

Supporting Workplace Wellness



EAP - PAE

À l'appui du mieux-être au travail

**Canada Revenue Agency
Employee Assistance Program**

Annual Report

2003-2004

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Overview

The success of any organization depends on the health of both its leaders and its employees. The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) contributes to individual and organizational health and wellness by providing consultative services to management and union related to good people practices, as well as by providing counselling services to employees and their family members in need of help with personal or work-related issues. The Program delivers these services through its network of Coordinator-counsellors, external contractors and referral agents. The Program also conducts information and awareness sessions on a variety of topics of interest, delivers training to managers and union representatives, and is responsible for the delivery of Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) services. The local EAP advisory committees play an active role in the promotion of the Program's services and help to ensure that employees' needs are being met.

The Past Year

During 2003-2004, we saw an increase of 7% in reported cases over the previous year. The Program's professional counsellors provided advisory services to managers on 610 occasions throughout the year. Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD) services were provided on a group basis on 56 occasions, a 44% increase over the 39 group sessions from 2002-2003. This observed increase is likely a result of increased awareness on the part of employees and managers, due to the high number of training sessions delivered to managers and information sessions to employees during fiscal year 2002-2003. In addition, over 14000 employees attended EAP-related information or awareness sessions, venues where employees obtained information to help them address their personal wellness issues. This represents an increase of over 20% from the previous year.

Transition

The Agency faced some important challenges throughout 2003-2004 related to change and transition. Whether a change is perceived as being negative or positive, it can create additional stress and can have an impact on the health and wellbeing of employees. EAP provided support to employees and managers during the implementation phase of the Compensation Service Delivery Renewal Project. It was also a time of transition for employees and for EAP personnel as the Customs component of Canada Customs and Revenue Agency left to form the newly created Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA).

The Human Resources Branch of the newly formed Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) continued to provide support services to the CBSA after the December 12, 2003 split. The Employee Assistance Program, as part of HR, continued providing direct assessment, referral and counselling services to employees of CBSA until March 31, 2004. On April 1, 2004, several of CCRA's Coordinator-

counsellors and associated resources (in NOR, SOR, Pacific and Quebec regions) transferred to the CBSA as part of the transition. CRA's EAP continues to provide EAP management and coordination services to CBSA in the Atlantic, Prairies and HQ regions through Service Level Agreements.

This annual report encompasses all 2003-2004 program activities and therefore includes data related to the Customs component of CBSA. CRA and CBSA will report separately for fiscal year 2004-2005.

The Next Year

CRA is maintaining the current model of EAP, including Coordinator-counsellors, external service providers, referral agents and local committee members. Recent program review consultations have confirmed that all aspects of the Program are well utilized and valued by employees, their union representatives and management alike.

For 2004-2005, the Program will focus its efforts in three key areas:

- Supporting management and union in their roles by continuing to provide coaching and support with fundamental people practices and difficult issues.
- Training delivery of established courses (Change Management, Union/Management EAP Training) and training development related to specific requests.
- Re-alignment of local EAP advisory committees to reflect the CRA/CBSA split, with new committees being formed where necessary.

By focusing on these key areas, EAP will contribute to the enhancement of the work environment. The result will be healthier, more productive employees and an organization that more effectively attains its business objectives.

Our network of EAP service providers and committee members has spent another active year supporting the organization and its employees. Our thanks go out to all those making the Program a success, including managers and union representatives providing strong support.

National Report

The National EAP Office is the functional authority for the Employee Assistance Program. The Office develops policy, provides advice and guidance to management and the EAP network, develops training tools and promotional strategy, monitors program performance, and acts as the focal point in the formal EAP consultation process with the unions. Services are delivered by a staff of three: the National EAP Coordinator, a Senior EAP Advisor and an Administrative Officer. Following is an overview of the Office's activities in 2003-2004:

Union/Management Consultation

Formal consultation with the union partners in the Program (UTE, PIPSC, CEUDA) takes place through the **National EAP Advisory Committee**. In the 2003-2004 fiscal year, the committee met in May and November. The unions were consulted and provided valuable feedback on the following issues: EAP contracts, promotion (strategy, EAP Planners), training plans, statistics and best practices.

