

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE REPORT

Volume 12, No. 10
October 2009

supporting EAP professionals

Lending EAP Muscle to Worksite Health Promotion

By *Gregg O. Lehman, Ph.D.,
President and CEO,
HealthFitness*

With a mission and structure that's focused on identifying and resolving personal concerns, EAPs are uniquely positioned to help promote employee health. When workers have better emotional and physical well-being, they are less stressed and more "present" on the job. They consume fewer health care resources and are more productive members of their communities.

What's more, by becoming more engaged in employee health, EAPs stand to enhance their own value within the organizations they serve.

Pressing Need

It's imperative as a society that



we create a healthier workforce. The costs of health care have spiked dramatically, compounded by higher rates of obesity and chronic disease. Between 1970 and 2005, health care spending rose from 7.2% of the U.S. gross domestic product to 16% of the GDP. Moreover, insurance premiums climbed nearly 55% between 2002 and 2006, or *more than four times the rate of inflation*.

Looking to the future, the need for change is just as compelling. By 2030, the number of Americans with one or more chronic conditions is expected to reach nearly 180 million — compared to 133 million in 2005. It's clear that something must be done to stop this trend.

Managing care as a way to manage costs was a largely unsuccessful enterprise. And strategies like cost shifting have outlived their usefulness, as insurance costs continue double-digit annual increases. The global recession is putting enormous pressure on corporations to control costs, which includes health care. Attracting and retaining healthy, productive employees who can succeed in a challenging environment has never been more urgent.

Re-Envisioning Benefits

As the first decade of the new century draws toward a close, I am encouraged to see organizations adopting what I call the 21st Century

Health Benefit Design. This model, developed at HealthFitness, includes five components. Translated into action steps, they have transformed many client companies.

➤ **Build a culture of health.** In a culture of health, the focus moves away from illness and toward health and well-being. Benefit plans provide for those who are sick, but the emphasis is on leveraging opportunities to prevent disease and manage

continued on Page 2

FEATURED INSIDE

- ▶ The Employee's Bill of Emotional Rights
- ▶ Tips on Cutting Household Expenses
- ▶ Co-Worker Competitiveness is OK — to a Point
- ▶ Ethical & Legal Considerations of Online Counseling are Ongoing
- ▶ Social Media: Do's, Don'ts in the Workplace
- ▶ Breaking the Silence on Violence and Assaults
- ▶ Resources

INSERTS

- ▶ *Brown Bagger*: Building a Culture of Health
- ▶ *Payroll Stuffers*
- ▶ *LifestyleTIPS*®

chronic conditions that threaten entire groups of employees.

In such an environment, there is a strategic emphasis on health as an *investment* in human capital, rather than as an *expense*. The view is articulated in an organization's mission statement, and borne out in policies and procedures that support employee well-being. Corporate leaders personally accept the challenge of changing how their employees and other constituencies think about health.

Tactically speaking, this process involves health risk assessments and biometric screenings. Population needs are assessed; focused, effective programming is created and progress is measured. Employees are encouraged, and given incentives, to participate.

A culture of health seeks to manage short- and long-term costs by targeting younger workers with poor health habits and lifestyle choices and by heading off potential chronic health issues among older workers.

➤ **Move from an acute-care approach to a focus on fighting chronic disease.** Approximately 15% of employees generate 85% of health care costs. The problem isn't visits to the emergency room — it's visits to fast-food restaurants, sedentary lifestyles, and lack of attention to chronic conditions. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 75% of health care expenditures can be attributed to patients with five conditions: congestive heart failure, asthma, diabetes, coronary artery disease, and depression.

The smart money is on targeting workers with poor health habits and helping healthy employees *stay* healthy. By making all employees partners in health, it is possible to reduce the number of strokes, heart

attacks, cases of diabetes, and other conditions that are so costly to employers.

➤ **Use incentives to encourage employees to make the right choices, and reward them for their efforts.** Incentives are a proven strategy to involve employees in their own health outcomes and to encourage them to lower their risks. In 2008, around 77% percent of employers offered health and wellness programs. Of those, 71% offered incentives.

