

# Of Interest

from your

Affiliated Employee Assistance Program

1.800.769.9819  
www.affiliatedeap.com

May/June 2009

## No Problem is Too Small for EAP

By Liz Ashe

Twenty years ago, I raised cavies (guinea pigs) and showed them at rabbit shows. I was really excited when one of my females became a grand champion. I went from Bangor, ME to Troy, NY to purchase a grand champion mate for her.

When my female became pregnant I was hopeful of getting a large litter of champion babies. In the middle of the night, near her delivery date, she went into pregnancy toxemia. I knew I would probably lose her and the babies. I thought of calling my vet to do a c-section and save the babies, but I didn't think I should bother the veterinarian in the middle of the night for such a small animal. I mistakenly thought those calls were only for dogs, cats or larger animals. I thought my little guinea pig too small to call the vet. I lost her and six babies.

Life is full of "small issues." Unfortunately, many people overlook them not realizing how small problems can snowball and become bigger, more difficult to handle problems. Consider a dripping faucet over a porcelain sink. Just a small drip, but over time it can discolor then erode the porcelain resulting a permanent stain and indentation. Just a little drip can cause a lot of damage.

Little things day to day not dealt with can add up, cause stress and wear us down and even cause burnout. Unfortunately all too often people ignore the "warning flags", operate on autopilot or bury their head in the sand until things get out of hand or they hit rock bottom before seeking help. If you were ice fishing and wanted to catch fish, the minute the red or orange flag went up, you'd run to the hole. You wouldn't sit on the side lines thinking, "I can go see if I have a fish later. I'll just sit here awhile longer and see what happens. Better yet, tomorrow I'll take a look."

Why do we avoid "red flags" that let us know our life isn't working the way we want it to or that problems are mounting up? A classic example is a failed marriage. Often little irritations, disagreements, communication issues not dealt with can lead to an un-fixable situation. Marriage counselors say most people come to marriage counseling when it's too late. Had they asked for help earlier, the marital problems may have been worked on and the marriage saved.

If you had a tiny splinter in your finger, you quickly want to remove it. It is tiny but it hurts and if not taken out could lead to an infection. If you have a small grain of sand or gravel in your shoe you don't hesitate to remove it. We don't want to get a blister and it is also very uncomfortable to walk on. We don't like pain. Emotional pain should be no exception. We should treat our "little problems" the same way before they snowball into bigger ones.

continued

**Consider using EAP for any issue.  
Some examples follow:**

### An informed opinion or education

Learning the signs of drug use/abuse in teens  
Disciplining children  
Becoming a step parent  
Suspected eating disorder in a loved one  
How to help someone who is grieving  
How to find a therapist  
How to divorce and not hurt the kids

### Emotional Support and an Objective view

Empty nest syndrome  
Grief and loss  
Moving; Job re-location  
In-law issues  
Kids in with the wrong crowd  
Grief over the loss of a pet  
Children's failing grades  
Returning to work after an injury  
Eldercare issues  
Living with a disability or chronic pain  
Partner's obsession with hobbies/sports/gambling  
Guilt about nursing home placement  
Job stress  
Sexual orientation confusion  
Dealing with a child's felony or incarceration

### Affiliated EAP

- *It's confidential.*
- *It's a free benefit to you.*
- *It really works.*

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continued

Why do people wait to get help with the small difficulties everyone faces? Is it because they think their problem is too small? Do they associate getting help with big problems and forget that little things can get out of hand? Do they have typical stigmas about counseling such as thinking therapy is for the inept and desperate, or drunk or “crazy” people? Or is it because some people are very private and hesitate to go outside the family to discuss issues that are troubling them? Or is it simply they don’t realize EAP can be used for everyday small issues.

Because of such confusion, many people avoid getting the help they need. You have the right to keep your issue, hurt and problem to yourself, but you also have the right to diminish your distress. Unresolved problems and unexpressed feelings can cause physical and emotional problems and can disrupt jobs, family life and your happiness.

Pretend you have an empty backpack on your back each morning you wake up. Throughout the day, pretend that your daily irritations and problems are like rocks that are placed in that back pack. At the end of the day, it is heavy and if not emptied, you go to bed with a full back pack only to wake and add more to it in the morning. Consider emptying your backpack for your health and emotional well being. Stress and emotional pain suppresses your immune system increasing your chance of getting physically ill. **EAP (Employee Assistance Program) can help. Your EAP is a free, confidential, assessment, short-term counseling and referral program for you and your household family members. It is a free benefit provided to you by your organization**

EAP is for anyone who wants an objective person, besides a friend or family, to talk to. Seeing an EAP counselor doesn’t mean you are weak, or “crazy” or that you can’t handle problems. In fact, counseling can be a wise and courageous way of handling many kinds of troubling issues. Getting help is a sign of strength, not weakness.

The advantage to getting professional help is that we can step outside our problem and get an objective view. When moving through difficult stages in our lives we may be too close to the problem to be objective. When we truly feel stuck or victimized by circumstances, it is difficult to see a way out or through because logic and emotions are incompatible.

We rarely can be logical while emotionally engaged in a problem or issue. Feelings must be identified, vented and resolved first. Some people are good at doing this on their own, others benefit from the help of an outside resource. Just remember that getting help is a sign of strength not weakness. help feet. Our lives are full of choices. One choice we all can make is to get help when we need it. EAP may be the approach you need. Don’t wait for little issues to snowball and become big ones. The earlier you deal with a problem, the easier it is to solve. **Remember, no problem is too small for EAP.**

**No problem is too small!**

## Financial Guidance

- Financial problems; Credit card debt
- Economic issues
- Budgeting

## Self-Development

- How to build your self-esteem
- Career confusion
- How to be more Assertive
- Time management
- Returning to school as a nontraditional student

## Post Traumatic or Cumulative Stress

## Phobias, Panic and Eating Disorders

## Productive Venting and Tools to Use to Cope

- Conflicts with coworkers; bosses
- Fight with a friend/family member
- Anger/Rage management
- Changes at work; Changes in shift assignments
- Inability to forgive
- Hostility, grudges and resentment

## Addictions

- Work-a-holism in self or loved one
- Gambling addiction
- Internet and Chat rooms
- Over-doing a hobby or exercise
- Substance abuse
- Sex addiction

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