Minutes of the committee's meetings can be found on the National EAP Website on Infozone:

<http://infozone.rc.gc.ca/english/r2732472/eap/Default.htm>

National EAP Business Meeting (October 20-24, 2003)

The meeting was an opportunity for the Program's EAP Coordinator-counsellors to do some strategic program planning. The group discussed various issues related to the management and monitoring of services, including record keeping, measuring client satisfaction, complaint investigation and resolution, clinical supervision for the Coordinator-counsellors, and RA selection and monitoring.

The National EAP Advisory Committee attended the meeting for one day. It was an opportunity for the Coordinator-counsellors to engage the unions in discussions on the status of the program in the regions and the successes and challenges faced. The unions shared information from their members and representatives, stating the program was working well and highlighting the importance of union/management support for the program and the role played by the local committees. The challenges that the unions identified included Program budgets, the ageing workforce, the need to focus on learning opportunities for managers, employees and the EAP network, and access to Program services for employees working off-site. The Coordinator-counsellors gave an overview of their activities, speaking to their role as service providers and advisors to management in the area of good people management and work place health. In addition, the **Assistant Commissioner of Human Resources Branch**, Dan Tucker, was present and spoke to the group of the importance of the EAP to the Agency. He was impressed with the connections

that the EAP Coordinator-counsellors had forged, which allowed them to regularly take the pulse of the organization and react to the needs of the employees. Mr. Tucker referred to the EAP as an **investment in employee and organizational health**.

The Coordinator-counsellors had an opportunity to consult with representatives from Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) and Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC). The group discussed best practices in the areas of EAP and organizational wellness.

Finally, the participants received training in two areas: Emotionally Focused Therapy and in the theory and application of the Business Health Culture Index (BHCI).

Training

The National EAP Office conducted three **Basic Referral Agent Training Courses** during the fiscal year, training approximately 40 new agents. The Basic course exposes new recruits to the Program, an RA's responsibilities within it, and gives trainees an opportunity to practice the skills they will use performing their RA duties. In addition, one **Workshop for Experienced Referral Agents** with 19 participants was held. This course is designed to give experienced RAs an opportunity to network with RAs from other regions and to brush up on their helping skills. A **Suicide Intervention Workshop** is also part of the course.

An online training tool (InfoKit) was developed for **local EAP Advisory Committee** members. The three modules describe the Agency's EAP, explain the role of the local advisory committees, and discuss the importance of program promotion.

Promotion

The Office developed a formal EAP promotional strategy in consultation with the unions and EAP stakeholders. The document highlights the critical importance of program promotion and provides principles, standards and a list of products and activities available to the EAP network to promote Program services to employees, managers and union representatives.

The 2004 (calendar year) EAP Planner was distributed to employees in the fall of 2003. There were some modifications made to the planner based on feedback received from the unions and from employees through an online Planner Survey (conducted January/February 2003). The planner continues to be a popular promotional item as it is inexpensive, functional and portable to the home.

The EAP Pamphlet was revised in 2003 and EAP pins were produced and distributed to referral agents as well as local EAP committee members.

Functional Advice

Through consultation with functional authorities such as Legal Services Branch and the Materiel Management Division of Finance & Administration Branch, the National Office provided the field with advice on:

- Issues of legal liability impacting the Program.
- The Program's external contracting process, specifically, options for reducing the number of contracts and simplifying the contracting process.

The National Office was consulted on and contributed to the following projects:

- Training and Learning's MG Learning Program project.
- The Taking Stock & Moving Forward initiative and the Program Review. EAP received positive appraisals from regional managers during this process, being cited as a support program crucial to employee and organizational health.

The National Office is a member of the Federal Workplace Wellness Network (FWWN), a group dedicated to sharing best practices and promoting wellness in the workplace.

Regional Program Activities

The following table presents the EAP network as it existed in the regions in 2003-2004. It lists employee population, EAP Coordinator-counsellor FTEs and the number of RAs, external EAP contracts and local EAP advisory committees.

Region	CCRA Population (August '03)	C.C. FTEs		RAs	Contracts	Committees
		Alloc.	Staff.			
Atlantic	4,280	2	2	34	10	12
Quebec	7,327	2	1.2	26	18	7
HQ	9,817	2.4	2.4	10	1	1
NOR	6,560	2	1	11	8	8
SOR	10,506	4	5	79	9	8
Prairies	7,190	2	2	50	8	6
Pacific	6,261	2	2	30	14	6
Total	51,941	16.4	15.6	240	68	48

Table 1

Management must ensure that all employees have access to EAP services, that the services address employee needs, and that EAP intervenes for significant workplace issues. The EAP Coordinator-counsellors support this mandate by managing, delivering and monitoring EAP services in their respective areas.

