

# NEELY EAP NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2026



## QUARTERLY WEBINAR

Join us for our quarterly webinar on

The Art of Difficult Conversations: Staying Calm, Clear & Respectful Under Stress

APRIL 23, 2026  
@2PM CENTRAL

CLICK HERE TO REGISTER

## WELLNESS SEMINAR

Join us for our monthly seminar on

Psychological Safety: Reducing Fear So Employees Think, Speak & Innovate

JUNE 26, 2026  
@2PM CENTRAL

CLICK HERE TO REGISTER

## LETTER FOR LEADERS

Helpful resources from your EAP

## WELCOME

The leadership newsletter is designed to provide EAP support to supervisors and managers. Making an informal referral (friendly referral) or formal referral can be challenging without training. In addition, the content will educate and promote program features that help leaders focus on the well-being of their employees. EAP services are free and readily accessible to the entire company and their family members.

Toll-Free, 24/7 Helpline:  
866-212-6096  
800-735-2989 TDD  
admin@neelyeap.com  
neelyeap.com

The logo for Neely Employee Assistance Program (EAP). It features the word "neely" in a lowercase, orange, handwritten-style font. To the right of "neely" is the word "eap" in a smaller, lowercase, orange, handwritten-style font. A small, white, four-pointed starburst is positioned above the top right of the "eap" text. Below the "neely" text, the words "Neely Employee Assistance Program" are written in a smaller, black, sans-serif font.

Neely Employee Assistance Program

# Counseling Awareness & Reducing Mental Health Stigma

By: Rosalinda Rodriguez, LPCA

**To truly understand counseling awareness and the mental health stigma,** we have to start at the root, and the root of the mental health profession doesn't begin with Freud. It begins with indigenous healers. Curanderas, shamans, priestesses, Babalawo, and countless others across the globe, long before the Anglo-Christian gaze shaped what we now call "mental health care." That is where this work originates. It matters because there is a very real and reasonable public skepticism toward the mental health profession. Why are we paying a stranger to listen to our problems? For many individuals, especially those from cultures that prioritize keeping struggles within the family or community, this model can feel unfamiliar and even a bit uncomfortable. That hesitation is not a weakness; it reflects deeply rooted values of connection, trust, and communal care. While modern systems have normalized seeking support outside of one's community, it is important to acknowledge why that discomfort exists in the first place.

At the same time, the mental health system, as it stands, is not without its flaws. There are valid concerns about how quickly medication can become a primary intervention, and how Eurocentric much of the education remains. Built largely on the work of white European philosophers and researchers, with study populations that historically centered white men, then white women, and later those with access to higher education. Ancestral knowledge, indigenous practices, and culturally rooted healing traditions are often absent from formal training. As Jennifer Mullan writes in *Decolonizing Therapy*, ignoring collective global trauma makes it impossible to deliver truly effective care, and failing to examine how we, as professionals, may participate in systems of oppression is deeply irresponsible (Mullan, 2023). This gap is real and it deserves to be acknowledged.



**And yet, there is also profound strength within the counseling profession.** As a counselor, I can speak to the depth of insight that this field offers; understanding attachment, recognizing how early experiences shape the way we show up in adulthood, and identifying how unaddressed wounds from childhood can quietly influence our relationships, work, and sense of self. There is meaningful value in this knowledge.

At its best, counseling is a space for being heard, a fresh set of ears, a trusted confidant. It is a relationship with someone who can sit with your most vulnerable moments without judgment, offering empathy and unconditional positive regard, while also holding space for accountability, honesty, and growth.

**When it comes to what good counseling actually looks like,** the hope is that you are working with someone who operates from a culturally humble, anti-oppressive lens. A clinician who understands that healing doesn't happen in a vacuum. Someone who believes in collective liberation: the idea that our struggles, our freedom, and our justice are all intertwined. To quote Dr. Han Ren, "Everything that is happening outside, it's happening within. We can't help other people unless we're willing to address what is happening within. We can only take others as far as we have met ourselves" (Ren & Martin, 2025).

Continued...

