

EAPs

**The Developing Profession in
Ireland**

Paper presented by

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BRIEF HISTORY OF EAP'S IN IRELAND

What happened before EAP?

- ◆ Quakers-turn of the century
- ◆ 1800's-Jacobs appoints a welfare secretary
- ◆ 1900's-Rowntrees appoint social workers
- ◆ 1950's-civil service appoints matrons
- ◆ 1970's-civil service appoints welfare officers
- ◆ 1973 – ESB introduces the first EAP
- ◆ 1990's-civil service appoints employee assistance officers

1972 The following motion was passed by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions at their annual conference. "Recognising that alcoholism in Ireland is an increasing social problem, that it is a serious cause of loss of work hours in industry and potential source of industrial strife, conference instructs the Executive Council to enter into early negotiations with the FUE with a view to establishing agreed principles or procedures in the treatment of workers who are victims".

1973 The Electricity Supply Board (E.S.B.) introduced a programme to deal with alcohol related problems for their employees. This initiative had the full support of the Trade Unions and is recognised as the first programme of its kind in Europe and provided a model for other semi- state and public bodies.

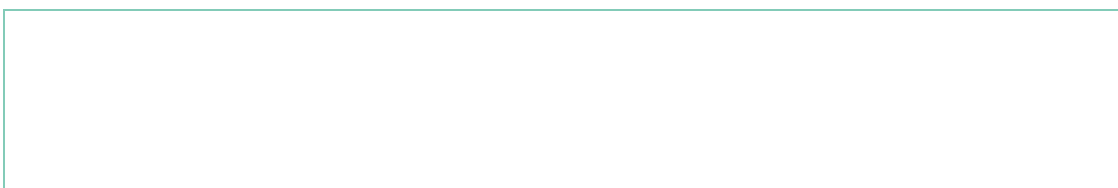
1973 The Civil Service first introduced staff support in 1950 with a matron service. Staff Welfare Officer appointed – 1973, Welfare Service expanded – 1980's, (General Council Agreed Report 10/81) Employee Assistance Service established – early 1990's

1980 U.S.multi-nationals introduce EAPs with a much broader focus into their Irish and European divisions.

1983 Employer/Labour Conference Working Party on Alcoholism reports and recommends that employers generally should adopt jointly agreed programmes which should incorporate the following:

- a clear statement of company policy
- recognition of drink related problems as wide spread
- a sympathetic approach by the employer

- 1985** There is a decline in companies introducing EAP's As the recession deepens there is a major focus in business on reducing numbers and employee welfare was afforded a low priority.
- 1989** The Health, Safety and Welfare at Work Act was introduced in Ireland. The initial focus of the Act was on physical hazards at work but it later encompassed psychological hazards such as violence, stress, and bullying in the workplace.
- 1993** Inaugural meeting of the Association of Welfare and Employee Assistance Counsellors (A.W.E.A.C.) was held in Dublin Castle on 27th May 1993. As of 2003 there are 140 members employed mainly in the public service providing EAP services.
- 1995** A survey of 100 manufacturing and service organisations was conducted by the Irish Management Institute. 50% of those who responded reported that they had a counselling service for their employees covering a wide range of employee problems. Reported benefits included a reduction in absenteeism, increased work performance and morale as well as an increase in productivity. A large majority of organisations expressed high levels of satisfaction with their counselling services.
- 1998** Employment Equality Act signed into law outlawing nine areas of discrimination including sexual harassment. Equality Authority established on 18th October 1999.
- 2000** On 25th October, the Equal Status Act was signed into law. Like the Employment Equality Act 1998, this Act prohibits discrimination on the grounds of gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the travelling community. This act applies to the general population.
- 2001** In May Of 2001 a chapter of the Employee Assistance Professionals Association (EAPA) was established in Ireland. EAPA is the largest and oldest organisation representing Employee Assistance Professionals. It was established in 1971 with a membership of approximately 5,000 EAP Professionals in the US and International. EAPA designs and publishes practice standards.



2001 During 2001, the Employee Assistance Certification Commission (EACC) introduced the CEAP-I credential to the international community. CEAP-I (Certified Employee Assistance Professional International), is a credential administered by the EACC which indicates a mastery of EA programming knowledge, skills and abilities.

2002 Three EAPA Irish Chapter members prepare for the CEAPI exam.

2002 In May 2002 a further group of seven EA Professionals undertook to begin the advisement process and prepare for the CEAPI exam. In August another group was in the process of forming. Seven candidates from the United Kingdom, Germany and Israel have applied to take the computer based test. In Ireland five candidates completed advisement in January 2005.

2003 The first Employee Assistance Professionals in Ireland to receive the CEAPI credential - viz. Lorus Collum, Melissa Darmody and Damian Davy.

2004 New Health Safety & Welfare Bill published
New Task Force on Workplace Bullying

Current driving forces in EA development include Employers Duty of Care for the following:

- work stress (work overload)
- critical Incident stress (C.I.S.)
- violence at work
- workplace bullying / harassment / sexual harassment
- employee drug testing

EMERGING ISSUES

Certification of EA Professionals.