Service Delivery

Cases

Employees accessed the Program's service providers for **confidential assistance** on **7,127** occasions. **Chart 1** below shows regional employee populations and the total cases reported by the EAP Coordinator-counsellors, referral agents (RAs) and external EAP contractors.

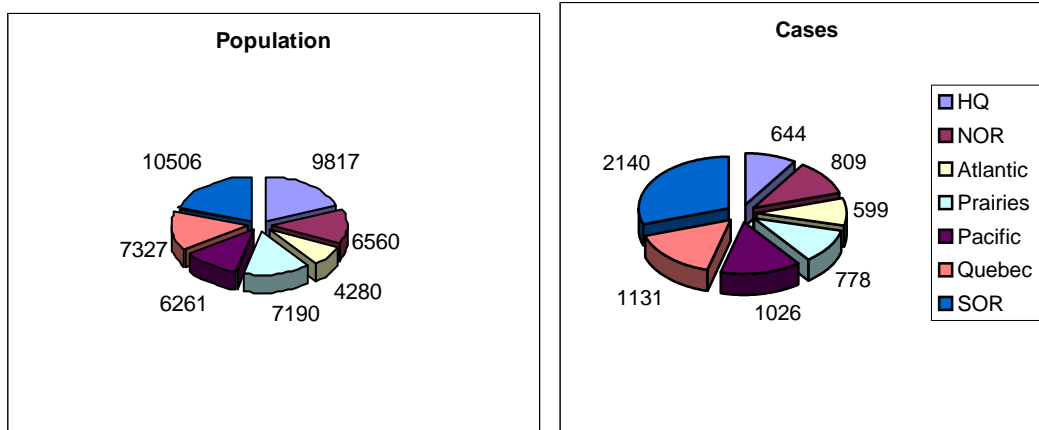


Chart 1

The Agency's **EAP Coordinator-counsellors**, professional counsellors and employees of the Agency, reported over **1100** cases; these cases were instances where employees and/or their family members accessed the assessment, referral and short-term counselling services they provide. In addition, there were almost **4300** cases reported by the **external EAP contractors**. These contractors are professional counsellors hired to provide assessment, referral and short-term counselling services to employees and/or their family members who are in need of assistance. There are contracts in place with services available to employees in all work locations. The Agency's **referral agents** reported meeting with over **1700** employees. These specially trained volunteers, employees of the Agency, offer a listening ear to clients, facilitate access to the professional counsellors and provide information on resources available within the Agency or the community.

The RAs refer employees to the Program's professionals on many occasions; of the 1727 seen by RAs, 1129 were referred to Coordinator-counsellors and contractors. The Coordinator-counsellors and contractors report that 203 of their cases were referred to them by RAs. Therefore, if we eliminate these cases that are double-counted, we arrive at a more accurate picture of the number of individuals accessing the Program (7127-203), that is **6924**.

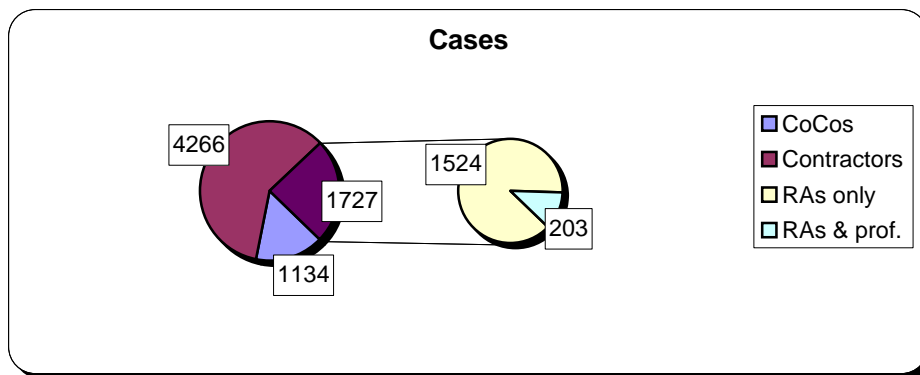


Chart 2

The 240 referral agents report spending a total of 3343 hours performing their EAP function. This is a 24% increase from the 2698 hours reported in 2002-2003 and a 49% increase from fiscal year 01-02 (2242 hours).

