Flight Attendant Mental Health Awareness

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Author Note

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Abstract

My capstone project was to create a Facebook group for flight attendants that allow them to be able to find a location with resources for mental, and physical health struggles that come along with the job. It was private so that others can feel safe within the group, and know that the resources that are being posted have correct, and valid information.

*Keywords: Flight Attendant, Facebook Group, Resources*
Section 1: Flight Attendant Awareness

Project Inspiration

In fall of 2022, I started my career working as a flight attendant for American Airlines. I was so excited to get to travel the world and get to see so many new places. What I didn’t know was the mental and physical health struggles that would come along with the career. I started to struggle with depression, anxiety, and body dysmophia when I got out of training and started flying. I started talking to crew members about it, and realized that a lot of flight attendants struggle with a lot of the same issues that I did, but didn’t have a good place to find resources. That’s when I decided to create a Facebook group that is a one spot location where resources can easily be located.

Summary of Project Development

My project started with the creation of a Facebook group that was made specifically for flight attendants to find resources for struggles within the job. It also allowed for others to post what they have come across as well. The posting went on for a few weeks during the course of my project and then I wrapped it up by creating a google form that allowed me to receive feedback on how successful flight attendants felt that the group was. I will continue to use the Facebook group, but for the purpose of the project I only measured the week's content within the course timeframe.

Section 2: Elements Coming Together

Innovative Approach
My project started based on my own experiences, and the resources that I was able to use to help myself. I know that the main form of communication that flight attendants use is Facebook. There are all sorts of groups for different purposes (even crazy cat groups for flight attendants). With that being said, I was never able to find one that was specifically created for flight attendants to get mental and physical health resources. This gave me the idea to be the first to create a Facebook group that provides resources, and also allows flight attendants to share their experiences and resources as well, or find a safe space to be able to relate to others. I also spent some time researching trials that were done on flight attendants that compared the effects of the job on them, compared to normal 9-5 employees. In 2018, there was a study created by BMC Public Health that came to the conclusion, “We observed higher rates of specific adverse health outcomes in U.S. flight attendants compared to the general population, as well as associations between longer tenure and health conditions” (McNeely, Mordukhovich, Tideman, Gale, Coull). This helped validate what I had experienced, and heard from others within the career.

*Emotional Intelligence*

This project helped to bring awareness to not only myself, but other flight attendants as well on issues that are bigger than we realize. The Facebook group was created as a safe place for flight attendants to be able to relate to content that was being published, as well as add in their own. When I created the group, I made sure to post about the rules, one of them including: Think about how your posts are going to be perceived by others. This helped everyone realize that what I was posting, and what they posted needed to be mindful of other people and their experiences.

*Creative Thinking*
For my project, I approached my creativity by “getting stuck.” At the time, I wasn’t taking it as an opportunity to train my brain, but I see now that I did get that “aha” moment once I decided what I wanted to do. I can now look back on that in a different perspective and realize that I did work on getting myself out of the box. When I was first brainstorming ideas for my project, I originally said that there was nothing I could do with my job because there are 27,000 flight attendants within the company, and I didn’t think that I would be able to make a difference. My project ended up being something that incorporated my job, and is a helpful tool and resource for other flight attendants and aviation crew. Looking back, I can see that I was able to improvise during my brainstorm, which allowed me to come up with a project I originally wouldn’t have considered.

*Innovation Solution*

After I had completed doing some more research for the topic of my project, I found another research project that was completed in 2018 that also discovered, “Aviation personnel and specifically cockpit and cabin crew members work in a unique environment and endure a range of different stressors, which may place them at an increased risk of developing a mental or physical health condition” (Tegelmann, University of Twente). This was a major part of the problem that I was trying to address. My project allowed me to take a platform (Facebook) that I know is prevalent in the flight attendant industry, and use it in a way to make a lasting impact on others. When I was brainstorming ideas to do for my project, I almost considered finding resources online that flight attendants could use, and posting them on paper in the crew rooms. The struggle with this, is that I would not have been able to quantitatively or qualitatively be able to track the success of my project. With the project that I moved forward with, I can use the
amount of likes and followers to get quantitative results, and I also created a form for people to fill out that gave me several qualitative results.