At Eastman Chemical Co., a HealthFitness client, participation in health risk assessments (HRAs) rose dramatically when incentives were introduced. In 2005, with no incentives, participation was at 30%. When a \$600 reduction in employee health contributions was offered for participation, *completion of HRAs rose to 88% in three years*. And involvement in an accompanying lifestyle-coaching program increased more than 500%.

➤ **Integrate all health programs with consistent data collection and output.** Data integration is critical to the success of a 21st Century Health Benefit Design. Components of a company's health care initiatives — benefit management, EAP, workers' compensation, long-term disability, and safety and health — may reside in separate silos. However, unless data *from each* is integrated, a company cannot gain a complete picture of what it is spending, or the impact of those resources.

➤ **Make a long-term commitment.** The EAP model acknowledges that individuals seeking assistance with challenges in health, relationships, or finances often need more than a handful of counseling sessions to resolve their concerns. Similarly, it takes time for companies to replace ineffective methods

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE REPORT

Editor - Mike Jacquart
Publisher - Jennifer Heisler
Circulation - Scott Kolpien
Designer - Kim Simmons

COPYRIGHT © Impact Publications, Inc. 2009. *Employee Assistance Report* (ISSN 1097-6221) is published monthly by Impact Publications, Inc., 1439 Churchill Street, Unit 302, Crystal Plaza, Waupaca, WI 54981, Phone: 715-258-2448, Fax: 715-258-9048, e-mail: info@impacttrainingcenter.net. POSTMASTER: Send address corrections to *Employee Assistance Report*, 1439 Churchill Street, Unit 302, Crystal Plaza, Waupaca, WI 54981. No part of this newsletter may be reproduced in any form or by any means without written permission from the publisher, except for the inclusion of brief quotations in a review which must credit *Employee Assistance Report* as the source, and include the publisher's phone number, address, and subscription rate. Yearly subscription rate is \$229.00. Material accepted for publication is subject to such revision as is necessary in our discretion to meet the requirements of the publication. The information presented in *EAR* is from many sources for which there can be no warranty or responsibility as to accuracy, originality or completeness. The publication is sold with the understanding that the publisher is not engaged in rendering product endorsements or providing instructions as a substitute for appropriate training by qualified sources. Therefore, *EAR* and Impact Publications, Inc. will not assume responsibility for any actions arising from any information published in *EAR*. We invite constructive criticism and welcome any report of inferior information so that corrective action may be taken.

of health care delivery with a new paradigm and tactics.

In other words, there's no quick fix for the current state of corporate health care. Rather, what's needed is a thoughtful, long-term commitment that starts at the C-suite and engages employees at every level in a shared vision that proactively changes corporate culture.

We Can't Afford Poor Health

A large-scale study published in the April 2009 *Journal of*

continued on Page 3

Occupational and Environmental Medicine suggests that poor employee health is costlier to U.S. businesses than they may realize. The unfortunate results are reduced profitability and productivity, the multi-year study of 10 organizations employing 150,000 workers found. The authors concluded that focusing on medical and pharmacy costs alone to create health strategies does not paint the whole picture.

Researchers measured medical and pharmacy spending as well as lost-productivity costs due to absenteeism and presenteeism. On average, for every dollar spent for medical and pharmacy costs, more than \$2 came back in health-related productivity.

“The transformational opportunity for employers is to look beyond health care benefits as a cost to be managed and rather to the benefits of good health as an investment to be leveraged,” commented Dr. Ronald Loeppke, one of the lead researchers. “Ultimately, a healthier, more productive workforce can help drive a healthier economy for our nation.”

Summary

Congress continues to grapple with the enormous challenge of health care reform. But waiting for change from Washington is a risky proposition. EAP providers can start to work immediately to help their client companies build a foundation of health for the future. ■

Gregg Lehman, Ph.D, is president and CEO of HealthFitness Corporation, a Minneapolis, MN-based provider of integrated employee health improvement services. Learn more at www.hfit.com. For information about the references used in this article, contact the author at gregg.lehman@hfit.com.

