



Supervisor NEWSLETTER

Employee Assistance Program
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When Drug and Alcohol Use Impacts Work: Supporting Employee Wellness

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When facing the possibility that one of your employees may be suffering with alcohol or substance abuse issues, it can be a tense and uncomfortable time for everyone involved. As people struggle to cope with their personal losses, financial pressures, social unrest and serious health problems, chemical dependency patterns often increase. Addiction affects millions of people in all levels of employment, education, and financial status.

It's a topic that can often be difficult to navigate. By the time a problem becomes evident in the workplace, employee performance, attendance and safety on the job may already have been impacted. Risk of job loss may be imminent. It may be time for a person to be formally evaluated by a chemical dependency specialist. Whether voluntary or mandatory, the EAP can consult with supervisors and provide guidance in their decision making process as they try to support their employees.

Step 1: Evaluation

Chemical dependency professionals conduct substance abuse assessments at their associated treatment centers. Appointments must be scheduled in advance and generally take one to two hours. Counselors will conduct a series of surveys and take a history of

both individual and family substance use. Most often a comprehensive drug/alcohol urinalysis test is included. The evaluation is a tool which will help assess the severity of a possible substance abuse problem, and guide the provider in creating a customized treatment plan if warranted.

Assessments are confidential and voluntary. No information is released or reported without the client giving signed consent. Clients freely decide whether or not to enroll in treatment programs, unless they are court ordered or employer mandated to comply with final recommendations. Ultimately, it is still up to the client to make the decision whether or not to follow through.

Step 2: Treatment

- **Outpatient treatment** is one of the most common recommendations. Employees typically continue to work while attending morning or evening treatment groups over several months. The weekly frequency and the length of the course of treatment depends on the individual progress and care plan.
- **Inpatient treatment** is recommended for the most critical and high risk medical needs. An employee may have had previous unsuccessful attempts at recovery in outpatient programs and has continued to relapse. Others have built up such escalated drug or alcohol dependency habits, that inpatient care is the safest and most effective plan to begin the road to recovery. Additional health complications can also be easily monitored with inpatient care. Patients live on site at the residential facility for 14-30 days typically, sometimes longer. Employees make the appropriate arrangements with their supervisors for time away.

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- **Medical detox programs** are also inpatient and may be necessary if someone is experiencing severe withdrawal symptoms such as: tremors, nausea, vomiting, sweats, anxiety or rapid heart rate. Acute withdrawal symptoms can have dangerous risks of heart attack, stroke and death if not monitored safely. Inpatient detox programs usually take between 3-5 days before formal treatment begins.
- **ADIS (alcohol drug information school)** class hours may be recommended, if no treatment criteria is met after the evaluation. This is an 8-16 hour education course that can be done online or in person.

What will it cost?

Medical insurance plans often cover a good portion of evaluation and treatment costs within their approved facility locations. Individual deductibles and co-payments must be managed by the employee. Education classes and DOT (Department of Transportation) assessments are not covered as a medical expenses.

Guidance from your EAP

First Choice Health EAP licensed clinicians consult with supervisors and provide step by step guidance for any employee concerns. Whether your employee is in a mandatory disciplinary action or voluntarily seeking help, the EAP can assist you. We offer in the moment counseling to employees, provide resources for substance abuse assessments and treatment, and confidential support to you and your staff. Reach your EAP 24/7 by calling (800) 777-4114 for consultation. Our experts welcome the opportunity to join you in these critical conversations.