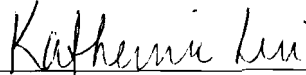Best Practices of Employee Assistance Programs

by

Laura Standal

A Research Paper
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Katherine Lui

Katherine Lui, Ph.D.
Research Advisor

The Graduate School

University of Wisconsin-Stout

May, 2005

The Graduate School

University of Wisconsin Stout

Menomonie, WI 54751

ABSTRACT

Standal	Laura	L
(Writer) (Last Name)	(First Name)	(Middle Initial)

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The purpose of this paper is to analyze the employee assistance programs at each four-year campus in the University of Wisconsin System. Employee assistance programs are becoming more common in all types of industries because they have shown to increase productivity. Without a productive workforce, any company stands to potentially lose a lot of money if not go out of business.

Employee assistance programs are mandated in every Wisconsin government agency by Wisconsin Governor Tommy Thompson's executive order 26. The researcher will compare the employee assistance programs at each four-year campus to determine how well employee assistance programs have been implemented into the UW System.

The significance of this research is to contribute to the awareness of employee assistance programs on each University of Wisconsin campus. The research will not only benefit the programs on each campus, but also provide resources for faculty, staff, and their families of each UW campus.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Kat Lui for the encouragement throughout this process. This project could never have been completed without her help. She has helped me not only through the thesis process, but pushing through all of the highs and lows through the graduate school experience.

I would like to thank my mom for always believing in me and showing me what I am capable of.

I would like to thank my family and friends for sharing their knowledge and experience with me. Without them I would not be the person I am today.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

In order for a company to make a profit, its employees must be productive while at work. With more employees having families and elderly parents to take care of, stress at home and work, alcohol and drug problems, and numerous other life stressors, productivity in the workplace could be affected. Employee assistance programs are becoming more and more common in workplaces today to help improve job performance. In Wisconsin, employee assistance programs are required in state government agencies. Former Governor Tommy Thompson issued executive order 94 mandating that policy (Fox, 2002). Current Wisconsin Governor Jim Doyle constructed executive order 26, similar to Tommy Thompson's executive order 94, stating that EAPs "be established and maintained in every department and independent agency in state government, and in every institution in the University of Wisconsin System, under the direction of the Office of State Employment Relations..."(LaFoyette, 2003).

Statement of the Problem

This study will compare the University of Wisconsin System's employee assistance programs with the best-practices of employee assistance programs in industry to date and also will compare the existing employee assistance programs developed in each four-year University of Wisconsin campus with each other. The question this study will attempt to answer is: Does the University of Wisconsin System utilize and maintain the best employee assistance programs available?

Purpose of the Study

Employee assistance programs are mandated in the University of Wisconsin System universities and all state government agencies. Executive order 94, issued by

former Wisconsin governor Tommy Thompson, and executive order 26, issued by current governor Jim Doyle mandated these programs (Fox, 2002 & Lafoyette, 2003). Although employee assistance programs are mandated in state agencies, the types of programs available vary greatly. This study will examine the mandatory programs and compare them with the best practices of employee assistance programs in industry. The University of Wisconsin System is composed of 13 four-year campuses, 13 two-year campuses and statewide UW-Extensions. The 13 four-year campuses will be compared to each other and with the best practices of employee assistance programs. This study will also research the help the state of Wisconsin, specifically the Office of State Employment Relations and the Department of Employee Relations, gave to the University of Wisconsin System in the development and ongoing maintenance of their employee assistance programs.

Assumptions of the Study

1. It is assumed that all information collected form the Office of State Employment Relations are valid and reliable.

2. It is assumed that all information collected from the Department of Employee Relations are valid and reliable.

3. It is assumed that all information collected from the University of Wisconsin System are valid and reliable.

4. It is assumed that all information collected from subject matter experts and employee assistance program directors, supervisors, and coordinators are valid and reliable.

5. The researcher will successfully evaluate the information received and produce meaningful and useful findings.

Definition of Terms

Employee Assistance Program: "A confidential, voluntary work-site program to assist state government employee affected by behavioral, medical or productivity concerns or problems" (OSER, 2004).

CEAP: Certified Employee Assistance Professional

OSER: Office of State Employment Relations

DER: Department of Employment Relations

EAPA: Employee Assistance Professionals Association

FTE: Full time equivalent

Limitations of the Study

1. The study will only evaluate the four-year campuses of the University of Wisconsin System.

2. The study will not provide information on how frequent employee assistance programs are used.

3. The study will only be as up to date as the information found in the literature review.

4. Employee assistance programs are always changing.

5. The study will not report future outcomes of employee assistance programs.

Methodology

A 30 question survey was constructed for this research. The survey, along with a description of the research will be sent to the director/coordinator of each of the four-year campuses in the University of Wisconsin System. The researcher will compare the employee assistance programs at each university with each other. The researcher will also compare the programs at each university with best practices in industry.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition of Employee Assistance Programs

Introduction. Profit margins can continually increase when a company has

productive employees. With the United States and the world becoming a fast-paced

environment more and more employees are feeling the effects of stress and other

problems that cause their productivity to decrease. More employees are dealing with life's

stressors and are becoming overwhelmed with their personal problems and work life.

Employee assistance programs are becoming more and more common in workplaces

today to help improve job performance. According to workplace productivity studies

conducted over the past decade ninety percent of all job performance problems are

directly related to personal problems (Jorgensen, 2003). Employee assistance programs

were designed to assist employees in identifying, evaluating and resolving personal

problems that might affect productivity or work performance (Baldino, 1997).

Definition. According to the Employee Assistance Professionals Association

(2005), employee assistance programs are worksite-based programs designed to assist

work organizations in addressing productivity issues and "employee clients" in

identifying and resolving personal concerns, including, but not limited to, health, marital,

family, financial, alcohol, drug, legal, emotional, stress, or other personal issues that may

affect job performance. This and other definitions of EAP's are very vague and identify

that EAP's come in many forms. The size of the company, location and need for an

employee assistance program all play a role in the development and maintenance of an

employee assistance program. According to Jorgensen (2003), more than 82% of

companies with 500 or more people have an EAP and 62% of businesses with 25 or more employees utilize an EAP for their company.