**Section 3: Results**

One of the many benefits that my stakeholders gained was first hand access to resources all by joining one Facebook group. There is a wide variety of information that has been added, so once flight attendants join, they have a one stop shop to things they may need assistance with. There are phone numbers, websites, and links to direct sources. To track the results of my project, I created a google form to have members fill out with how successful they felt the group was. Thankfully that wasn’t the only thing I relied on, because I was hoping more would fill it out, but they didn’t. I used the amount of likes and followers that I had to almost measure my success rate, and that seemed to have been more accurate. I would have liked to gain more followers, and have more interaction within the group, but I am still proud of the numbers that I was able to reach. I looked at one of the reviews on the survey and a flight attendant said, “I personally haven’t used the resources myself, but I worked with a flight attendant who was asking me some questions about the Wings Foundation, so I added them to the group and sent them the post.” I really appreciated the fact that people were actually taking advantage of the sources that are there to help flight attendants in their day to day lives within this career.

**Section 4: Conclusion**

I chose to do this action project, because when it comes to the career of being a flight attendant, there needs to be action taken in order to help with mental and physical struggles that come along with the job. Research and gaining insight is beneficial, but it’s not implementing that information into anything that people can act on. From creating my capstone project, I have
learned that getting people to come together for a common cause is harder than I expected. There is still a stigma against mental health in the flight attendant industry, and people expect them to know what they are getting themselves into when they take the job. This leads to flight attendants not wanting to admit that they are struggling, which prevented me from fully being able to gain as many followers as I was hoping for. I know that I benefited from this project because I found sources for myself, and others that I know I will be using down the road. Also after sending out the survey, I learned that several flight attendants felt the group helped them feel relatable to others in the same career.

If I were to do this project differently, I would have posted the page to more groups to try and spread the word a little bit more. I did get quite a few followers (and may still gain more), but I was definitely hoping to help out more than I did. I surprisingly learned skills from using Facebook. I had never created a group before and didn’t realize all the steps that necessarily went into it. As well as how to make topics broad enough that it can benefit other groups and not necessarily just flight attendants. After completing my capstone project, I hope that more people in the aviation industry know that they aren’t alone. Being away from family and friends can be tough, but we are all in this together, and there are resources out there to help when we are struggling.

**Section 5: References**

*Home: Well-being resources. Home | Well-being resources. (n.d.).
https://www.resourcesforliving.com/


Tegelmann, J. (2018). *A study into schedule characteristics of shiftworking across more than two time zones that negatively impact the health and work-life balance of cabin and cockpit crew members under contract of one of the world’s largest airline* (Master's thesis, University of Twente).

*Welcome to FADAP. FADAP. (n.d.). https://www.fadap.org/

**Section 6: Appendix**

Due to my flight attendant Facebook group being private, I have attached screenshots from the feed of my group, as well as some of the content that was provided.

*Survey Results
FADAP*
For flight attendants who may be struggling with Drug and Alcohol use, here is a great resource for you.

What is FADAP?

FADAP is a substance-abuse prevention program, created and promoted for and by the Flight Attendant profession and funded by the FAA. Assistance is provided to all Flight Attendants, including those who are active, furloughed or on leave. FADAP serves as an additional resource for Flight Attendants struggling with addiction or health and wellness issues. FADAP is an industry-wide program to help supplement and support Flight Attendants that need support in the recovery.

FADAP's mission is to support a culture of safety which will be able to assist Flight Attendants in meeting their personal and professional goals through substance-abuse awareness, combined with self and peer referrals for assistance, and the implementation of a Flight Attendant-specific recovery support system. The Flight Attendant Drug and Alcohol Program began in September 2010 with funding from the FAA, and now includes Flight Attendant peers and managers from 25 airlines across the country.

What are some of the benefits offered by FADAP?

FADAP is an authorized and funded safety program funded by the FAA. The goal of FADAP is to educate and support cutting edge
FAA Mental Health Awareness

FAA. The goal of FDAP is to educate and support cutting edge assistance programs and policies within and across labor and management groups that are truly effective in helping Flight Attendants and their families who struggle with substance use disorders. Some of the services FADAP offers to all Flight Attendants and family members regardless of their airline or Union status and which also augment the assistance your Union EAP can provide include:

24/7 live phone assistance (you will never get a recording in your time of Cristi or need) with follow up services coordinated from your own peer program.