New definition of EAP's

EAPA Global Development.

Accountability.

Customer Service.

Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 1989

Employers have a duty of care under the Act

“personal injury” includes any disease and any impairment of a person’s physical or mental condition

Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Bill, 2005 Act Pending

“personal injury” includes-

- any injury, disease, disability, occupational illness or any impairment of physical or mental condition, or*
- any death,*

that is attributable to work;

What is impairment of mental condition?

Mental condition refers to/includes psychological well being.

Anything that threatens this falls under a duty of care.

In particular, employers may be held liable where certain threats to psychological well being are globally accepted as hazards at work, i.e. where policies exist and are globally accepted.

Prime examples are,

- stress
- bullying/harassment
- addiction would also be possibly included as employers are introducing policies to address this problem at work

International Definition of EAP (EAPA).

An employee assistance program (EAP) is a worksite-based program designed to assist (1) work organizations in addressing productivity issues and (2) "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.

An EAP is a worksite-focused programme to assist in the identification and resolution of employee concerns, which affect, or may affect, performance. Such employee concerns typically include, but are not limited to:

- **Personal matters** - health, relationship, family, financial, emotional, legal, anxiety, alcohol, drugs, and other work related issues.
- **Work matters** - work demands, fairness at work, working relationships, harassment and bullying, personal and interpersonal skills, work/life balance, stress and other related issues.

It includes a mechanism for providing counselling and other forms of assistance, advice and information to employees on a systematic and uniform basis, and to recognised standards. An EAP is also a strategic intervention designed to produce organisational benefit - quantifiable by outcome measurement - through a systems-led approach to human asset management. It addresses team and individual performance and well being in the workplace.

EAPs are intentionally defined more by what they achieve, rather than by what they are, in order to leave maximum room for tailoring services to meet the needs of each organisation. EAPs are unique within the occupational health field in addressing the twin focus of employee well being and organisational performance.

EAPs therefore have the opportunity to reach people who would not otherwise have access to the support from which they may benefit.

Why should an organisation have an EAP?

In the last decade there has been an enormous increase in the pace of change in the commercial world. Organisations continue to face unprecedented pressures and demands from increasing competition, heavier workloads and longer hours, all of which have to be dealt with at a personal level. It is inevitable that these continuous pressures will cause problems both for every organisation and many individuals.

In this climate EAPs help individuals, managers and organisations to:

- Cope with work-related and personal problems and challenges that impact on performance at work.
- Improve productivity and workplace efficiency.
- Decrease work-related accidents.
- Lessen absenteeism and staff turnover.
- Promote workplace co-operation.
- Manage the risk of unexpected events.
- Position the organisation as a caring employer.
- Recruit and retain staff.
- Reduce grievances.
- Assist in addiction problems.
- Improve staff morale and motivation.
- Provide a management tool for performance analysis and improvement.
- Demonstrate a caring attitude to employees.
- Assist line managers in identifying and resolving staff problems.
- Supports management in its Duty of Care under legislation.

In short, EAPs represent a proven, cost-effective solution to many of the people problems employers face today. The EAPA Ireland therefore would recommend all organisations to consider seriously how a relevant form of EAP can be introduced into their organisation.

Models of EAP Service delivery take mainly 2 forms in Ireland

Internal - EAP professionals are employees of the company/organisation. Smaller organisations may employ a single EAP professional, either full-time or part-time, while larger organisations may have several EAP professionals. Internal programmes are most commonly structured as part of an employer's medical department, human resources department or as a completely separate department.

External - EAP provider provides services to the employer on a contractual basis.

Future of EAP (Dupont Global Model) Integrating EA work to organisations

- ◆ Transactional = confidential/individual/counselling service face to face/phone/role identity/demarcation/compares with other professionals
- ◆ Strategic = requires a second set of skills/coaching/consultancy/organisational skills/confidentiality/input to policy/feedback
- ◆ Integration = Being a key player or partner alongside HR/OHS/Management/Unions.

EAP is effectively a triad relationship. Some professionals do not possess the skills to enter the strategic level and therefore become integrated to the company.

Models of Employee Assistance Programmes include

Internal - EAP services are provided solely by an employee or employees of the company or organisation. Smaller organisations may employ a single EAP professional, either full time or part time while larger organisations may have several staff who share the various administrative, consultative, assessment and referral functions. Internal programmes are most commonly structured as part of an employer's Human Resources Department or Occupational Health Department. EAP Professionals are trained and qualified to provide the full range of EAP services viz. counselling, referral, support and information.

External - EAP services are provided by an outside service provider on a contractual basis. External EAP services usually provide training, education and promotion during the launch of the service to encourage the use of the EAP service. The service would provide mental health support confidentially to employees. Direct line access is essential allowing employee to make contact with the EAP directly, ensuring confidentiality. External services provide counselling, information, and support delivered by mental health professionals, usually based off site of the organisation.

Combined - There may be an Internal Provider, with external professionals carrying out some of the functions on a contractual basis.

Consortium - Several small employers join together to establish a shared EAP or jointly contract with an external provider.