Employee assistance programs were designed to help solve problems that affect work performance (Johnston, 1997). According to NIOSH (Sledge, 1999), mounting stress levels are taking their toll on US businesses. These businesses are losing billions of dollars per year in accidents, absenteeism, reduced productivity, and employee turnover. Hiring a new employee is an expensive process, but retaining employees can cost very little. Some employee assistance programs can cost as little as three dollars per employee per month (Johnston, 1997). Employee assistance programs can reduce the amount of money spent on hiring new employees, insurance costs and workers' compensations costs (Johnston, 1997). They can also reduce stress, improve job performance, and numerous other things depending on the type of employee assistance program implemented.

Employee problems can range from substance abuse and mental health problems to divorce, financial crisis, and many other personal problems (Johnston, 1997). With this wide range of employee concerns it may be difficult for a company to pick the type(s) of employee assistance programs to offer.

Benefits of employee assistance programs. There are numerous benefits to implementing employee assistance programs. With a range of problems affecting employee productivity such as substance abuse or other addictions, psychological problems, conflict with personal relationships, workplace stress, legal or financial problems, critical incidents, and elder or child care issues, employees can utilize employee assistance professionals to combat these problems (Baldino, 1997).

When employee assistance programs are properly implemented benefits could include return on investments, complying with government regulations, and avoiding legal liabilities (Baldino, 1997). Employee assistance programs can provide a return on investment by reducing absenteeism and tardiness, reducing workers' compensations costs and other medical expenses, and improving productivity. It can help a company comply with government regulations by providing alcohol and drug counseling to those who have tested positive (this is especially true in the trucking industry). An employee assistance program can also help a company avoid legal liabilities by providing sensitivity training and diversity training.

Human resource research reported an average of almost fourteen hours of work loss was avoided by individuals accessing employee assistance program services (Jorgensen, 2003). Employee assistance programs assist in decreasing workplace accidents, workers' compensation claims, absenteeism, and turnover rates. They also eliminate the need for supervisors to try to diagnose the personal problems of their employees.

Types of employee assistance programs. Types of employee assistance programs offered range greatly. There is a wide variety of companies to choose from for outsourced programs or a company can choose to have a sponsored in-house employee assistance program. Choosing what type of employee assistance program depends on the needs, goals, and resources of the company. Although each employee assistance program provides different areas of coverage, most include help dealing with: alcohol and drug related problems, family, marital and relationship issues, legal and financial difficulties,

work-related problems, emotional problems, and others which may include non-smoking, eating disorders, and care of the elderly or children (King, 1994).

There are two main types of employee assistance programs, in-house organizational counseling and contracts with external agencies. Company sponsored in-house programs, like the one offered at UW-Stout, offer counseling and a referral service of employees and their immediate family (Counseling Center, 2004). The employee assistance program is designed to provide professional consultation to assist in the prevention and resolution of personal problems that may affect job performance. The program links people who have personal concerns to services or agencies that are able to assist in resolving their problem.

Outside programs use a consultant or firm to provide crisis intervention, short-term counseling, assessment, and referral to specialized sources (Steele, 1998). This is a very common model of an employee assistance program. This type of program offers specialized staff and services on an outside basis and not in the direct sight of the employer, which is found more acceptable to employees.

Industry best practices. There have been no set guidelines for employee assistance program implementation and development, although some researchers suggest one type of program is better suited than another type of program. Though more and more companies are choosing to implement an employee assistance program utilization remains relatively low (Lehman, 2003). Lehman's research showed barriers to participation in employer-based employee assistance programs. The first was employee reluctance to self-refer and second, the company referral program. Some other barriers

were the awareness of the employee assistance program, attitudes of employee assistance

program use, social climate and EAP use, and demographic predispositions to EAP use.

While there are no set best practices for the perfect type of employee assistance

program because every company should develop one with their size, location, and needs

in mind, there are standards and guidelines for EAP's set by the Employee Assistance

Professionals Association (EAPA, 2005). The standards and guidelines are broken down

into seven sections. These sections are program design, management and administration,

confidentially and regulatory impact on protective rights, employee assistance program

direct services, drug-free workplace/substance abuse professional direct services,

strategic partnerships, and evaluation. Each of the sections are broken down into sub-

sections describing how to accomplish the stages and what should be done when. (See

Appendix A).

History of Employee Assistance Programs

Employee assistance programs, as we know them today, started to develop in the

1970's (Baldino, 1997 & Steele, 1998). Prior to 1970 some large industrial firms had

some type of occupational alcohol program (Steele, 1998). These programs provided

support and counseling for employees suspected of abusing alcohol. The programs relied

on supervisor or co-worker referrals. From 1970 onward, the programs broadened from

alcohol only to include personal and family concerns. The referrals shifted from

supervisor to self-referrals.

The Employee Assistance Professionals Association (EAPA) was established in

1971 (EAPA, 2005). With approximately 5,000 members in the US and more than 30

other countries the EAPA is the largest membership organization for employee assistance

professionals. The EAPA offers training and resources to enhance the professionalism of its members, publishes a journal, and holds an annual conference.

The Certified Employee Assistance Professional (CEAP) credential was developed in 1986 (EAPA, 2005). This credential is recognized as the standard in employee assistance and was created to identify individuals who have met established standards. There are two ways to obtain CEAP certification. If the candidate does not have an EAP-related graduate degree 3,000 hours of work experience in an EAP setting are needed along with at least 60 professional development hours and 24 hours of advisement. If the candidate does have a graduate degree that is EAP-related 2,000 hours of work experience in an EAP setting is needed along with at least 15 professional development hours and 24 hours of advisement.