The 6924 cases reported by the EAP service providers translate to a utilization rate of **13.3%** for 2003-2004 (based on an average employee population of 51,941). **Chart 3** below shows the utilization rate for the past eleven years.

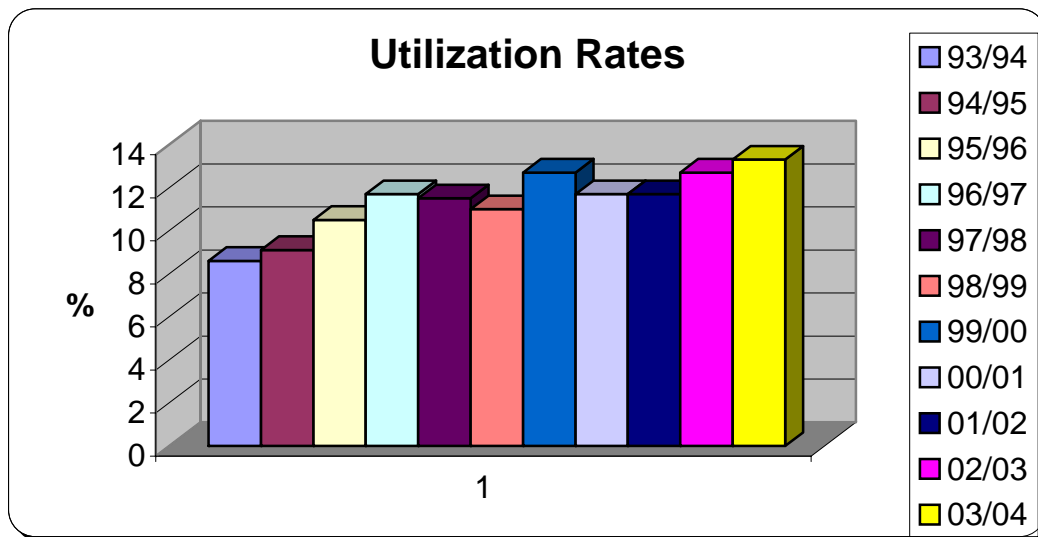


Chart3

As depicted in the above chart, Program usage shows a steady increase for the past three years.

It should be noted that there were an additional 1758 instances where employees approached the various service providers in search of EAP-related information. These requests, although not considered to be formal cases, are occasions where employees are assisted through EAP.

Types of Issues

Employees approach the EAP for help with a wide variety of issues. The most commonly reported concerns are Family & Marital, Emotional Health, and Work Related. **Table 2** below shows a breakdown of issues (as a % of total reported) cited by clients to internal providers (EAP Coordinator-counsellors & RAs) and to the external EAP contractors.

Issue	C.C.s and RAs (%)	EAP Contractors (%)
Family & Marital	41.2	50.1
Work Related	24	8.5
Emotional Health	19.8	29.6
Physical Health	6.7	4
Addictions	3.1	2.3
Financial	3	2.3
Legal	2.2	3.2

Table 2

It is interesting to note that **work-related** issues are a significantly higher percentage of the total reported to the internal resources. This would seem to indicate that employees choose the avenue of help they feel is most likely to meet their needs. The presence of internal resources, aware of the workplace

and its culture, is of benefit to those employees who are seeking help to deal with issues related to their work lives. Conversely, employees are more likely to access an external resource to deal with issues related to Family and Emotional Health.

Chart 4 shows a breakdown of issues reported by all providers, internal and external.