Editor's note: For more on this topic, see this month's *Brown Bagger*.



Editor's Notebook

I wish to thank Gregg Lehman of HealthFitness Corp. for writing this month's cover article. Health care reform is a major topic being bandied about in Washington, and while the issue is largely controversial and complex, the benefits of *some* aspects — such as worksite health promotion — seem clear. In fact, workplace wellness is an area that EAPs are well-positioned to develop for their corporate clients.

Moving on, one of the best uses of this particular space is to inform *EAR* readers about what we at Impact Publications are doing behind the scenes to benefit YOU.

We've addressed your continued requests to be able to save company imprinting information that you enter on the *Payroll Stuffers* and *Lifestyle Tips* inserts. [Starting with this issue of *EAR*, that capability is now available.](#)

Please address any questions to info@impacttrainingcenter.net or call (715) 258-2448.

Speaking of email, we recently changed our email addresses to reflect our company's continuing evolution into more of a training, than strictly publishing, business. Please note my new email below. Until next month. ■

Mike Jacquart

Mike Jacquart, Editor
(715) 258-2448
mike.jacquart@impacttrainingcenter.net

Quick Ideas

The Employee's Bill of Emotional Rights

An employee has the right to:

1. Insist on a reasonable workload and fair expectations;
2. Put family obligations first when necessary;
3. Refuse to do something that conflicts with your principles;
4. Receive fair compensation and increases for the work you perform;
5. Be treated with dignity and respect;
6. Refuse to be responsible for someone else's performance;
7. Be kept informed about decisions that affect your job;
8. Refuse to participate in office politics without fear of emotional or economic retaliation;
9. Stand up to and take action against harassment, threats, intimidation, discriminatory behavior, verbal abuse, or violations of confidentiality or trust;
10. Performance expectations that are clear, consistent, rational, honest, and free of unwritten rules;
11. Adequate training;
12. Question procedures that seem contradictory, inefficient, overly complex, or excessively bureaucratic;
13. Be treated as an individual, not a statistic;
14. Insist that stated or implied promises and commitments be kept; and
15. Move on if the job doesn't meet your needs. ■

Source: Scott Barella and Craig Chalquist, Cornerstone Counseling Center.

Tips on Cutting Household Expenses

By Gary Foreman

We receive a lot of letters at the Dollar Stretcher looking for financial advice. The following is one of them:

“Week after week, the money just goes. My husband earns about \$40,000 a year, which is roughly \$2,600 take-home per month. Our bills are as follows:

- House payment, \$600;
- Utilities, \$260 to \$520;
- Groceries, \$550;
- Car payment, \$175;
- Car insurance, \$89;
- Cable TV, \$50;
- Gas for cars, \$130;
- Credit cards, \$90;
- Preschool, \$75;
- Gymnastics, \$45; and
- Cell phones, \$40.

“This totals \$2,234 if you take the average utility bill. I am trying everything I know. I buy very few convenience foods at the grocery store. I have my heat set at 69. I had my grocery bill down to \$300 a month. For a little while, it looked like things were going good, and then everything started climbing again. We are planning to pay off the credit card bills with our income tax refund, but I am afraid it will not be enough.” — Kim

Kim’s question is a typical one. A family spends more than they make, so they do a little homework and put some numbers on paper. The next step — *determining how to close this gap* — is the hardest, but most crucial.

Fortunately for Kim, and everyone else who has faced this problem, the question can be broken down into smaller, more easily answered questions.

\$ The first question that she needs to ask is how big is the gap between income and expenses. If you’re looking for \$50 a month, you could take a lunch to work. But if you’re short \$500, brown-bagging it isn’t going to work.

Realistically, you can cut about 10%, to maybe 15%, of many monthly bills. However, it’s difficult to save more than that without changing your lifestyle.

If your expenses exceed your income by 10% or more, you probably need to consider major changes. Chances are, you’re either spending too much on house or auto payments or you’re living beyond your means.