Wisconsin Mandated Employee Assistance Programs

Development. The inception of employee assistance programs in Wisconsin started in 1974. Patrick Lucey, former Wisconsin Governor, issued executive order 74, in 1974, authorizing all Wisconsin state agencies to implement employee assistance programs. The Wisconsin Governor in 1985, Tony Earl, issued executive order 77 again authorizing the establishments of EAP's. Finally, former Wisconsin Governor Tommy Thompson issued executive order 94 on June 12, 1990 encouraging employee assistance programs in the University of Wisconsin System. This order stated that an employee assistance program "be established and maintained in every department, independent agency in state government, and the University of Wisconsin System..." (Fox, 2002). Because executive orders do not carry the weight of law, no funding was provided to the

universities for these programs only direction by the Wisconsin Department of Employment Relations.

On October 1, 2003, Wisconsin Governor Jim Doyle issued executive order 26 encouraging employee assistance programs "be established and maintained in every department and independent agency in state government, and in every institution in the UW System" (LaFoyette, 2003). The Office of State Employment Relations was put in charge of the statewide development of employee assistance programs.

The Office of State Employment Relations was directed to establish minimum program standards, identify and recommend agency program adjustments as necessary and provide consultation to, and coordinate the provision of training for statewide EAP personnel.

According to Doyle's executive order, UW System universities are to:

Establish and maintain an EAP that provides for and ensures: the opportunity for self-help to employees who voluntarily seek it; assistance to supervisors whose employees' work performance may be impaired by personal problems and illnesses; the confidentiality of all information shared during an EAP contact…, and equal access to services for all employees, supervisors and managers (Lafoyette, 2003).

Each university is also to cooperate with OSER by: "appointing or designating a program director, establishing an employee assistance committee, providing education and ongoing training for the EAP director and others with defined roles in the program, establishing procedures that conform with general EAP principles and standards, promoting awareness and understanding of the EAP among employees and their family

members, maintaining confidential record keeping, and making program adjustments as necessary."

Summary

      As more and more companies are recognizing the numerous benefits of implementing employee assistance programs, the types of programs are rapidly changing. The programs developed by each company can vary greatly. Although all of the campuses surveyed in this research are part of the UW System their employee assistance programs cover both ends of the spectrum of types of programs. This lead to the research of how the UW System employee assistance programs were developed and how they are maintained. Chapter four will examine the results of the survey sent to each of the thirteen UW four-year campuses.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to explain the research methodology used to evaluate the best practices of employee assistance programs and the practices of employee assistance programs at University of Wisconsin four-year colleges. The question this study will attempt to answer is: Does the University of Wisconsin System utilize and maintain the best employee assistance programs available? The study examined the University of Wisconsin System employee assistance programs by determining the best practices in industry and comparing them with the programs at the four-year UW colleges. A survey was sent to the UW colleges to examine the programs at each campus. The executive orders mandating the establishment of an employee assistance program in all state agencies of Wisconsin and what steps the Wisconsin government took to aid in the development and maintenance of the programs were also examined.

Subject Selection and Description

The University of Wisconsin System consists of 13 four-year campuses, 13 two-year campuses and UW-extensions throughout the state. The sample used in this research project consisted of the directors/coordinators (some campuses used different names) of the employee assistance programs on each of the 13 four-year University of Wisconsin System campuses. The directors/coordinators are in charge of overseeing the employee assistance program at each location.

Instrumentation

The survey (Appendix B) was prepared from information collected in the literature review, informal interviews with subject matter experts, and published reports

from the University of Wisconsin System and Wisconsin State Agencies employee assistance programs. The survey will assess the type of employee assistance program at each campus. There are questions about how the program was developed, how the program is maintained, the certifications and training the employee assistance staff have, and the type of help the university received in developing and maintaining the program. The survey was created for this research and will be terminated when the study is complete.

Data Collection Procedures

A 30 question survey was administered via email to the directors/coordinators of each four-year University of Wisconsin campus (n=13). The survey was accompanied by an email (Appendix C) stating why the survey was taking place, and an implied consent form (Appendix D). Two campuses use an outside consulting group and therefore the survey was sent to the account manager at the consulting EAP organization. The campuses include University of Wisconsin Eau Claire, Green Bay, LaCrosse, Madison, Milwaukee, Oshkosh, Parkside, Platteville, River Falls, Stevens Point, Stout, Superior, and Whitewater. Each director/coordinator was asked to complete the online survey about the employee assistance program at their university.

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using Microsoft Excel Descriptive Statistics.

Limitations

A limitation of the study is the sample size. The survey will only be sent to the directors/coordinators of the employee assistance programs at the four-year University of

Wisconsin campuses (n=13). This is not a very large sample size and could result in

weaker results.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

The purpose of the study was to examine the employee assistance programs at the four-year UW System colleges. A 30-question survey was sent to the director/coordinator of the universities employee assistance programs. The response rate for the survey was 6 out of 12, or 46%. This section will analyze the responses indicated on the survey by the participants. Each question will be analyzed independently.

Item Analysis

Question 1: Does your university currently utilize an employee assistance program?

Every respondent, 100%, indicated that their university currently utilizes an employee assistance program.

While conducting preliminary research, some type of EAP information could be found online for each four-year university. Every university website lead to information on where the EAP was located and how to contact the EAP, although some of the websites were not up-to-date and gave inaccurate information or were difficult to track down.

Question 2: What type of employee assistance program is offered at your university?

The participants were given three choices as answers to this question. The choices were in-house, external (contracted) or a combination of both. Four of the six respondents, 66.7%, indicated that their employee assistance program was in-house. Two respondents, 33.3%, indicated that their employee assistance program is contracted to an outside provider.

One of the contracted EAP's also has an on-campus contact person available for referral to the external agency.

