

# EAP is at your service



In an edition of *Psychology Today*, Steve Albrecht, doctor of business administration, encourages employees to find out about the many services available from their Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and reach out for help if needed. Dr. Albrecht has written or co-written 15 books, including *Ticking Bombs: Defusing Violence in the Workplace*, and *Fear and Violence on the Job*. He is also a former police officer and domestic violence investigator with the San Diego Police Department.

Dr. Albrecht gave four reasons why employees do not use their EAP services:

1. They do not think what they say or do will be held in confidence.
2. They see reaching out for help as a weakness. This is especially true for men.

3. They think they need to get permission from their boss or Human Resources to seek services from their EAP.
4. They do not know their EAP exists.

First, according to Dr. Albrecht, services and discussions between employees and EAP providers are kept confidential. There is an exception—an EAP counselor has a duty to warn or intervene if the employee wants to harm himself or herself or others. The company gets no reports or records of employee use of EAP services.

Second, employees need to be reassured that EAP offers help for many very common issues that affect most people. Examples are money worries, marital issues, raising children or step-children, blended families, sick kids, and dealing with parents with Alzheimer's disease.

Employees can also get help for financial problems, burnout, stress-related illnesses, cancer and mental health issues. These include substance abuse, workplace conflicts, depression and suicidal thoughts.

Third, employees simply need to call the EAP phone number and make an appointment. They do not have to tell coworkers, their boss or Human Resources.

Lastly, Dr. Albrecht is puzzled why employees do not know about their EAP. Companies with EAP programs list their services and contact numbers on posters and brochures in lunch rooms and break rooms. New employees receive EAP information.

To find out if your company offers EAP services, check your benefits manual or website or ask your human resources manager. Help is just a phone call away.