

# Bridging Public Health with Workplace Behavioral Health Services: A Call to Action

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## For More Information...



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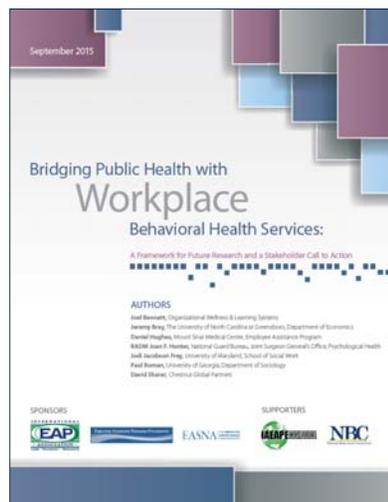
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## This Rapid Fire Session Addresses:

- ❑ A new resource for EA/WBH services research published by the EA Evidence-based Practice Network
- ❑ Rationale for a “Call to Action” for EA/WBHS Research
- ❑ Organizing framework for promoting and organizing EA/WBHS Research
- ❑ Recommendations to stakeholders to promote & align EA/WBHS studies with Public Health

## White Paper Produced in Partnership...



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## Lack of Evidence

- Work organizations invest billions in Workplace Behavioral Health Services (WBHS), predominately delivered by EA professionals.
- Industry, government, and society assume devotion of such resources = effectiveness.
- Yet research on the effectiveness of WBHS services to prevent and address the mental health and substance abuse risks and problems is lacking.
- Absence of science and evidence-based practice (EBP) leads to decisions based almost entirely on cost and providers have no tested standards for quality.

## Challenges of WPBH Research

- WBHS research has been difficult to conduct.
- WBHS research requires significant collaboration with work organizations and professionals.
- Most WBHS research is provider-supported, subject to conflicts of interest, often conducted for marketing purposes, or not publicly disseminated.

## EA Industry Call to Action

- *“Bridging Public health with Workplace Behavioral Health Services”* White Paper is a Call to Action.
- Overall Aim: Energize a new collaboration among work organizations, EA/WBHS providers, government agencies, researchers , and other stakeholders to systematically examine the processes and effectiveness.
- Ultimate goal: To reduce behavioral health concerns – improving overall health and quality of life for employees and their families.



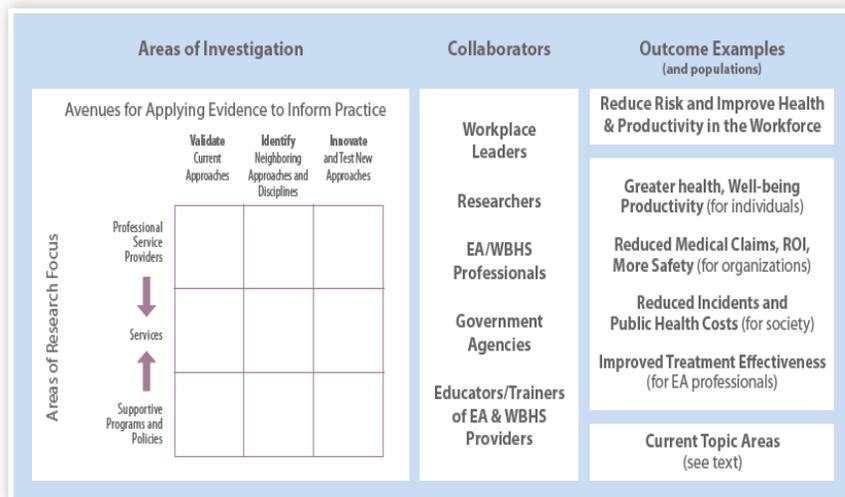
## ACA Reinforces the Need

- Affordable Care Act (ACA) in the U.S. reinforces the need for rigorous EA/WBHS research.
- ACA identifies mental health and substance abuse treatment services as “essential health benefits” in all health care plans – extending access and parity.
- ACA is likely to lead to broad integration of WBHS into the mainstream health care system and increase access to care for many U.S. Americans.

## Lack of EA/WBHS Research is a Public Health Problem

- Behavioral health issues have a profound impact on workforce productivity, employer costs, families, and communities.
- Payers and consumers of EA/WBHS will benefit from knowledge about how these services work and how they can be improved.
- EA/WBHS professionals lack evidence-based principles to guide the delivery and enhancement of services.
- ACA has specific provisions for behavioral health and relies on work organizations to help delivery these services.

## Organizing Framework



## Areas of Investigation

	Validate Current Approaches	Identify Neighboring Approaches and Disciplines	Innovate and Test New Approaches
Professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How effective are training programs for developing EA professionals?</li> <li>What are the core competencies of EA service professionals?</li> <li>What attitudes do EA professionals have?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do different core disciplines within the EA profession approach their work (e.g., psychologists versus social workers)?</li> <li>What key collaborations serve as best practices for WBHS?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How does the profession view innovation?</li> <li>What are the barriers to testing new approaches?</li> </ul>
Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How effective are existing EAP protocols in core service areas (see Table 1)?</li> <li>What is the impact of emerging technology on EA/ WBHS effectiveness?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How can EAPs effectively adapt services used in other fields of public or occupational health?</li> <li>Can EAPs apply other public health models, such as the Triple Aim?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What types of studies are needed to develop innovative EA/ WBHS services?</li> <li>Can health media make EA/ WBHS services more effective?</li> </ul>
Programs and Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How can researchers help EAPs test and adapt EBP?</li> <li>What makes EAPs unique and requires special training to deliver services?</li> <li>What policies are needed to enhance or regulate current approaches?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Which programs benefit from collaboration with professionals outside the EA field?</li> <li>What interdisciplinary projects will result in better uptake of EA/ WBHS?</li> <li>How can workplace policies guide collaborations for better service delivery?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How can national policy foster greater involvement amongst work organizations to get their participation in EA research?</li> <li>What types of "disruptive technologies" will help vitalize the EA/ WBHS field?</li> </ul>