Question 3: Is your employee assistance program union controlled, management controlled, or a combination?

There were no union controlled employee assistance programs at any of the responding universities. Four of the respondents, 66.7%, indicated that the employee assistance program was management controlled. One respondent, 16.7%, indicated that their employee assistance program is contracted to an external agency by the human resources department. Finally, one respondent, 16.7%, stated that their employee assistance program is management sponsored, but not management controlled.

Question 4: In what department is your employee assistance program located?

Fifty percent of the respondents indicated that their employee assistance program is located in the counseling center. One was located in the human resource office, one in the provost's office and one in an off-campus suite of offices.

Question 5: What is the average number of employee (and family members of employees) who use the employee assistance program each year?

The mean number of employees (and family members of employees) utilizing the employee assistance programs offered at UW System colleges is 52.4. There was one outlier which reportedly sees an average of 300 new employees per year which was taken out of the calculations because it skewed the data too much.

Because some of the campuses programs see a lot more people, the actual number of people seen is skewed. The actual numbers were 12, 153, 45, 20, 32, and 300. As you can see only two of six campuses see more than 50 clients per year on average.

Question 6: What is the total number of employees your university currently

employs?

The mean number of employee's employed at UW System universities is 1595.2.

The largest university, with approximately 20,000 employees was taken out of the

statistics because it skewed the data too much.

Question 7: What year did your university first implement an employee assistance

program?

Only two participants, 33.3%, chose to respond to this question. One program was

contracted to an external agency in April of 2004. Prior to April it was housed at the

university. Data prior to April of 2004 was unavailable. The other program was

implemented on May 15, 2003. There is no data to indicate if there was a program in

place prior to May 15, 2003.

Question 8 and 9: Do (did) you receive help from the Wisconsin Office of State

Employee Relations (OSER) implementing and maintaining your employee assistance

program? Please explain.

Only one of the six respondents, 16.7%, reported receiving help from the

Wisconsin Office of State Employee Relations. They reported receiving emails with

offers for training, workshops and access to useful material. Another respondent was

unsure if the previous employee assistance program coordinator had received help from

OSER.

OSER was put in charge of directing the EAP programs at every institution in the

UW System in 2003. They are to provide consultation to, and coordinate the provision of

training for statewide EAP personnel.

Question 10 and 11: Do (did) you receive help from the Wisconsin Department of Employment Relations (DER) implementing and maintaining your employee assistance program? Please explain.

Fifty percent of the participants receive help from the WI DER. One respondent attends training sessions put on by the DER. Another respondent receives emails with offers for training, workshops and access to other useful materials. The final respondent stated that WI DER provided some templates for forms to collect EAP service information, but was unsure of the extent of help received otherwise.

The Department of Employment Relations was put in charge of the direction of statewide EAP's by former Wisconsin Governor Tommy Thompson. In 2003, the office in charge of directing EAP's was changed to OSER. It is questioned if DER is still offering direction, or if the help received from DER was prior to 2003.

Question 12 and 13: On a rating scale of 1 to 6, (1 being not successful and 6 being very successful) how successful do you consider your employee assistance program? Please explain how you determine its success.

The average rank for the success of the program is 4.2. Each participant had a different explanation as to how they determine its success. Overall, each respondent stated that some of the success of each program was determined by the number of employees who used the service and client feedback. Table 1 shows the answers received on how successfulness was determined by the employee assistance office.

Table 1

Successfulness of EAP

Item Response	Frequency (N=6)	Percentage
Utilization by employees	4	66.7
Positive feedback	4	66.7
Requests for services	1	16.7
Budget provided	1	16.7
Support from other departments	1	16.7

Question 14 and 15: On a scale of 1 to 6, (1 being not effective and 6 being very effective) how effective do you consider your employee assistance program? Please explain how you determine its effectiveness.

The average rank for effectiveness of the employee assistance program is 4.3. Although no university had a direct measure for effectiveness from clients that used the EAP, most based their effectiveness on returning clientele and positive feedback.

Question 16: Has a formal evaluation of your employee assistance program ever been conducted? (This could be a student thesis, a survey your office sent out, etc.)

Only 33% of the programs have conducted a formal evaluation of their employee assistance program.

According to Doyle's executive order 26, an employee assistance committee is to be established to evaluate the EAP. How is OSER keeping record of how each EAP is doing, if there are very few evaluations of the programs being offered?

Question 17: If a formal evaluation has been conducted, please specify the last known evaluation.

Of the two programs that have been formally evaluated, no response was given for this question.

Question 18: Does your university advertise the employee assistance program?

Every participant, 100%, stated that their university advertises their employee assistance program.

Question 19: If yes, what type of advertising do you do?

Every respondent, 100%, indicated flyers were used for advertising. Each campus also uses new employee orientation to explain the employee assistance program. Table 2 (below) shows the types of advertising and the number of campuses that indicated using them.

Table 2

Type of advertising used

Item response	Frequency (N=6)	Percentage
Flyers	6	100
Posters	5	83.3
Emails	5	83.3
Campus meetings	2	33.3
New employee orientation	6	100
Ads in campus paper	1	16.7
Statement on paycheck stub	1	16.7
Website	2	33.3
Promotional materials	1	16.7
Brochures	1	16.7
Presentations	2	33.3
Newsletters	2	33.3

Question 20: How many people does your employee assistance program employ?

The mean number of people employed for each campuses employee assistance

program is 3.33. The smallest was one and the largest was a contracted employee

assistance program with seven employees and two support staff. One respondent reported

having nobody designated as an employee assistance program employee, but the existing counselors in the counseling office are used.

Question 21: What percentage of their job is each person assigned to the employee assistance program?

The mean time allocated to the employee assistance program is .397 FTE (full time equivalent). Three campuses indicated that they have only one person who is allotted time for the employee assistance program. One campus reported that although they allocate .4 FTE for the coordinator, there are five psychologists and counselors in the counseling center who see employee assistance program clients. Another campus does not have any one person designated for the employee assistance program. They indicated that they only do EAP as needed.

