

# CONNECTIONS INC

Employee & Family Solutions | Employee Assistance Programs

Vol. 17 #1

*Fanaticism consists in redoubling your efforts when you have forgotten your goal.*  
(George Santavana)



ANDY VISSER, CEO  
andy@connectionseap.com

## **BUZZWORD:** **Self-awareness**

Is self-awareness the single greatest secret to a leader's success? If not, it's a strong contender. I'm not talking about being aware of what makes you happy or sad, or what you like and dislike, I'm talking about the awareness a leader has regarding the impact they have on those around them.

A leader who is unaware of their impact on the team, is missing out on a world of opportunities to drive meaningful change and engage those around them. What would your team say about you?



MATT VISSER  
matt@connectionseap.com

## **A MESSAGE FROM ANDY:**

I have held many positions in my 28 years with Connections Inc. EAP including EAP Assessment Counselor, Trainer, Marketer, Finance Director, HR Officer, Snow Remover and CEO. The job of CEO has changed considerably and has shifted from its roots as an interesting sideline for a mental health counselor, to building a team of competent, talented people who can provide top quality services to our customers. With the evolution of this role, I am happy to announce the following change in our organization!

Effective January 1, 2017, Matt Visser has been named CEO of Connections Inc. EAP.

Working side-by-side with Matt for the past two and half years (and knowing him all his life) has been one of the great joys of my life! I have no doubt that he is the best person for this role. Matt's time with Connections as an EAP Associate, VP of Operations and most recently as co-owner, combined with his experience in Human Resources with Target Corporation, has well prepared him to guide Connections to exciting levels of service competence, health and growth.

I want to thank all our customers for your confidence and your patience as you taught me what you needed most from us. I plan to remain working full-time as Trainer, Quality Assurance Specialist and a new title of "Chairman of the Board."

## **A MESSAGE FROM MATT:**

I am so pleased to take on the CEO role! I am continually impressed with our staff's dedication to serving our customers and the passion they exhibit in connecting those in need with those who can help them. This company was built on the principle that bringing "healing" to the individuals we serve is not only advantageous to the individual, but also to the workplace.

As the new CEO, we will continue to operate under this principle and seek to provide the highest level of service possible to every single person that calls our office. As we focus on the years ahead, I look forward to new partnerships, new friendships and the continued tradition of listening and responding to your needs.

**Connections Inc. Employee Assistance Program's** mission is to provide holistic assistance products and services that support optimum productivity, team work and healthy community in the workplace.

Connections Inc. Employee Assistance Program mission statement since 1988

# Marijuana and The Workplace: Complexity Continued

Marijuana/workplace issues are complex reflecting our larger culture. Needed serious medical research is slow in coming. Helping us to understand this is J. Michael Bostwick, MD. Respected research psychiatrist at the Mayo Clinic and author of a review of medical marijuana research. He states “*doubt continues about marijuana’s value and who it really can help, he says. Based on medical science, it seems possible that marijuana-based treatments could be developed for some conditions; but federal restrictions make it hard for the research to advance...*” All sides say it is problematic that in “1970, the federal government classified marijuana as an illegal, highly addictive drug with no medical value, making research harder to do.” (a) Despite these obstacles, three FDA-approved marijuana based medications exist and a fourth drug is in clinical trials in the US.



Tamera Cagney, spokesperson for employee assistance programming and workplace safety advocate questions:

1. How can employers with workers in multiple states comply with [marijuana] laws that differ from state to state?
2. Will employers have to accommodate the use of medical marijuana?
3. Will there be an adequate supply of drug-free workers?

## She suggests:

- employers reduce confusion by replacing policy references to ‘illegal drugs’ with ‘drugs listed as illegal under federal and state laws’ & overtly specifying ‘marijuana.’
- policies must go beyond prohibiting employees from showing up for work “under the influence” and address having drugs, including marijuana, in an employee’s system.
- communication employment and marijuana to both employees and managers, is critical. Leadership must recognize the symptoms of possible impairment due to marijuana & be acquainted with the appropriate safety measures in the event of a drug-related accident.

Complexity plagues even this final point. A recent post-accident consult following a positive test for marijuana revealed a safety mechanism had been disabled rather than appropriately repaired. An injury resulted for the employee responsible for the illegitimate modification. Following the positive drug test, the gentleman faced a mandatory EAP evaluation and likely rehab. He chose early retirement rather than face his marijuana use, confiding to his long-time supervisor that he used marijuana – a daily pattern since the early 1970’s. Management viewed this 60+ year old employee as generally ‘easy going’ - very likely mistaking a marijuana induced ‘impaired sense of urgency’ for an ‘easy-going’ demeanor.

a. <http://www.webmd.com/pain-management/features/medical-marijuana-research-web#1>

b. The Shifting Landscape of Medical Marijuana Tamara Cagney, EdD, MA, BSN, CEAP, is an internal EAP at Sandia National Laboratories in Livermore, Calif. She is also the President-elect of EAPA. <http://www.eapassn.org/The-Shifting-Landscape>

## Maynard’s Corner

As 2017 is underway, we all resolve to have a better year than the last. One way to ensure that we take better care of ourselves, our families, our employees and employers is to learn what your Connections EAP can provide.



maynard@connectionseap.com  
Direct Phone: (515)890-0663

Please go to our website [www.connectionseap.com](http://www.connectionseap.com) and check out our online video. Just click on the orange “Connections EAP Video”. It is just five minutes long and explains very well what Connections Inc. can do for you. Our current clients use this video for new employee orientation and for keeping long time employees informed.

With a proactive, engaging and highly visible EAP we will make 2017 less stressful. Please contact me to how economical a comprehensive EAP can be.

**NEXT ISSUE:**  
Smartphones and Smart  
Business Meetings

# CONNECTIONS INC

925 Westview Drive, Rock Valley, Iowa 51247 | Call (712) 476-2889 or 800-779-6125 | FAX (712) 476-2464

[www.connectionseap.com](http://www.connectionseap.com) | E-mail at: [andy@connectionseap.com](mailto:andy@connectionseap.com)