

# CONNECTIONS INC

Employee & Family Solutions | Employee Assistance Programs

Vol. 21 #1

## A Message from Matt

### Leading Through Uncertainty

Committing to a future we want to see when everything around us feels out of control is hard. The reality is we never did control more than our own thoughts, decisions, and actions. Leaders need to remain calm and remember that this too shall pass. Consider the following activities during times of uncertainty:



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- Keep your team connected to the big picture
- Brainstorm ideal outcomes a year from now with your team
- Discuss opportunities that may pop up in your industry
- Use downtime for the skill development of your team

*"...people will forget what you said ... and what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."*

- Maya Angelou



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## EAP Utilization: Maximizing The Returns For Employees And Employers

A recent article in the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) journal addressed the utilization of employee assistance programs and quoted an industry consultant as saying that "usage is abysmal. Most companies aren't communicating their EAPs well. It wouldn't occur to employees to call."

Earlier this year, the Wall Street Journal published an article titled "Stressed Out at the Office? Therapy Can Come to You." It outlined how many employers, from "Dell to Delta" were bringing in therapists for on-site counseling; Employee assistance programs were not mentioned once in this article.

Some Employee Assistance literature narrowly defines 'utilization' as the number of employees who have a mental health or a chemical abuse diagnosis. While these numbers are important the whole story is better told by the return of investment (ROI) data we can provide to your organization. Although dollars are not the sole way to measure success in helping employee families, ROI data is an important tool that HR staff can bring to the attention of all decision-makers in a management team.

We at Connections study and review how to best report usage. Some diverse facts:

- Usage research tells us that a child's chronic illness can create just as much stress as an individual's struggles with mental health issues.
- A note attached to a user survey informed us that the detailed family budget plan, generated from the EAP consumer finance consult, resulted in a mortgage refinancing plan producing a significantly reduced monthly payment. The client noted that the family's income status had changed due to health issues which had created serious anxiety.
- Problem-solving with financial, legal, mental health, substance abuse, and special needs child experts often result in less stressed, more productive, and more reliable employees.

Our colleagues in a very large employment environment did a utilization review which included adding up distinct employees who had received EAP services over a 7 year period. The review revealed that over 30% of the workforce had been served while regular reports showed a 4 - 5% annual utilization rate.

*(EAPA Journal Vol50 No4\_4thQtr2020. 'EAP Field Doesn't Do Itself Justice)*

Over the years, Connections has improved the employer's quarterly reporting strategy by adding a 'rolling' twelve-month open case rate total. After discussions Connections determined that reporting the percentage utilization of the first quarter of any year as a cumulative report in April was not as helpful (nor as accurate) as reporting utilization over the past rolling twelve months. This also makes it easier to compare 3, 5, and 10-year trends accurately. If it is helpful to review your particular report data our staff will be happy to accommodate questions.

**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

# NOTEWORTHY:

Your personal and your team's wellbeing are a priority if you want to lead a healthy business. Amongst the flurry of suggestions, we found this list:

- **Stay Connected.** We are wired to belong. Find your community (even if virtual): neighborhood, church, work-out, book club, volunteer, professional association, etc.
- **Build Your B.E.S.T. team:** Buddies who Encourage Success and Truth. Help others. Performing acts of kindness increases your happiness level. The more acts you perform in a day, the happier you are. Be kind today!
- **Movement for 30 - 60 minutes Daily:** 6 times a day take a 5-minute brain break. Walk away from your workspace, take deep breaths and let your mind wander. Do not think of anything specifically.
- **Be Mindful of Your Body.** Eat well. As part of a balanced diet eat whole foods and foods rich in Omega 3 fatty acids. Get enough sleep (average of 7.5 hours for most people). Sleep is when the body and mind are replenished.
- **Meditate, pray and relax.** These activities grow the frontal area of the brain. Find a practice that works for you and incorporate it into your daily routine.
- **Savor.** Attend to and appreciate feelings that emerge from positive events in your life. Choose to be fully present.
- **Seek Novelty.** Humans are novelty-seeking so seek out new experiences to grow your brain. Be curious! Explore hobbies. Express yourself by using your natural gifts and/or learning something new.



The above adapted from: Lee J. Colan, Ph.D. & Julie Davis-Colan, M.S. The L Group, Inc.  
[www.thelgroup.com](http://www.thelgroup.com)

## Maynard's Corner

Each new year we look forward to a fresh start with optimism. 2020 started as any other, but we were taken aback by the pandemic, economy and more. We do not know what 2021 will bring but we do know that Connections Inc. Employee Assistance Program is here to help.



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If you see a family member or coworker struggling with today's issues, simply remind them that Connections EAP is ready to serve them.

Stay safe, stay positive. We are here for you! May your 2021 be healthy and prosperous!

**NEXT ISSUE:** Making the Most of Mental Health Services over Telehealth

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