Question 22: Is the employee assistance program director/coordinator CEAP certified?

Only one out of the six, 16.7%, coordinators is CEAP certified.

Question 23: Does the employee assistance director/coordinator have any certifications or specialized training related to employee assistance programs?

One respondent indicated that they were CEAP certified from 1987 until 2001, but discontinued renewing the certification. Each of the respondents reported receiving some type of training. One of the respondents is a member of EAPA and has attended national EAPA conventions. Another respondent reported receiving training from a NIAAA (National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism) sponsored program. None of the respondents had similar answers except that they were all involved in some sort of training, but by different sources.

Question 24: Approximately how much funding is available for the employee assistance program?

For four of the six respondents, 66.7%, the mean funding available is $2,075 for supplies and equipment. The other two respondents indicated that the amount of funding varies depending on utilization.

Question 25: Do all employee of your university (other than student employees) have a copy of the employee assistance program policy?

Half of the respondents, 50%, indicated that all employees of their university have a copy of the employee assistance program policy.

Question 26: If they do have a copy, how did they receive it? If they do not have a copy, do they know where to find information about the employee assistance program?

As shown in Table 3, information about employee assistance programs is available in numerous places. Some universities do not distribute a copy to every employee, but make the information available online. It is assumed that every employee can access this information on the respectful campuses website.

Table 3

Access to a copy of the employee assistance policy

Item Response	Frequency (N=6)	Percentage
Letter sent home	1	16.7
Business card sent home	1	16.7
Newsletter	2	33.3
Website	3	50
Orientation	2	33.3
Training for supervisors	1	16.7
Union stewards trained in EAP	1	16.7
Email to employees	2	33.3

Question 27: What type and how often does the employee assistance staff receive training?

Each campus has different requirements for staff training. The campus that has CEAP certifications needs at least 60 professional development hours over a three year period. All of their counselors are state certified social workers and the requirements for training are met or exceeded. For the other campuses, EAP training is not specific. Some have time allotted for professional development, continuing education training, and retreats, but is not specific.

Question 28: What type and how often does the employee assistance director/coordinator receive training?

Three out of six respondents, 50%, indicated that the employee assistance coordinator receives training, but it is not specific to the EAP. The other three respondents, 50%, receive a variety of training. One is CEAP certified requiring over 20 hours of training per year, is an active member of EAPA, another is provided with continuing education through EAPA national conferences, and the third is trained on crisis intervention, AOD (Alcohol and Other Drug) assessment, programming, violence intervention, and other programs.

Question 29: Does your university use the Wisconsin EAP client contact form to record client services?

Half of the respondents, 50%, reported using the Wisconsin EAP client contact form to record client services.

Question 30: Do the managers/supervisors/departments heads receive training on how to effectively determine if their subordinates need help and where to receive it?

Half of the respondents, 50%, do not specifically train their supervisors in employee assistance matters. The other half provides some type of training for their supervisors. One campus provides free manager training every spring and fall. Another campus provides information about the EAP and how to access the referral process. The third campus trains their supervisors through a variety of means on how to refer and why types of issues warrant referral. They are trained in conjunction with HR trainings, EAP staff attends department meetings, and the EAP coordinator meets with the deans, chairs, and supervisors.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

Through the literature review the process of mandating employee assistance

programs at all Wisconsin government agencies was identified. A survey was then

conducted with the four-year UW colleges. The response rate was 47%, or six out of

thirteen. When conducting preliminary research online, each four-year university had

some type of information relating to an EAP on their website. Finding specific

information on some of the sites was difficult. If the university did have an on-campus

EAP program the website search usually brought the researcher to the webpage for the

EAP or to a link explaining how to contact the EAP personnel. If the university did not

have an on-campus EAP the website search would either turn up nothing or give a link to

the consulting agency.

Limitations

1. The study will only evaluate the four-year campuses of the University of
    Wisconsin System.

2. The study will not provide information on how frequent employee assistance
    programs are used.

3. The study will only be as up to date as the information found in the literature
    review.

4. Employee assistance programs are always changing.

5. The study will not report future outcomes of employee assistance programs.

Conclusions

Although the survey had only six respondents, the response rate was 47%. The

findings of the study indicate that employee assistance programs have been developed by

every four-year UW System campus. The development and maintenance of each

program, however, vary greatly. The type of program in use at each campus also varied

greatly.

As indicated in the research findings each university indicated that they currently

utilize an EAP. However, while conducting preliminary research on each university's

EAP most of the websites were not up-to-date and almost half gave inaccurate

information. While further researching to find the correct information, some campuses

did not know who the director was or how to contact them. This shows that although an

employee assistance program was reported, some of them must not be as utilized as

others.

Fifty percent of the respondents indicated that their employee assistance program

was located in their human resource office. Studies suggest that in-house programs have

less utilization than those contracted to external agencies. There was no evidence

collected to support or discredit this research.

The number of employees seen each year varied greatly by campus. The smallest

number of clients seen reported was 12. The mean number of employees at each campus

was reported at approximately 1600. Although each campus reported that their EAP was

advertised and that every employee knew where to turn for help, it is questioned whether

or not the employees on each campus really know that the program exists or what types

of help they can receive there.

In the inception of employee assistance programs in Wisconsin State Agencies the

Wisconsin Department of Employment Relations was put in charge of directing the

employee assistance programs. In 2003, the office directing the programs changed from

WI DER to the WI Office of State Employment Relations. Only one respondent (16.7%) stated receiving help from OSER, while 50% stated receiving help from WI DER. It is questioned whether or not any of the campuses has received help since 2003 when the directing office changed. The responses received would reveal that the campuses are not receiving as much direction now as in previous years, if at all.