A no-cost, 6 month family education program for those struggling with a loved one’s substance use disorder.

24/7 help line for timely questions like 1) Can I take this medication and still fly? 2) Will I test positive if I take this medication? 3) I can’t enter Canada because of a DWI, what can I do?

Individualized treatment program searches for Flight Attendants and family members with little to no insurance coverage.

Individual and bulk access to free printed or electronic educational material including pamphlets, videos, recovery stories, webinars, hotlines, etc.

Free training programs die managers, Union leaders, and EAP peers on a variety of subjects related to substance use and mental health disorders.

Visit the FADAP website to learn more about services offered, recovery resources, and substance abuse information and education.
FA Mental Health Awareness

24/7 help line for timely questions like 1) Can I take this medication and still fly? 2) Will I test positive if I take this medication? 3) I can’t enter Canada because of a DWI, what can I do?

Individualized treatment program searches for Flight Attendants and family members with little to no insurance coverage.

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Free training programs die managers, Union leaders, and EAP peers on a variety of subjects related to substance use and mental health disorders.

Visit the FADAP website to learn more about services offered, recovery resources, and substance abuse information and education.

fadap.org
Fadap

95
2 comments

Like Comment Send

Write a comment...
2024 EAP Contact Information Update

We continue to experience challenging times. The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is here for you. Mental health concerns can adversely impact your quality of work and home life. Please reach out to us with any concerns. All correspondence is confidential.

Some of the most common reasons Flight Attendants call us include:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Stress/Coping
- Divorce
- Substance Use
- Trauma
- Emotional Distress
- Medical Clearance
- Assistance Finding a Counselor

Call the EAP department at 817 540-0108, ext 8701, or email eap@apfa.org.

After Hours Call Center Update

If you are trying to reach us after hours, we have a 24/7 call center available to take your calls.
FA Mental Health Awareness

If you are trying to reach us after hours, we have a 24/7 call center available to take your calls.

Optum is our vendor through December 31, 2021. Optum may be reached at 800 363-7190.

Beginning January 1, 2022, our new vendor will be CVS Health/Aetna. They may be reached at 833-721-2322.

Our vendor has licensed clinicians answering all calls. They will give referrals along with the code for your four free sessions with a counselor.

![Sistance PR](image)

following services:
on and resource referral support
seasonal standards through effective conflict resolution
support to critical or traumatic incidents
Is to enhance the health, welfare and safety of its Union’s members by providing quality gh. Attendees, we not only value and understand the professional job you do every day with a number of workplace resources and the guidance for the concerns that may int
FA Mental Health Awareness

WE ARE HERE FOR YOU!

14

86

Like Comment Send
APFA’s EAP provides the following services:

- Assessment, information and resource referral support
- The promotion of professional standards through effective conflict resolution
- Offers response and support to critical or traumatic incidents

The objective of APFA EAP is to enhance the health, welfare and safety of its Union’s members by providing quality peer support services. Since we are a group of trained Flight Attendants, we not only value and understand the professional job you do every day, we also specialize in providing you and your family with a number of workplace resources and the guidance for the concerns that may impair your ability to function at your best.

WE ARE HERE FOR YOU!

The four integrated departments of EAP which specialize in specific aspects of the program are:

- MENTAL HEALTH
- PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS
- CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS MANAGEMENT
- FLIGHT ATTENDANTS IN RECOVERY (F.A.I.R.)

Each department provides a wealth of information that better informs you of how EAP is directly related to your career as a Flight Attendant at American Airlines as well as the services we can provide to you and your family. Below are brief descriptions of each department and links to each of the individual department’s webpage.
Mental Health

APFA EAP understands that mental health issues can affect anyone at any time, occur in almost every family and workplace, and can adversely impact your quality of work and home life.

Some of the most common reasons Flight Attendants call us are:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Stress/Coping
- Divorce
- Substance Abuse
- Trauma
- Emotional Distress
- Medical Clearance
- Assistance Finding a Counselor

If you, or someone you know suffers from a mental health concern we can help you find the resources you need.

For CONFIDENTIAL assistance call:

(817) 540-0108
Ext. 8701

Critical Incident Stress Management

As Flight Attendants, we are “First Responders” and your Well Being is our first priority.

