of training for supervisors predicted higher levels of program utilization. Other recommended features, including maintenance of client confidentiality, were either unrelated to utilization, or predicted lower utilization.

KEYWORDS: EAP, utilization, training, staffing, confidentiality, policy

In My Opinion: Title IX and the Glass Ceiling

Keith McClellan

Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was enacted to eliminate disparities between the opportunities for men and women. Controversy about the effects of Title IX on men's athletics threatens to obscure the need for and accomplishments of this federal law.

KEYWORDS: Women's rights, women's education, equal rights, gender pay equity, comparable pay, sex bias
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