When asked about the successfulness and effectiveness of the EAP at each university the responses indicated each campus saw their program as being moderately successful and effective. The average rank was 4.25 on a scale from 1 (not effective) to 6 (very effective). When asked if a formal evaluation was ever conducted on their employee assistance programs only two campuses (33%) indicated evaluation. It is questioned how these campuses determined the successfulness and effectiveness of their programs if a formal evaluation had never been conducted. A formal evaluation could determine what, if any, changes could be made to increase usage of the program and what could be done differently to increase the satisfaction of the employees using the program. Current Wisconsin Governor Jim Doyle's executive order 26 states that an employee assistance committee is to be established to evaluate the EAP. This must not have been done on every campus.

Although every campus indicated that some type of advertising was being used to promote the EAP, it is questioned how much these materials are known about. Every respondent indicated using flyers to advertise their EAP, but while conducting informal interviews it was mentioned that in some places the flyers are made but not distributed widely. The low utilization of the programs on some campuses could be from the lack of advertising for the program.

The survey results indicated that the average number of employees employed in the EAP was 3.33. Some campuses only had one person with a very small percentage of their job dedicated to the EAP and one campus did not have anyone designated for the EAP. With such a small number of people responsible for undertaking the employee assistance program, advertising the program could be detrimental to the other parts of their jobs. The standards and guidelines for EAP's states "an adequate number of employee assistance professionals shall be available..." (EAPA, 2005). It is questioned whether or not some campuses do not advertise their program as much because they do not have the resources or manpower to take on a larger number of clients.

CEAP certification is an employee assistance industry standard. Only one respondent indicated ever being certified, but discontinued the certification. In an informal interview it was stated that every EAP coordinator is supposed to be CEAP certified, but because the certifications are not checked the recertification was ended. The standards and guidelines of EAP's states "the EAP shall retain professionals qualified to perform their duties" (EAPA, 2005). It is questioned whether or not the coordinators/directors are qualified to perform their duties if they are not required to keep CEAP certifications.

Half of the respondents indicated that all employees have a copy of the employee assistance program policy, but all indicated that employees were shown where to find information on the program. If the employees do not have a copy of program information and campuses are not advertising the program, it is questioned whether or not the employees know where to find the information. Also, if the information about the EAP is incorrect on the websites the utilization of the program could be minimal.

In the EAPA standards and guidelines for EAP's it is stated that "the employee assistance program shall support employee assistance professionals' efforts to maintain and upgrade their knowledge" (EAPA, 2005). Only three respondents (50%) indicated receiving training, but not specifically for the EAP. The other half of the respondents indicated receiving a variety of training. It is questioned whether or not the campuses are receiving training applicable to their EAP.

Recommendations

The researcher acknowledges the limitations of the study. While there is evidence that an employee assistance program is utilized on each campus the rate of utilization should be researched. While the average number of employees utilizing the EAP is approximately 50 it would be interesting to find the percentage per campus. If there are over 20,000 employees and only 300 people are utilizing the EAP or if there is a campus of 500 and 150 people are utilizing an EAP the difference in advertising and program offerings would be interesting to research.

Another recommendation would be to incorporate some type of standards and guidelines for all campuses to follow. If some campuses are receiving greater utilization than other campuses, it would be interesting to find out what the differences are.

As a final recommendation, further research should be made into the type and presence of help OSER gives to each campus. The campuses vary greatly in the size and type of EAP offered, but did each campus receive help to develop the best program for them?

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Appendix A

Standards and Guidelines for EAPs (EAPA, 2005)

Following is an abridged version of the *EAPA Standards and Professional Guidelines for Employee Assistance Programs*. The complete text of the *Standards and Professional Guidelines* provides more detailed information on the essential and recommended components of an EAP, including the intended effect and outcome of implementing each standard. To order the complete text, visit the Resource Center section of this Web site or contact the EAPA Resource Center by calling (703) 387-1000 ext. 307 or sending an e-mail to rescen@eap-association.org.

I. Program Design

    A. Needs Assessment

        Program design shall be based on an assessment of organization and employee needs.

    B. Advisory Function

        An advisory process within the organization shall be created and shall provide for the involvement of representatives of all key segments of the workforce.

    C. Service Delivery Systems

        Employee assistance program services shall be provided through a distinct, identifiable delivery system.

    D. Additional Services

        The employee assistance program shall remain alert for emerging needs and may add new services when they are consistent with, and complementary to, the EAP Core Technology.

    E. Organizational EAP Policy Statement

        The organization shall adopt a written policy that defines the employee assistance program's relationship to the organization, describes the program as a confidential resource, and states the scope and limitations of the program's services.

    F. Implementation Plan

        An implementation plan shall outline the actions needed to establish a fully functional employee assistance program and set forth a timeline for the completion of such actions.

II. Management and Administration

    A. EAP Administrative and Operating Procedures

        Written procedures for employee assistance program administration and operation shall be developed based on organization needs, program objectives, and the organization's employee assistance program policy statement.

    B. Staffing Levels

        An adequate number of employee assistance professionals shall be available to achieve the stated goals and objectives of the employee assistance program.

    C. Staff and Affiliate Criteria

        The employee assistance program shall retain professionals qualified to

perform their duties.

D. Affiliate Management

The employee assistance program shall ensure that all affiliates understand and accept the policies, procedures, and responsibilities associated with their role in the employee assistance program.

E. EAP Consultation and Case Supervision

Every employee assistance professional who provides client services shall receive consultation and/or case supervision.

F. Professional Development

The employee assistance program shall support employee assistance professionals' efforts to maintain and upgrade their knowledge.

G. Record Keeping

The employee assistance program shall create and maintain client records that are consistent with the employee assistance program's service delivery system, the organization's policies, program procedures, and applicable legal requirements.

H. Risk Management

The employee assistance program shall take all reasonable precautions to limit its risk for exposure and liability.