Current Research in Progress in Ireland

To conduct a Pan-European investigation (mapping) of work-based EAP/Counselling services across the existing and new EU countries and to investigate the efficiency of an in-house and an external programme in Ireland.

Research Questions

1. What EAP/Counselling at Work Services exist across Europe?
(What is the quantity and quality of such services? How are the practitioners trained? What is the extent of the provision? How many organisations/companies operate an EAP/Counselling service? How many are there in each EAP? How many employees use the services? How are the services regulated? What professional bodies are the practitioners aligned with and do they work to a code of ethical practice?)
2. Does EAP/Counselling at Work positively affect employee well-being?
(This will be measured using the Clinical Routine Outcome Evaluation (CORE) instrument. In addition, clients and managers will be interviewed using semi-structured interview).
3. Does EAP/Counselling at Work positively affect job performance?
(This will be measured using the Clinical Routine Outcome Evaluation (CORE) instrument. In addition, clients and managers will be interviewed using semi-structured interview).
4. Are EAP/Counselling at Work services supportive to the Organisation and Management?
(Do EAP/Counselling at Work programmes assist in the development of strategies and policies for efficiency and effectiveness? Do they address work/life balance?)
5. How are EAP/Counselling at Work services being used by managers?
(Do they address relationship and conflict at work issues? What are the motives of employers who employ or who do not employ these services?)

Timescale 3 years.

A Brief Outline of EAPA Ireland Chapter.

What is EAPA Ireland and what are the benefits of membership?

The Employee Assistance Professionals Association (EAPA Ireland) is the professional body that represents the interests of professionals concerned with employee assistance, psychological health and well being in Ireland. Amongst its members of purchasers, providers, counsellors, consultants, trainers and other related specialists there is an accumulated wealth of experience.

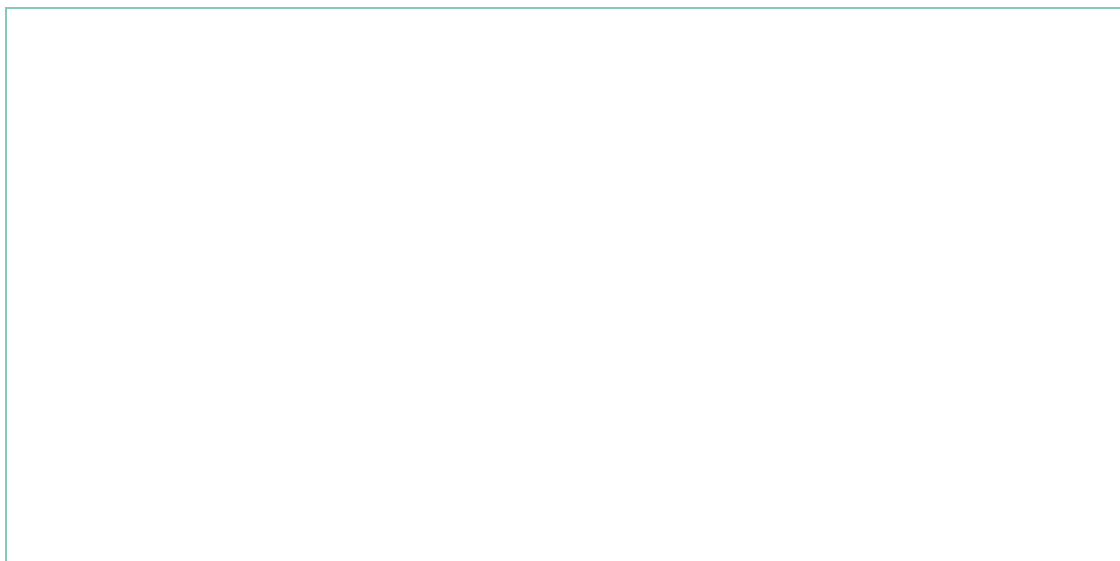
EAPA Ireland is part of EAPA International, which has over seven thousand members in more than thirty countries worldwide.

EAPA Ireland exists to:

- Provide leadership in promoting and developing EAPs in Ireland.
- Set national standards of practice and professional guidelines for EAPs.
- Provide support and stimulation for the professional development of its members.

The benefits of belonging to EAPA include:

- Professional Recognition.
- Regular meetings and seminars.
- Free publications.
- Networking opportunities with fellow professionals.
- Information on competitive and market trends.
- Professional development and qualification.
- Links to EAPA International.
- Training courses.
- Discounts at EAPA events.



Who should be a member of EAPA Ireland?

- Professionals with an active interest in people welfare and performance in the workplace. (Such professionals may come from diverse backgrounds including psychology, counselling, human resources, welfare, social work, account management, business administration, law, finance, information, occupational health, family specialists and so on.)
- External and internal providers of EAP services.
- Organisations who use, or are considering using, EAP services.
- Universities, colleges and other learning institutions having a teaching or research interest in human resource management or occupational psychology.
- Government and non-government organisations involved in the development of legislation, guidelines, codes of practice etc. regarding people in the workplace.
- Organisations specialising in subjects such as alcohol or drug abuse, health advisory services, financial and legal advice and helpline services that are relevant to the workplace.

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