When housing and auto payments combined are more than 45% of your take-home pay, it becomes difficult to balance your budget. Usually the only solution is to refinance or trade for a less expensive home or auto.

Payments for past purchases may also hurt. Kim’s payments aren’t bad, but many people could balance their budgets if it weren’t for credit card minimums. Consider consolidating debts to a lower interest rate home loan or credit card. If that’s not possible, it may be time to contact a credit counseling company for help. (Your EAP should have some referral ideas.) It’s also time to consider cutting up the credit cards.

\$ Another key question involves where to cut spending. Kim is fortunate in that if she can cut \$100 to \$200 from her budget, her finances will look a lot better.

Still, where should she start?

For most families, *groceries* makes sense. We spend a lot on food, and we make a lot of decisions about buying food. That makes it easy to save a little bit each day.

Next, Kim should price shop her *home and auto insurance policies*. A change in coverage or company could save hundreds a year.

After food and insurance have been taken into consideration, it’s time to look at *utility bills*. The best way for Kim to evaluate these expenses is to compare them to her neighbors. If your home is about the same size, but your bill is much larger, you know that something is wrong.

Other Considerations

Even after trimming these areas, Kim may still find there’s not enough money at the end of the month. If that happens, she’ll have to consider dropping some lifestyle choices. For instance, perhaps they really can’t afford cable TV, gymnastics, and/or cell phones.

In addition, more cost-cutting is also possible. It appears that Kim is a stay-at-home mom. That gives her the opportunity to turn her time into money. She can do that in three ways:

\$ Be a super shopper. She has the time to search out consignment shops and yard sale bargains.

\$ Save by avoiding purchases. Sewing, gardening, and cooking from scratch all reduce expenses.

\$ Increase income with a part-time job. Watching a neighbor’s

continued on Page 5

kids after school or doing some housecleaning one day a week might be just the ticket.

Summary

Some final thoughts: Kim's right that her credit card balance creates a problem. Using their tax refund to pay it off is a good idea. However, if they don't create some room for savings in their budget, sooner or later they'll run up a credit card balance again. The only way to avoid that is to save some money each month.

In addition, a large tax refund could be a sign that they need to change their withholding rate. That would increase take-home pay.

Often, it's a combination of things that affects a monthly budget. Hopefully, Kim will find the combination that works for her. ■

Gary Foreman is the editor of The Dollar Stretcher (www.stretcher.com/r/134.htm) and newsletters (www.stretcher.com/subscribe/subscribeDS.cfm). The site posts thousands of articles on various ways to save money, and includes a forum where people share their dollar-stretching ideas. Follow Gary on Twitter at www.twitter.com/Gary_Foreman.

Co-Worker Competitiveness is OK — to a Point

Football players and other athletes will take to the field this fall to vie for various championships in their respective sports. However, workers may be experiencing their own competition, a recent survey suggests. Almost half (46%) of senior executives interviewed said they believe employees are more competitive than they were 10 years ago.

"In an uncertain economy, people grow more concerned about job security and proving their worth to employers," said Dave Willmer, executive director of OfficeTeam, which conducted the survey. "This pressure to perform may result in rivalries between employees."

Willmer added, "A bit of healthy competition among staff can increase motivation and productivity, but, just as in sports, the overall results of the team are what count. Too much intramural competition creates tension and stands in the way of collaboration."

OfficeTeam has identified five common workplace competitors, along with strategies for discouraging them from taking competition too far:

1) *An employee who races to the finish on projects, but sometimes overlooks details.* The manager should commend this individual on his or her long-term view and enthusiasm, but encourage this employee to avoid cutting corners in the process.

2) *An employee who views achievements in terms of quantity rather than quality,* often taking on more projects than can reasonably be accomplished satisfactorily and on time. The manager should offer to redistribute some of his/her work among others and encourage this individual to focus on doing a first-rate job rather than attempting to do too much at once.

3) *An employee who aims for perfection and tends to complete projects on his/her own.* While aspects of this type of work-related behavior may be impressive, a manager may have to diplomatically counsel this individual to channel talents more toward team goals rather than spending too much time on solo routines.