## Collaboration is Key to Advance EA/WBHS Research

- **Workplace Leaders** – organizational consumers across all industries
- **EA/WBHS professionals**
- **Researchers** in EA/WBHS, e.g., occupational health & safety, productivity, risk management, HR, public health, mental health, addiction.
- **Funding and Governmental Policy Agency Representatives** who can encourage research and play a role in its application.
- **Educators/Academics** who prepare future generations of EA/WBHS professionals.

## The Ultimate Goal of Collaboration

- Reducing risk and improve the health and productivity of the workforce.
- Achieving desired outcomes for employees, work organizations and society as a whole
- Achieving outcomes that demonstrate effectiveness of EA/WBHS practitioners.

## Topic Areas of Collaboration

### Areas of Consensus...

- Veteran Workplace Integration
- Crisis Intervention and Mental Health
- Health and Productivity
- Substance Use Disorders
- Innovative Research and Development
- Refining the EAP value statement
- Resilience

## Call to Action Recommendations

- For Work Organization Leaders:
  - ▣ Become more educated about EBP & utilize to gauge effects on productivity
  - ▣ Encourage employee participation in WBHS studies
  - ▣ Encourage EA providers to conduct credible WBHS outcome evaluations using valid measures & acceptable response rates
  
- For EA Service Providers:
  - ▣ Initiate direct dialog with business leaders to assure delivery of evidence-based services & training
  - ▣ Provide quality monitoring of EAP subcontractors & affiliates
  - ▣ Hold affiliates accountable for using EBP

## Call to Action Recommendations

- For Researchers:
  - ▣ Apply innovative & valid experimental approaches to continuously establish effectiveness of EA/WBHS services
  - ▣ Find innovative ways to persuade work organizations to support EA/WBHS research & to allow workers to participate
  - ▣ Use the framework to plan interdisciplinary studies & business-provider-research collaborations
  
- For Funding Agencies:
  - ▣ Identify specific review panels for EA/WBHS research
  - ▣ Ensure reviewers have appropriate experience in conducting EA/WBHS research to promote continuity & consistency in reviews
  - ▣ Support funding announcements that encourage research among various areas & collaborators

## Call to Action Recommendations

- For Educators and Academics:
  - Develop advanced degrees and training curricula to promote the use of EBP among EA/WBHS professionals
  - Develop cross-disciplinary programs to foster partnerships between disciplines (e.g., psychology, social work, human resources management)
  - Articulate valid theories and conceptual frameworks that can help advance research

## Closing Thoughts...

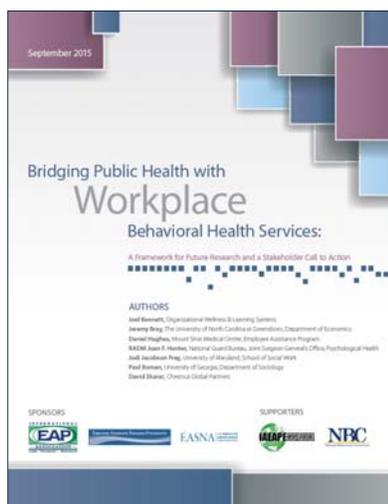
- Continued neglect of research threatens several problems:
  - Stagnation of the EA/WBHS field
  - Ineffective education and training of new professionals
  - Lack of innovation
- Without commitment to high-quality research, stakeholders will continue to lack evidence-based standards to guide professionals and consumers toward effective, optimal use of EA & WBH services.
- Scientific basis for valuing EA/WBHS remains limited, despite their widespread and routine use by millions of people.
- EA/WBHS marketplace is currently fragmented and needs a framework to advance our understanding of the services for the benefit of advancing public health.

## What is Your Role?

- Read the White Paper
  - ▣ Learn more about this EA industry initiative
- Identify your role in advancing EA/WBHS research:
  - ▣ Do you have the capacity to promote or support EA/WBHS research?
  - ▣ Do you have access to employees, data, or other asset to support conducting EA/WBHS research?
  - ▣ Do you have the resources (e.g., funding, staff) to support conducting EA/WBHS research?
  - ▣ Who can you collaborate with to advance EA/WBHS research?



## Thank You!



Access the White Paper here:

EASNA Research/Practice  
Webpage for EASNA members:  
<http://www.easna.org/research-and-best-practices/1636-2/>

Employee Assistance Archive at  
University of Maryland - open  
access:  
<http://archive.hshsl.umaryland.edu/handle/10713/4876>