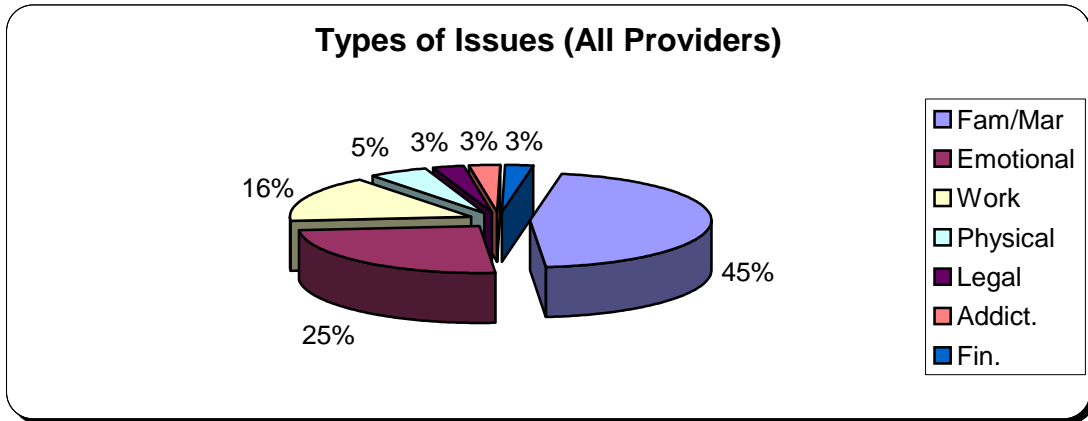


Chart 4

Coaching & Advisory Services

A significant part of the EAP Coordinator-counsellors’ responsibilities involve the provision of **advice and guidance** to managers, union representatives and referral agents. In addition to providing advice and guidance on EAP policy, program delivery and contracting for external services, the Coordinator-counsellor provides coaching and advisory services on good people management practices, particularly in the context of workplace issues and constructively dealing with employees. Coordinator-counsellors provided these services on **885** occasions during the fiscal year. External EAP contractors accounted for another **223** instances. **Chart 5** shows the advisory services delivered by region.

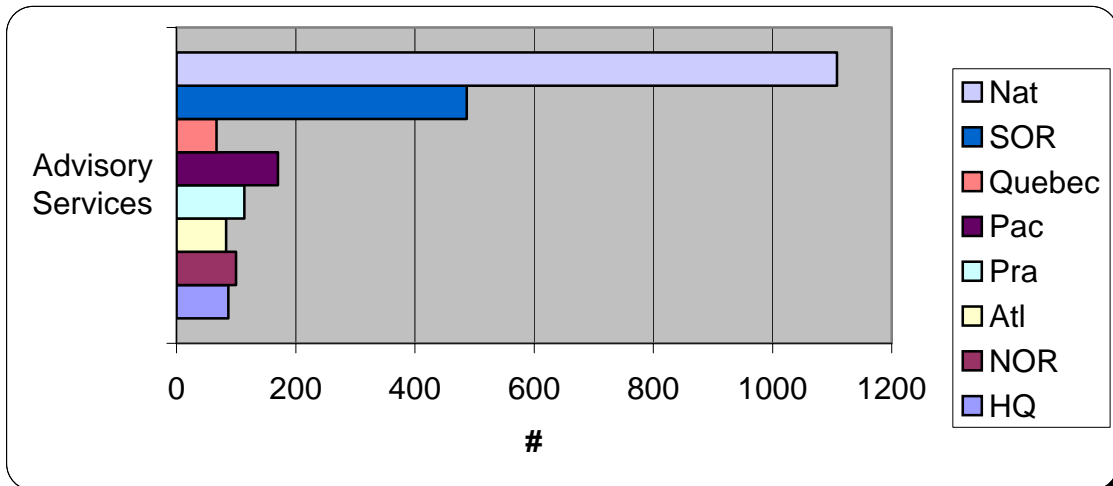


Chart 5

Training

There were **76** instances of **supervisor and manager training**, with a total of **1224** participants. Training topics offered to supervisors/managers included Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM), Local EAP Advisory Committee roles and responsibilities, Dealing With Change, and the **EAP Workshop for Managers and Union Representatives**. This workshop explains to participants their responsibilities vis-à-vis EAP and the importance of early intervention in situations where employees may benefit from accessing EAP. There were 47 occurrences of this training, with a total of 719 participants.

Chart 6 shows the range of EAP-related training delivered to managers. In the case of the EAP Workshop, training is delivered to both managers and union representatives jointly.