4) *An employee who feels no challenge is too great,* and who lobbies to take on the highest-profile projects. While this can-do spirit is helpful, it's important for the manager to not let this worker monopolize all of the most challenging assignments.

5) *An employee who is involved in many different areas, but who puts himself/herself first.* This individual is like the runner who trips others near the finish line or the soccer player who always gets the yellow card. His/her struggle to get ahead at the expense of others ends up damaging the team's chances. The manager needs to explain the value of playing by the rules and focusing energy on collaborating with colleagues rather than personal glory. ■

Source: OfficeTeam (www.officeteam.com).

Subscribe to EA Report Now!

YES! Please start _____ or renew _____ my subscription to *Employee Assistance Report*. If I'm not completely satisfied, I can cancel and receive a refund for the remaining portion of the subscription.

- 3 years (36 issues)\$687.00
- 2 years (24 issues)\$458.00
- 1 year (12 issues)\$229.00

____ Extra copies per month at \$2 each, \$24 per year (e.g., 5 extra copies per month for 1 yr. = \$120 per year). Add to above rates.

Foreign orders please add \$20 per year.

Name:.....
 Title:.....
 Organization:.....
 Address:.....
 City:.....
 State or Province:.....
 Zip Code:.....
 Daytime Phone:.....

All payments must be made in U.S. funds or by check drawn on a U.S. bank.

Method of Payment:

- Organization's check
- Personal check
- Purchase order
- Bill me
- Charge my: MC Visa Am. Express
- Card #:.....
- Expiration Date:.....
- Signature:.....

Credit card orders may call 715-258-2448.
 Mail to: EA Report, PO Box 322,
 Waupaca, WI 54981

Ethical & Legal Considerations of Online Counseling are Ongoing



By Marina London

Anytime the Employee Assistance Professionals Association (EAPA) presents either a webinar or a workshop on social media and online counseling practices, we are flooded with questions about the ethics and legal implications of email counseling, Facebook, Twitter, and the like.

The truth of the matter is that the Internet, social media, and a broad range of web-based applications are developing at warp speed, and professionals who write codes of ethics for psychologists, social workers and counselors of all stripes, as well as lawyers who author case law, are just beginning to come to grips with the implications of these technologies. Few professional associations have yet to touch on issues connected to online counseling. So where can the ethically minded online practitioner go for guidance and information?

EAPA is very fortunate that one of the leading experts on the ethics of online counseling, DeeAnna Nagel, will be presenting a full-day pre-conference training on this topic at the upcoming 2009 World EAP Conference (Oct. 21-24) in Dallas, Texas.

DeeAnna is also the brains behind The Online Therapy Institute Blog, a must read for anyone interested in cutting edge information about online practice.

A recent Institute blog post addressed whether an online therapist has to be licensed in every state to offer online therapy. The following are some highlights from the response:

- ❖ In theory, some officials suggest that a clinician could be liable for ethics charges or even loss of license if they see a client who resides in another state.

- ❖ The state of Ohio is looking at a new rule saying that therapy takes place wherever the client is.

- ❖ There are no legal cases yet.

- ❖ Insurers are generally not happy with the concept of Internet services but coverage remains in place.

- ❖ The first person who gets hit (with a lawsuit) will get hit big.

- ❖ Even so, many individuals are seeking therapy online.

- ❖ Various associations offer ethical guidelines but retain attitudes ranging from indifference to hostility.

- ❖ Informed consent may need to be modified for online work.

- ❖ It is suggested that if your license is listed on your website, you come under the jurisdiction of the license regardless of what service you state you are providing (consulting, coaching or advice).

Not surprisingly, like most information in this area, the post, while thought-provoking and informative, is neither ultimately conclusive nor prescriptive.