I. Ethics

The employee assistance program shall require that all employee assistance personnel
adhere to the EAPA Code of Ethics.

III. Confidentiality and Regulatory Impact on Protective Rights

The employee assistance program shall prepare and implement a written policy of confidentiality that reflects professional standards and ethics and clearly elucidates all limits of confidentiality.

IV. Employee Assistance Program Direct Services

A. Problem Identification/Assessment and Referral

The employee assistance program shall identify and/or assess problems of the client, develop an appropriate plan of action, and, when necessary, recommend or refer the client to an appropriate resource for problem resolution.

B. Crisis Intervention

The employee assistance program shall offer responsive crisis intervention services to employees, eligible family members, and the organization.

C. Short-Term Problem Resolution

The employee assistance program shall establish procedures to determine when to provide short-term problem resolution services and when to make a referral to professional and/or community resources.

D. Monitoring and Follow-Up Services

The employee assistance program shall establish procedures to ensure appropriate follow-up and/or monitoring of client progress.

E. Training of Organization Leadership

The employee assistance program shall provide training for organization leadership to communicate employee assistance program purpose and procedures

and to explain their role in the program.

F. Consultation With Organization Leadership

The employee assistance program shall provide individual consultation to organization leadership regarding the management and referral to the employee assistance program of employees with job performance or behavioral/medical problems.

G. Organizational Consultation

The employee assistance program shall provide consultation to the organization regarding issues, policies, practices, and events that may impact employee well-being.

H. Program Promotion and Education

The employee assistance program shall coordinate the development, availability, and use of promotional materials and activities that encourage the use of the program by employees, eligible family members, and organization leadership.

V. Drug-Free Workplace/Substance Abuse Professional Direct Services

A. Drug-Free Workplace

The employee assistance program shall assist the organization in the development and implementation of policies, procedures, programs, and services that advocate and support a drug-free workplace.

B. SAP Direct Services

Employee assistance professionals who perform the role of substance abuse professional (SAP) shall be knowledgeable about, and comply with, the U.S. Department of Transportation drug-testing regulations of the specific governing agency under which they provide SAP services.

VI. Strategic Partnerships

A. Internal Organizational Activities

The employee assistance program shall be positioned at an organizational level from which it can most effectively communicate with and influence the executive level of the organization.

B. Integrated Employee Assistance Program and Managed Care Systems

The employee assistance program shall collaborate with all managed behavioral health care (MBHC) systems that provide services to the organization to establish and define the relationship between the employee assistance program and the MBHC system and to delineate their respective roles and responsibilities.

C. External Community Organizations and Resources

The employee assistance program shall identify, utilize, and continually evaluate health care delivery systems and other community resources that provide quality assistance to employees, eligible family members, and the organization.

D. External Agencies

The employee assistance program shall maintain awareness of the activities of external bodies that may impact the employee assistance program. External bodies include regulatory agencies, legislatures, courts, advocacy groups, business groups, and academic centers.

VII. Evaluation

The employee assistance program shall evaluate the appropriateness, effectiveness, and efficiency of its services. Measurable objectives shall be stated for both program processes and outcomes.

Appendix B

Employee Assistance Program Survey
By participating in this survey you are giving implied consent to the researcher to use the information in this study. Please complete the survey by March 18, 2005. Thank you for your cooperation.

Questions marked with a * are required.

*1.   Does your campus currently utilize an employee assistance program?

     ○ Yes
     ○ No

*2.   What type of employee assistance program is offered at your university?

     ○ In-house
     ○ External (contracted)
     ○ Combination
     ○ Other: [_____]

*3.   Is your employee assistance program union controlled, management controlled, or a combination?

     ○ Union
     ○ Management
     ○ Combination
     ○ Other: [_____]

*4.   In what department is your employee assistance program located?

     ○ Human Resources
     ○ Counseling Center

◌ Other: |⎡‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾⎤

*5.   What is the average number of employees (and family members of employees) who use the employee assistance program each year?

⎡‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾
|

*6.   What is the total number of employees your university currently employs? (Do not include student employees.)

⎡‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾
|

*7.   What year did your university first implement an employee assistance program?

⎡‾‾‾‾‾‾‾
| *(e.g. 4/21/2002)*

*8.   Do (did) you receive help from the Wisconsin Office of State Employee Relations (OSER) implementing and maintaining your employee assistance program?

◌   Yes
◌   No

9.   If you answered yes to question 8, please explain how.

*10. Do (did) your receive help from the Wisconsin Department of Employment Relations (DER) implementing and maintaining your employee assistance program?

    ◌ Yes

    ◌ No

11. If you answered yes to question 10, please explain how.

*12. On a rating scale of 1 to 6, (1 being not successful and 6 being very successful) how successful do you consider your employee assistance program?
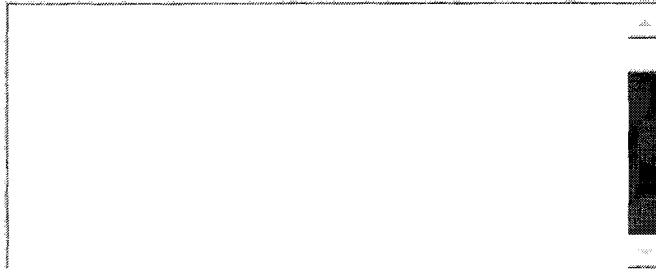
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Success of program	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌

13. Please explain how you determine its success.

*14. On a scale of 1 to 6, (1 being not effective and 6 being very effective) how effective do you consider your employee assistance program?

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Effectiveness of program	○	○	○	○	○	○

15. Please explain how you determine its effectiveness.

*16. Has a formal evaluation of your employee assistance program ever been conducted? (This could be a student thesis, a survey your office sent out, etc.)

○ Yes
○ No

17. If a formal evaluation has been conducted, please specify the last known evaluation.

(e.g. 4/21/2002)

*18. Does your university advertise the employee assistance program?