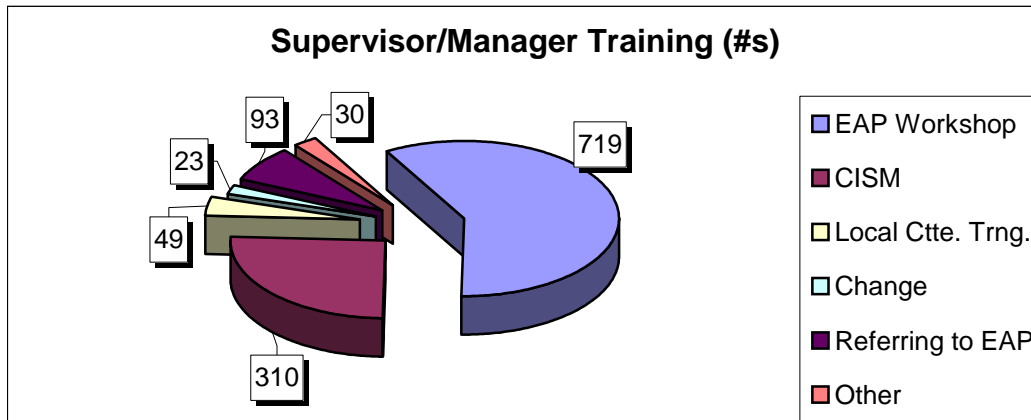


Chart 6

Orientation, Information & Awareness Sessions

The Agency's EAP coordinates and delivers EAP **orientation** sessions to the employee population. These sessions are delivered regularly to ensure that the employees are aware of the services available to them and their family members through the EAP. During the fiscal year, a total of **322** sessions were delivered to **8302** employees.

The Program also seeks to help employees deal with issues before they become a significant problem. To this end, the EAP sponsors, coordinates and conducts a wide variety of **information and awareness sessions**. Over the course of the year, these activities allow employees to learn about various health and wellness related subjects. For example, there were 10 Wellness Fairs held throughout the regions that were attended by over 2400 employees. Other popular sessions were also held relating to Stress Management, Change, Balancing Work and Family, and Dealing With Grief. A total of **512** different sessions took place with over **14500** employees attending (approximately **30%**

of the employee population). **Chart 7** shows a breakdown of orientation and information & awareness sessions held throughout the regions.

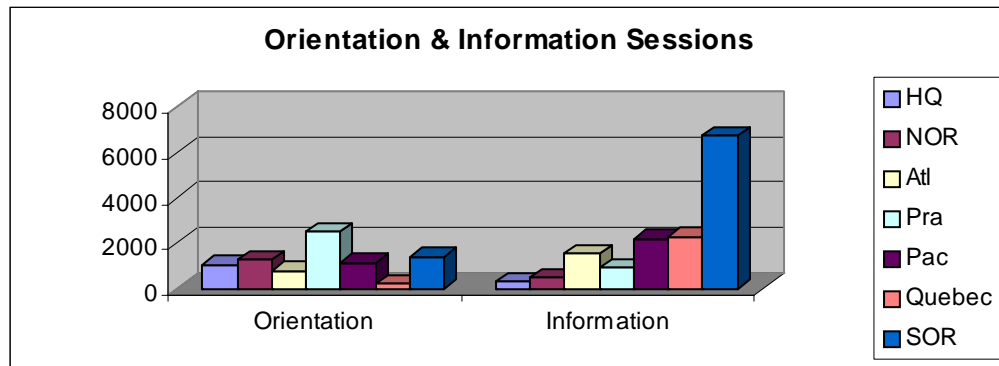


Chart 7

Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM)

Critical Incidents are unusual **traumatic events** that can severely affect the employees who experience them. The EAP Coordinator-counsellors ensure that incident response plans are in place, that managers and staff are aware of the services offered, and that **defusing and debriefing** services are offered as required following critical incidents. A defusing is the front-line response to a critical incident and is provided within a few hours of a crisis event to minimize the effect of acute critical incident stress. A debriefing is a structured intervention occurring usually within 48 to 72 hours after the incident, conducted by a trained mental health professional.

The Coordinator-counsellors are qualified to deliver these services. It is also a requirement that the external EAP contracted providers be able to deliver defusing and debriefing services. Many of our referral agents have received special training and are available to assist the professionals.

In 2003-2004, EAP Coordinator-counsellors and external EAP contractors delivered a total of 111 debriefing sessions (56 group, 55 individual). In addition, defusing services to individuals were delivered on 52 occasions.

	EAP Coordinator- counsellors	EAP Contractors	Referral Agents	Totals
Group Debriefings	26	30	-	56
Individual Debriefings	30	25	-	55
Defusings	11	16	25	52

Table 3

It is of course important that employees be aware of the potential impact of CIS and the services available to them. Last year, the EAP delivered **13** training sessions to **310** managers and supervisors. In addition, **19** general awareness sessions concerning CISM were offered to **346** employees.