**A good counselor knows you are the expert on your own life.** They aren't there to fix you, but to listen, hold space, and stay mindful of the unseen: your story, your systems, and how to meet you with true respect and cultural humility. At its core, counseling is rooted in connection and community. In a world that prioritizes independence, choosing support is a quiet act of resistance and a good reminder that you don't have to do this alone.

**If you are a leader reading this,** the influence you carry on your team's willingness to face their mental and emotional health—rather than avoid it—is profound. This is at the heart of decolonizing work: healing was never meant to happen in isolation. While we sometimes need personal space, by and large, we heal with those around us. Community is not a bonus to the healing process, it is the process.

### **YOUR CALL TO ACTION:**

*Reflect on how your own biases or apprehensions around mental health may quietly shape your team's culture. You don't have to have all the answers—you only need to be willing to not look away. True liberation and healing are collective. There is no healing in isolation. There is no "I" in team. And there is no "some" in us all.*



**I've been reflecting on Ted Lasso lately,** and bear with me, because I assure you it connects. Coach Lasso is hired to lead a sport he has never coached, in a country far from home. What makes him remarkable isn't his technical expertise but his humanity. He leads with patience and empathy, seeing each player as a whole person first. He does not avoid his own struggles when severe anxiety arises mid-season, he learns through the team's psychologist, that there is strength in vulnerability and honesty. As the psychologist says, *"I can't be your mentor without being your tormentor."* This applies to leadership as well. Strong leaders do not shield their teams from hard truths or difficult feelings, they model what it looks like to face them. And above all, Coach Lasso's belief never wavered: not in individual players, but in the team, the community.

**To learn more about this topic, please join our upcoming webinar, [The Art of Difficult Conversations: Staying Calm, Clear & Respectful Under Stress](#) on Thursday April 23rd, at 2:00PM CST.**

References:

Mullan, J. (2023). Decolonizing therapy: Oppression, historical trauma, and politicizing your practice. W. W. Norton & Company.  
Ren, H., & Martin, R. (2025, January). Anti-racism in clinical practice [Staff training presentation]. Neely Employee Assistance Program

# Insights: Leveraging EAP for Leadership Success



Here are some answers to common questions supervisors and managers have regarding employee issues and making EAP referrals. If you need more assistance, feel free to email us at [admin@neelyeap.com](mailto:admin@neelyeap.com).

**Q: This is meaningful, but how do I actually bring this into my workplace without overstepping?**

**A:** Start small and stay consistent. You don't need to run a mental health workshop, normalize the conversation by checking in genuinely with your team, sharing EAP resources regularly, and being honest when you're having a hard week. Permission flows from the top down. When you model it, your team learns it's safe.

**Q: I worry about confidentiality if someone on my team opens up, what are my boundaries as a leader?**

**A:** Your role is to listen, not to counsel. If someone shares a struggle, the most powerful thing you can do is acknowledge it, avoid minimizing it, and point them toward support, like your EAP. You are not responsible for fixing it, and you should never share what's disclosed without permission. Holding that boundary is the support.

**Q: I have my own mental health struggles. Is it even appropriate to share that with my team?**

**A:** Yes, thoughtfully. You don't owe your team your full story, but selective vulnerability is one of the most powerful leadership tools you have. As Coach Lasso showed us, admitting that you've navigated anxiety, burnout, or hard seasons doesn't weaken your credibility. It humanizes you and quietly tells your team: it's okay to not be okay here.



## WHAT CAN MY EAP DO FOR ME?



### About Our Logo

For decades, enslaved African Americans looked to the North Star for hope, inspiration, and freedom. Neely EAP (NEAP) provides the **hope** that your situation will improve, the **inspiration** to move you in the right direction, and the **freedom** to live your best life.

Being in a leadership role can be challenging. Having the correct tools and resources can make a difference. The **Manager Assistance Program** offers support to resolve personal or professional issues that can negatively impact the workplace. We also offer:

- 24/7 Hotline, Access to Confidential Services
- Free Short-Term Counseling and Couch Time Check-In (preventive annual counseling session)
- Legal and Financial Assistance
- Work-life referrals for adult care, childcare, pet care and more
- Wellness Trainings & Online Employee Training Vault
- Critical Incident Stress Debriefing