Any emergency or traumatic event at home or in the workplace can provoke distressful emotions, which is a normal reaction to an abnormal event.

The APFA EAP Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT) is available for confidential help 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. We are Flight Attendants assisting Flight Attendants.

For CONFIDENTIAL assistance call:

(800) 998-8194

Professional Standards

APFA Professional Standards is a voluntary and confidential service providing members the opportunity to resolve conflicts/concerns about co-workers without management involvement.

Our Goals

- To promote and restore professional conduct
- Ensure a safe work environment
- To develop and utilize sound problem-solving skills

If you have experienced a conflict or have a concern with a coworker and need confidential assistance from your Base Representative CLICK HERE

View the list of Base Professional Standards Reps

F.A.I.R.

Flight Attendant in Recovery

Provides a safe place for Flight Attendants in recovery to learn life/occupational skills from one another to support their ongoing recovery.

LEARN MORE >
Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

The Qxmd Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a free consultation, information, and referral service for all American team members and members of their household. There is no charge to you and the Program is designed to protect your privacy. Services are voluntary and confidential (except as required by local, state, or Federal law).

Professional help when you need it:

- EAP helps find solutions when none appear possible or likely.
- EAP is designed to help you identify and use resources to address personal and professional challenges.
- EAP can provide referrals for drug or alcohol problems, psychiatric problems, counseling needs, legal or financial concerns.
- All EAP advisors and licensed professionals have many years of experience in the mental health and substance abuse fields.

Accessing services:
The following apply to U.S.-based mainline team members and their household. Learn more about EAP for internationally based team members.

Read below to learn more about the resources available to you and your family:

LIVEANDWORKWELL.COM
As part of your health package, liveandworkwell.com provides private 24/7 resources to help you and your family with change, challenges, coping or crisis. Connect with a behavioral health professional, access self-help tools or review educational resources.

Visit: www.liveandworkwell.com
Access Code: American
(Your name is important to us. A personal login is required for secure tools. American is not modified if you or your family use the site.)

24-HOUR TELEPHONE ASSISTANCE AND COUNSELING
Telephonic counseling is completely free and team members have the option to meet with a counselor for up to four free in-person counseling sessions. Simply call 800-363-7190.
- If you are covered under BCBS and would like to continue to meet with your counselor after your free sessions, please check with BCBS Member Services before beginning your counseling to ensure they are in network provider.
- For those enrolled in a United Healthcare medicare plan, Optum will also continue to administer mental health and substance abuse benefits.

ON-SITE EAP AT AIRPORT HUBS, MAJOR EMPLOYMENT CENTERS
You may directly call our onsite EAP Advisors who are based at the airport hubs and major employment locations to schedule a phone appointment or contact us via email to request assistance. If you would like us to communicate information directly to you, we do so only with your consent (release of information, except when mandated by law).

To obtain details or to request assistance, contact your EAP Leader at 1-800-555-8880 (press the option that corresponds with your station or nearest location) or send an email to the clinician in your area.
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FA Mental Health Awareness

Myna Krueck
Apr 11

Here’s a quick reminder for all American Airlines flight attendants:

The Wings Foundation Flight Attendant Crisis Relief (FACR) program is here to help American Airlines Flight Attendants on the active American Airlines APFA system seniority list facing financial hardship due to sudden, unexpected, or crisis situation that may threaten their health and welfare.

Did you know that Wings Foundation exists primarily through the generosity of your fellow flight attendants? We are so grateful to all of you for believing in this mission to help one another when it’s needed most.

To learn more about how Wings Foundation can help, click on the link below.

wingsfoundation.com
Facebook Group Feedback

I would love to hear your thoughts on how beneficial this group has been, and whether the resources were useful or not.

What was your favorite part about the group? *
1-2 sentences

My favorite part about this group was being provided sources for people who are going through the same thing as me and not feeling alone.

Suggestions for improvement
1-2 sentences

I would suggest maybe organizing a virtual meet up to build more of a community and talk with others.
Did you use the resources provided?

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

How did you find out about the Facebook group?

- A Working Crewmember

Are you going to recommend this group to other flight attendants?

- Yes
- Maybe
- No
Did the environment within the group feel safe and non-judgmental?

- [ ] Strongly Disagree
- [ ] Disagree
- [ ] Agree
- [x] Strongly Agree

How successful was this Facebook group?