Trends

Statistical reports continue to identify the fact that work-related issues form a higher percentage of total issues reported to internal resources than to external EAP contractors. Conversely, family/marital and emotional issues are more commonly reported by external contractors. Employees access the resource they feel is most likely able to help them.

One area reports that there is an increase in the frequency of physical issues being cited as the reason for accessing EAP. Although overall national statistics do not show an upward trend, the Agency's demographics would indicate that an ageing workforce may be more likely to suffer physical ailments over the coming years.

EAP finds itself consulted more frequently with regards to issues of workplace wellness. The EAP Coordinator-counsellors offer support and guidance to managers in the areas of good people management and organizational health. In addition, many regions and districts are reporting local initiatives related to wellness. Local Wellness Committees have been formed in some areas; in others, wellness has been added to the mandate of the local EAP committee. However organized, this shows a grass-roots employee-driven initiative that speaks to the employees' recognition of, and interest in, personal and workplace health.

Successes

EAP in all regions has formed partnerships with other program areas, with EAPs from other organizations (both public and private sector) and with community health agencies. This resulted in EAP involvement in Agency workshops dealing with the Alternative Dispute Resolution System, Harassment, Disability and Return to Work Issues, and Union/Management training.

EAP is also actively involved in the organization of Wellness fairs throughout the regions. Almost 23,000 employees attended information/awareness sessions and EAP orientation sessions, highlighting employee interest in health and wellness and reflecting the EAP's commitment to promoting a healthy lifestyle.

Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) plans are in place in all areas. EAP Coordinator-counsellors report positive feedback from managers and employees who have accessed CISM services as a result of exposure to a traumatic incident.

Local EAP advisory committees remain active in the workplace, organizing events and ensuring a strong, vibrant program is available to employees. The Program also receives crucial ongoing support from managers and union representatives.

In addition, the regions report some specific highlights:

Southern Ontario Region

- EAP has partnered with Employment Equity in activities celebrating diversity, such as Asian Heritage month.
- The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) requested EAP's involvement in a pilot project concerning mental health and depression.
- Three referral agents received Queen Elizabeth Commemorative Medals, awarded both for their Agency EAP activities and for their volunteer services in the community.

HQ

- EAP reported an increasing number of requests for career related counselling. They developed a workshop and information package for employees affected by the Compensation Delivery Renewal Project.

Atlantic Region

- EAP developed an annual EAP plan which lists both regional and local priorities.
- Reported the success of its popular 2nd annual regional EAP Week.

Quebec Region

- EAP developed a well received module on the psychological aspect of retirement for pre-retirement seminars.
- For the 6th consecutive year, National Mental Health Week was recognized and employees attended various activities.
- Two customized workshops were developed: one to help auditors deal with anger and intimidation; the other to help employees in Client Assistance deal with difficult clients.

Prairies Region

- On-site visits by the Coordinator-counsellor to border points.
- Project work on national EAP initiatives, notably, development of a Statement of Work for the delivery of clinical supervision services to EAP's Coordinator-counsellors.

Pacific Region

- Increased collaboration with Training & Learning, ADR and leadership/MG Group.

- Consultation with Regional AC on organizational wellness.

Northern Ontario Region

- An emphasis on promotion, information sessions and union/management training has resulted in a significant increase in utilization of the Program.

Challenges

The following challenges are reported by the EAP network:

- Managing use of available EAP budget funds as effectively as possible.
- Reducing the administrative burden of managing a large number of EAP contracts, while maintaining the same high quality of service to employees.
- Several districts and regions noted that there needed to be a mechanism in place to allow for consultation with EAP as management considers large-scale change initiatives.
- EAP Coordinator-counsellors report an increase in emotional/mental health issues related to stress and depression. Industry literature points to mental illness and depression becoming increasingly responsible for absenteeism and lost production over the next 5-10 years. In this light, development of strategies are seen as being critical in responding to this issue.
- As stated earlier in this report, CRA EAP personnel continue to deliver EAP management services to CBSA employees in several locations. The responsible EAP Coordinator-counsellors report challenges in staying current with the ongoing changes as CBSA moves forward in its transition and in responding to the different needs of that population.