The Institute also recently posted an interesting ethical framework about the use of technology in mental health. Visit www.onlinetherapyinstitute.com/id43.html. Some sample bullet points from this comprehensive framework include:

> Dual Relationships:

Practitioners discuss with clients the expected boundaries and expectations about forming relationships online. Practitioners inform clients that any requests for “friendship,” business contacts, direct or @replies, blog responses or requests for a blog response within social media sites will be ignored to preserve the integrity of the therapeutic relationship and protect confidentiality.

Moreover, if the client has not been formally informed of these boundaries prior to the practitioner receiving the request, the practitioner will ignore the request via the social media site and explain why in subsequent interaction with the client.

> Insurance, Subsidy or Reimbursement Information:

If the client resides in a geographic area that generally accepts insurance or other forms of reimbursement for therapy services, the practitioner informs the client of this information. Conversely, the practitioner also informs the client about services delivered via technologies that are not covered at all or at the same rate.

The framework is essential reading for anyone considering an online practice.

(Editor's note: Other important resources are included in this month's Resources section.) ■

Marina London, LCSW, CEAP is the Manager, Web Services for the Employee Assistance Professionals Association (www.eapassn.org). Some of the information in this article was previously published in iWebU blog.

Editor's note: This article is reprinted with permission from EAPA.

Social Media: Do's, Don'ts in the Workplace

Social media is taking over, and no one can deny its influence. Facebook, Twitter, blogs, and other online venues have expanded far beyond the realm of personal use, playing an increasing role in workplaces worldwide.

Social networks can boost a company's brand awareness and streamline business in numerous ways, but they also present concerns for corporations. Tamara Devitt, a prominent attorney and recognized authority on a spectrum of employment issues, offers the following advice:

❖ **Be careful when "befriending" employees** — As online barriers between the personal and the professional continue to blur, managers must be increasingly careful when becoming "friends" with employees in cyberspace. As a general rule, managers should not reveal *anything* they wouldn't say or post in the breakroom. Online information and opinions can potentially lead to harassment, discrimination or other claims — even if posted on a personal profile.

❖ **Social media: savvy screening method, or risky recruitment tool?** — Companies are increasingly turning to the Internet for information about potential new hires. While doing so can provide enlightening information about a candidate's attitudes, behaviors, and core values, the risk of "social media screening" may outweigh possible gain. First, Facebook and MySpace profiles can indicate race, religion, disability, sexual orientation or other protected categories of an applicant,

increasing the risk of a discriminatory failure to hire claim if the applicant is not hired.

In addition, a savvy user of online media can manipulate information to create a false personal image. As a result, employers who check candidates' public social networking sites should: 1) avoid "fake" friend requests; 2) be consistent — if checking any candidate, check them all; 3) consider obtaining consent before searching; and 4) if a search reveals information that plays a part in not hiring, keep a copy of the information and give the candidate a chance to address the information.

❖ **MySpace ... my privacy?** — Research shows that 53% of employees think the content of Facebook is not a boss's concern. However, 60% of employers believe they have a right to know how employees portray themselves online. So the question remains: "*Is digital information protected by privacy law?*" Recently, a group of restaurant employees set up an invitation-only MySpace group where they could "vent any BS with ... without outside eyes spying on us." Postings referred to violence, illegal drug use, and a copy of a test for employees. A manager caught wind of the group and asked an employee for the password to gain access to the group — and then terminated employees for criticizing their bosses after viewing the online posts. When the case went to trial, the jury found the manager's actions violated federal and state statutes, which prohibited unauthorized access of elec-

tronic communications sites based on the way the password was obtained. While employees have no expectation of privacy when it comes to publicly available material, employers need to be extremely careful of how they obtain *protected* information they believe they have a right to know.

Summary

Some companies ban social media access at work, while others simply prohibit employees from identifying their employer online. Regardless, companies must take action to safeguard against social media lawsuits, etc. Devitt suggests that employers establish a social networking policy. ■

Source: Fisher & Phillips LLP, which represents a wide variety of national and regional employers. For more information, visit www.laborlawyers.com.



New Email Address!