- [ ] 0
- [ ] 1
- [ ] 2
- [ ] 3
- [ ] 4
- [ ] 5
- [ ] 6
- [ ] 7
- [ ] 8
- [ ] 9
- [x] 10

This content is neither created nor endorsed by Google.
Facebook Group Feedback

I would love to hear your thoughts on how beneficial this group has been, and whether the resources were useful or not.

What was your favorite part about the group? *
1-2 sentences
I like that I found support in one spot from other flight attendants like me

Suggestions for improvement
1-2 sentences

Did you use the resources provided?

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

https://docs.google.com/forms/u/1/d/1zC0Q_8tFb1kIPuoRI2Z-hy9D-UVDuUk6rYWoU6_iBKg/printallresponses?pli=1
How did you find out about the Facebook group?

- A Working Crewmember

Are you going to recommend this group to other flight attendants?

- Yes
- Maybe
- No

Did the environment within the group feel safe and non-judgmental?

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree
How successful was this Facebook group?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

This content is neither created nor endorsed by Google.

Google Forms
This group was very beneficial to me. Being a flight attendant can be very stressful and tiring days. This group helped me not feel alone. I felt a sense of relief seeing other individuals going through the same things.

I would like to have more information on how to create a well balanced lifestyle with a flight attendants schedule. The owner of the group focuses a lot on mental health for flight attendants. How do you incorporate exercise, cooking balanced meals, and maintaining your mental health when you are going through stressful or exhausting times?
Did you use the resources provided?

- [ ] Strongly Disagree
- [ ] Disagree
- [ ] Agree
- [x] Strongly Agree

How did you find out about the Facebook group?

- [ ] A Working Crewmember

Are you going to recommend this group to other flight attendants?

- [x] Yes
- [ ] Maybe
- [ ] No
Did the environment within the group feel safe and non-judgmental?

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

How successful was this Facebook group?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

- 6

This content is neither created nor endorsed by Google.

Google Forms
I loved the group because it made me feel less alone. It help me prioritize my mental health by giving me access to a lot of information I wasn’t aware of and by giving me access to others struggling similarly!

None! I just hope to see it continue to grow.
How did you find out about the Facebook group?

A Working Crewmember

Are you going to recommend this group to other flight attendants?

- Yes
- Maybe
- No

Did the environment within the group feel safe and non-judgmental?

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree
How successful was this Facebook group?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

This content is neither created nor endorsed by Google.

Google Forms
Facebook Group Feedback

I would love to hear your thoughts on how beneficial this group has been, and whether the resources were useful or not.

What was your favorite part about the group? *

1-2 sentences

Being able to find others that were going through the same thing as me. I found this group highly useful and will continue to engage as needed.

Suggestions for improvement

1-2 sentences

The group is great however I’m sure as it continues to grow, so will the resources that will continue to benefit us all.

Did you use the resources provided?

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

https://docs.google.com/forms/u/1/d/1zC0Q_8tFb1kIPuoRl2Z-hy9D-UVDuUk6rYW0U6_iBKg/printallresponses?pli=1
How did you find out about the Facebook group?

- A Working Crewmember

Are you going to recommend this group to other flight attendants?

- Yes
- Maybe
- No

Did the environment within the group feel safe and non-judgmental?

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree
How successful was this Facebook group?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

This content is neither created nor endorsed by Google.
Facebook Group Feedback

I would love to hear your thoughts on how beneficial this group has been, and whether the resources were useful or not.

What was your favorite part about the group? *
1-2 sentences

How easy it was to share helpful information with others. I personally haven't used the resources myself, but I worked with a flight attendant who was asking me some questions about the Wings Foundation, so I added them to the group and sent them the post.

Suggestions for improvement
1-2 sentences

just not letting the resources getting out of date and keeping up with changing information

Did you use the resources provided?

- [ ] Strongly Disagree
- [ ] Disagree
- [x] Agree
- [ ] Strongly Agree
How did you find out about the Facebook group?

- A Working Crewmember

Are you going to recommend this group to other flight attendants?

- Yes
- Maybe
- No

Did the environment within the group feel safe and non-judgmental?

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree
How successful was this Facebook group?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

This content is neither created nor endorsed by Google.

Google Forms