○ Yes
○ No

*19. If yes, what type of advertising do you do? Please check all that apply.

    ☐ Flyers
    ☐ Posters
    ☐ Emails
    ☐ Campus meetings
    ☐ New employee orientation
    ☐ Other: _____

*20. How many people does your employee assistance program employ?

*21. What percentage of their job is each person assigned to the employee assistance program? Please indicate each employee and their percentage.

*22. Is the employee assistance program director/coordinator CEAP certified?

    ○ Yes
    ○ No

23. Does the employee assistance director/coordinator have any certifications or specialized training related to employee assistance programs? If no, please leave blank.

*24.   Approximately how much funding is available for the employee assistance program?
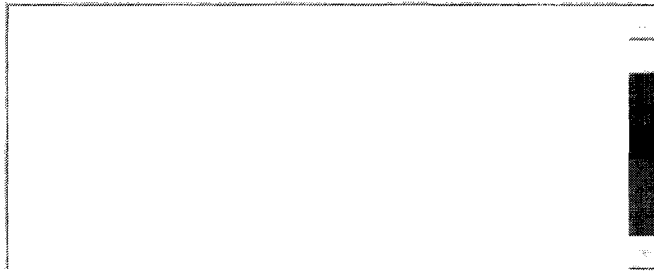
*25.   Do all employees of your university (other than student employees) have a copy of the employee assistance program policy?
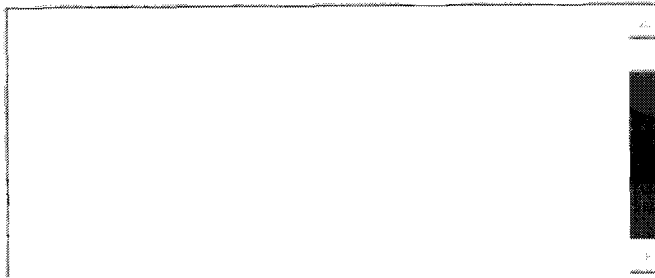
    ⊙ Yes

    ⊙ No

*26.   If they do have a copy, how did they receive it? If they do not have a copy, do they know where to find information about the employee assistance program? (Please explain)

*27.   What type and how often does the employee assistance staff receive training?

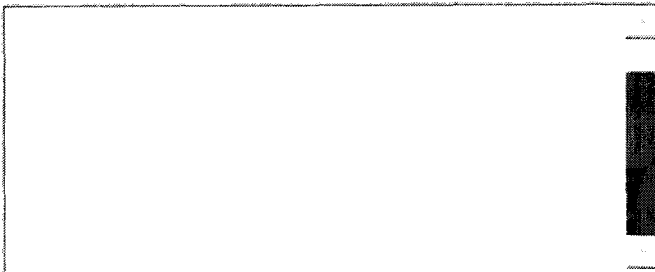*28.   What type and how often does the director/coordinator receive training?

*29.   Does your university use the Wisconsin EAP client contact form to record client services?

      ⊙ Yes

      ⊙ No

*30.   Do the managers/supervisors/department heads receive training on how to effectively determine if their subordinates need help and where to receive it? Please explain.

Appendix C

EMAIL SENT TO EAP COORDINATORS AT EACH CAMPUS

Hello.

My name is Laura Standal. I am a graduate student in the Training and Development program at UW-Stout. I am working on my thesis titled Best Practices of Employee Assistance Programs. The purpose of the study is to examine the employee assistance programs at each four-year UW campus.

Your input in this study is very valuable. The findings are intended to help build and provide a stronger employee assistance program system wide. The results will be analyzed and a full report can be obtained by sending me an email at standall@uwstout.edu. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me.

The survey is 30 questions in length and should only take about 5-10 minutes. By taking the survey you are giving your implied consent to have your information used in the thesis. Attached is the UW-Stout research implied consent form.

Please click on the link below to take the survey.

Thank you for your time,

Laura Standal
standall@uwstout.edu
715-556-3105

http://www.uwstout.edu/survey/admin/public/survey.php?name=eapsurvey_copy

Appendix D

Consent to Participate In UW-Stout Approved Research

Title: Best Practices of Employee Assistance Programs

Investigator:
Laura Standal
715-556-3105
standall@uwstout.edu

Research Sponsor:
Katherine Lui
715-232-5634
luik@uwstout.edu

Description:
I am writing a thesis on the best practices of employee assistance programs and the University of Wisconsin System. The study will compare the employee assistance programs at each of the 13 UW four-year universities.

Risks and Benefits:
There are very few risks in your involvement of this research. Your name and campus information will not be asked or identified throughout the process. The benefits of your involvement in this study could lead to a stronger employee assistance program in the UW System.

Time Commitment:
The survey is 30 questions in length and should only take about 5-10 minutes to complete. Your input in this study is very important to the success of the study.

Confidentiality:
You will remain anonymous in this research. Your name will not be included on any documents. Your campus will not be identified on any documents.

Right to Withdraw:
Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You may choose not to participate without any adverse consequences to you. However, should you choose to participate and later wish to withdraw from the study, there is no way to identify your anonymous document after it has been turned into the investigator.

IRB Approval:
This study has been reviewed and approved by The University of Wisconsin-Stout's Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB has determined that this study meets the ethical obligations required by federal law and University policies. If you have questions or concerns regarding this study please contact the Investigator or Advisor. If you have any questions, concerns, or reports regarding your rights as a research subject, please contact the IRB Administrator.

Investigator:
Laura Standal, Graduate Student
Services
715-556-3105
standall@uwstout.edu

Advisor:
Katherine Lui
715-232-5634
luik@uwstout.edu

IRB Administrator
Sue Foxwell, Director, Research

152 Vocational Rehabilitation Bldg.
UW-Stout Menomonie, WI 54751
715-232-2477
foxwells@uwstout.edu