



THE LATEST NEWS AND UPDATES

## Message From The President

by Paul Fitzgerald, PsyD, LCPC, CEAP



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## Social Media, Technology, and EAPs A 2018 Update

As the incoming Chapter President, I would like to welcome you to NIEAPA's 2018-2019 year. The Northern Illinois Chapter is one of the largest Chapters/Branches of EAPA, and has been thriving since the 1980's as a source of support, professional development, networking, information, and resources. I have always felt especially welcome in this group and consider it my "professional home." I look forward to exciting happenings in the coming year and beyond. We are already starting to plan our 2019 conference; and your help and participation would be welcome on our Conference Committee. It's also time to [submit your proposal](#) if you want to present at the Conference!

At the world EAPA conference in October, a number of people presented on and spoke about the use of technology and social media to help with EAP service delivery, marketing, and professional networking. On the operations/clinical side, in addition to an excellent presentation about LGBTQ inclusion, we heard from Kimberly Messer about [IBM's use of their "Watson" capabilities](#) to set up a mental health outreach platform that uses

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artificial intelligence to direct people to the most appropriate resource, whether that is information and resources, a live crisis counselor, or a routine appointment. My thought on hearing this was that it seems cold and – well, artificial – at first glance, and seems to lack that human touch that we all like to think we provide. But on second thought, as the former manager of a call center, I know that nothing feels colder to an employee or family member than navigating through a phone prompt system or waiting on hold, which unfortunately still occurs despite our best efforts. (And, as an affiliate, I can usually “name that EAP” in five notes, from the hold music!)

Of course, tele-health services are emerging as an area for rapid growth in the EAP world, which is fitting since we were among the early adopters of telephonic counseling, at the urging of our client organizations and their employees. And NIEAPA’s own Chris Drake has been a strong advocate on the EAPA Board for using videoconferencing platforms to leverage the reach of our Association and help members in less-populated areas to stay connected.

Another innovative use of technology we learned about is the use of a mobile app by the South Africa Branch of EAPA. (You can download it by going to Google Play or the App Store and searching for “EAPA-SA”). Their app serves many of the purposes of a chapter or branch website ([and they have an excellent one](#)), but adds convenience and portability. They made especially good use of it to highlight their branch’s ongoing social advocacy projects and annual conference, and to thank their sponsors.

One idea that I have had, as a Commissioner on the Employee Assistance Credentialing Commission, is that the whole system of PDH and CEU maintenance might benefit greatly from a move into the digital age. Many of us keep our banking and credit card records entirely online, and more and more insurance panels are using CAQH as a centralized credentialing platform. But we still labor with paper certificates and a hand tally of PDHs for renewal of our CEAP credential. Platforms such as [Accredible](#) are emerging as robust alternatives to the old paper system, allowing organizations to award PDH or CE certificates in a digital format; and also allow for participants to share their participation in our events to their social media accounts such as LinkedIn. I will be bringing this idea up in our EACC meetings this year.

Our chapter – despite being a leader in many aspects of Association operations - has

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struggled at times to keep up our social media presence over the years. But it is apparent we “dinosaurs” need to stay on top of this, because a stale web or social media presence can occur in a matter of months these days, and can turn people off. Overall, I think there are a lot of exciting developments going on, and we in the EA profession are uniquely poised to appreciate and adopt cutting-edge technology as we deliver services to our client organizations and their employees. In the meantime, if you want to help make a contribution to our chapter’s social media presence, please contact me or any of our Board about serving on our [Communication Committee](#).

## Message From The Vice President

I think that being an EAP professional is the best job on the planet! The advantage of working in our field for a long time is that you get to see the progress (and sometimes bumps in the road) of our profession. We are so lucky to be part of the best EAP chapter in the country. During my time on the board, I would love to see engagement of professionals who have never been part of an NIEAPA before. There is room for everyone. I also think we have an incredible opportunity to bring technology and life into the EAP work in Northern Illinois. So let’s shake it up, let’s do what’s never done before and let’s continue to support EAPs!



Marie Apke, LCPC, CEAP, SAP, PCGC, ICGC



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## Conference Speaker Submissions



Interested in Speaking at the Conference?

[SUBMIT APPLICATION HERE](#)

Deadline: December 21, 2018

## Chapter Meeting Information

### Restoring Hope After Suicide

**Presenters**

Deborah Major  
Emily Tegenkamp  
Cynthia Waderlow

**Location Sponsor**



17 N. Dearborn | Chicago, IL

**Food Sponsor**



[MORE INFORMATION](#)

[REGISTER TO ATTEND](#)

## 2019 CHAPTER MEETING DATES

February 22 | April 12 | June 4 - Annual Conference |  
August 16 | October 18 | December 6



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## Want to get more involved? Submit your resume to join the Board

Is the time right for you to grow your professional experience by becoming a NIEAPA board member? According to our bylaws, it is time for a few of our dedicated board members to step down to allow for new members to step up! The benefits are valuable and the commitment is worth the time and effort. If you are considering this opportunity and have questions, please contact one of our current Board members.

### Executive Committee

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