

Mental Health Matters in the Workplace



Substance Abuse NOTE:

Workers with alcohol and other drug problems used the healthcare system 13.5 times more than non-substance abusers .

Substance abusers may overuse employer health care benefits. In fact the National Conference Proceedings Report (US Department of Labor & Office of National Drug Control Policy) indicates substance abusers incur 300% higher medical costs than Non - abusers.

Substance Abuse in the Workplace

Alcohol and drug dependence are most frequently portrayed as problems affecting only the homeless, the unemployed or criminals in our community. This portrayal is a false one as the majority of substance abusers are insured blue collar and white collar workers.

Their “economic crimes” include:

- Absenteeism
- Productivity decline & presenteeism
- Workplace accidents
- Wasteful overuse of health care
- Frequently late for work

This may be a factor in higher Worker’s Compensation claims among substance abusers. The same report cites nearly 50% of all Worker’s Compensation claims are related to substance abuse in the workplace and reports substance abusers file three to five times as many Worker’s Compensation claims.



Substance Abuse NOTE:

79% of FORTUNE 1000 CEOs believe substance abuse was either a significant or very significant problem in their company as compared to five years ago.

Workplace injuries may be linked to substance abuse in some employees. One manufacturer found employees with a chemical dependency had:

- Six times the number of accidents
- Seven times the number of missed days from work
- Higher incidence of injuries, hypertension or other mental illness.

Another large employer which administers pre-employment drug tests found those who tested positive on the drug screen were five times more likely to have a workplace accident than those who screened negative.

Substance Abuse NOTE:

20% of male workers are heavy drinkers.

**Alcohol and Other Drugs in the Workplace:
What Other Employers Have Done**

- Write a Written Substance Abuse Policy
- Create an Employee Education & Awareness Program
- Develop Supervisor Training
- Start or refer to an Employee Assistance Program
- Contact an Employee Assistance Program
- Contact an Alcohol and Drug Treatment provider
- Conduct drug or alcohol testing as appropriate

For More Information: Contact the Mental Health Association of East Tennessee at 865-584-9125.

The Mental Health Association offers equally all services to eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin or disability.

Substance Abuse NOTE:

70% of adult illicit drug users are employed.

29% of employees ages 20-40 used drugs in the past year.

Mental illness and substance abuse issues affect both male and female employees yet are under recognized by white collar and blue collar employees.



No single symptom is proof of an alcohol problem or chemical dependence. However, any employee seeking help for themselves or a co-worker should feel comfortable consulting their Human Resources Department or EAP. A clinical evaluation is recommended if you observe several of the following:

- Seeing or hearing things others do not
- Extreme mood swings
- Feeling others are “against” them
- Withdrawal from others
- Lax personal hygiene care
- Abnormal absences or tardiness from work
- Numerous injuries
- Restlessness
- Inappropriate emotional responses
- Confusion
- Rambling, illogical speech

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