

Substance Abuse in the Workplace is Everybody's Problem

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Substance abuse in the workplace is detrimental not only to the employee who abuses drugs but also to co-workers and employers.

Substance abuse can result in poor balance, diminished motor skills, inability to concentrate, impaired vision and slower reaction time. The employee who uses alcohol or other drugs may suffer from or cause an accident in the workplace because of any or all of these factors. And it's not just when someone drinks during the working hours that these dangers are present. Studies show that an employee experiencing hangover is affected by the same symptoms as those listed above.

Besides the chance of physical injury to self or others, the employee may lose time from work. This can result in less pay and also may affect his or her chance for promotion. In some cases, it may result in termination.

When any employee does not perform well on the job, production suffers. So does morale. This can damage business or services and may result in an across-the-board cutting of raises, lowering of benefits and elimination of positions. This affects everyone, not just the alcohol or other drug abuser.

If you know someone with an addiction problem, you might worry, though, that you're being a busybody or intruding on someone's private life. You're not. As this article shows, substance abuse becomes everyone's problem when left untreated.

If you want to help ensure your safety and that of others in the workplace, mention the employee assistance programme as a confidential source of help to the person with the addiction. Other resources to provide for those who have a substance abuse problem are Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous and other mental health agencies.

*For further information or help for someone with a substance abuse problem you can contact
Families In Action at 628-2333.*