In an effort to improve our services, we have changed our webhost! **Please whitelist the following email address** so that we can continue to send *EAR* electronically without interruption!

info@impacttrainingcenter.net

Call 715-258-2448 with questions or concerns!

Employee Assistance Report is published monthly. For subscription information contact: Employee Assistance Report, 1439 Churchill Street, Unit 302, Crystal Plaza, P.O. Box 322, Waupaca, WI 54981. This publication is designed to provide accurate and authoritative information in regard to the subject matter covered. It is sold with the understanding that the publisher is not engaged in rendering legal, accounting, or other professional services. If legal advice or other expert assistance is required, the services of a competent professional should be sought. (From a Declaration of Principles jointly adopted by a committee of the American Bar Association and a Committee of Publishers.) Employee Assistance Report does not necessarily endorse any products or services mentioned. No part of this newsletter may be reproduced in any form or by any means without written permission from the publisher, except for the inclusion of brief quotations in a review which must credit Employee Assistance Report as the source, and include the publisher's phone number, address, and subscription rate.

Breaking the Silence on Violence and Assaults

Tough laws are one way to reduce domestic violence and sexual assaults. Too many people continue to believe that domestic violence is a private matter between a couple, rather than a criminal offense that merits a strong and swift response.

The victim of a domestic assault runs the risk of being asked, “*What did you do to make your husband angry?*” This question implies the victim is to blame for this abuse. People in the criminal justice system — police, prosecutors, judges, and jurors — need to be educated about the role they can play in curbing domestic violence.

Moreover, domestic violence has a broader scope than physical assault. Emotional and verbal abuse, isolation, and threats and intimidation are other forms of domestic violence.

What can be Done

Even when cases *are* brought to court, domestic crimes are often difficult to prosecute. Victims are so terrorized that they fear for their lives if they call the police. *Silence is the batterer’s best friend.*

Neighbors must contact the police when they hear violent fights in their neighborhoods. Don’t turn up the TV to block out the sounds of the drunken argument next door. Call the police.

Medical and other professionals who see the victims of violence need to ask them about these crimes. Too often, doctors or emergency room personnel in particular accept the statement of fearful victims that their bruises or cuts are the result of household accidents or falls. When a woman with a black eye says that she fell and hit the doorknob, doctors and nurses must ask: “*Did someone hit you?*”



These crimes are serious. Experience shows that levels of violence in these relationships tend to escalate, and many police departments cite domestic violence as their number-one problem.

As awareness about domestic violence has grown, so has the recognition that this crime has a major impact in the workplace. A recent survey of corporate executives found that:

- 57% believe domestic violence is a major problem in society.

- One-third thought that domestic violence has a negative impact on their bottom lines.

- Four out of 10 executives surveyed were personally aware of employees and other individuals affected by domestic violence.

Employees who witness domestic violence need to contact their EAP, which should be able to provide assistance and referrals, support groups, counseling, and other services. ■

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture Safety, Health and Employee Welfare Division.

Editor’s note: October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. For more information, contact an organization like the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence at www.ncadv.org.

Resources

📖 *International Society of Mental Health Online* is a multi-disciplinary association of students, teachers, researchers, clinical practitioners, and others interested in online mental health. Participants meet online to discuss current issues and collaborate on projects to further the field of online mental health. Visit www.ismho.org/home.asp. The ISHMO has also endorsed principles for the online provision of mental health services. While dated from 2000, they are considered a good starting point. Check out www.ismho.org/suggestions.asp

📖 *Facebook, Twitter and Social Networking: The Dangers of Social Networking*, \$99, .pdf download, PBP Executive Reports, (800) 220-5000, or visit www.pbpexecutivereports.com. This report helps readers navigate both the potential — and the perils — of social networking.

📖 *The Fearless Fish Out of Water: How to Succeed When You’re the Only One Like You*, by Robin Fisher Roffer, \$24.95, Wiley, ISBN: 978-0-4703166-8-9. Recent college graduates who make a mistake with their first foray into the corporate world could find their entire future affected. However, grads who go after the job they really want will set themselves up for a happier life in the long run. The author shows how.