



Drug Free Workplace

USD Policy 005.02100 requires that information be distributed, explaining the harmful physical and mental effects of drug abuse and how it hampers one's productivity in order that each employee may fully understand the importance of their compliance with this policy.

Uintah School District

School Year
2009-2010

What is Addiction (Dependence)?

Addiction is a chronic, progressive, life-threatening, often relapsing, but treatable disorder characterized by compulsive use of one or more substances that results in physical, psychological, or social harm to the individual and continued use of the substance or substances despite this harm. Addiction has two possible components, physical dependence and psychological dependence:

Physical dependence—A state of becoming physically adapted to alcohol or other drugs. There are two important aspects to physical dependence: tolerance (the need for higher and higher doses to achieve the same effects) and withdrawal (the appearance of physical symptoms such as nausea, chills, and vomiting, when someone stops taking a drug too quickly).

Psychological dependence—A subjective sense of need for alcohol or other drug, either for its positive effects or to avoid

negative effects associated with no use.

Not everyone who uses alcohol or experiments with illegal drugs ends up addicted. Unfortunately, it is not possible to tell early on whose use may lead to addiction. Although addiction unquestionably begins with a voluntary act of using a drug, continued use often becomes involuntary, ultimately to the point that the behavior is driven by a compulsive craving. The compulsion results from a number of factors, including dramatic changes in brain function, involving changes elicited in specific neurons in the central nervous system, produced by prolonged exposure to the drug. This is why addiction is considered a brain disease. It is this compulsion that causes most of the problems surrounding addiction and requires multidimensional regimens of treatment. Once addicted, it is almost impossible for most people to stop the spiraling cycle of addiction



One of the most disturbing and confusing aspects of addiction is that it is characterized by denial.

on their own without treatment. Furthermore, addiction often becomes a chronic recurring disorder for which repeated treatment episodes are required before an individual achieves long-term abstinence.

What are the Characteristics of Addiction?

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, addiction to alcohol or other drugs may be:

Chronic—Once an addiction is developed, it will always have to be addressed. An addict may manage to stop using alcohol or other drugs for significant periods of time, but the disease typically does not disappear.

Rather, it goes into remission. Should "normal" drug use be attempted, "out of control" use will return rapidly.

Progressive—Addiction gets worse over time. With some drugs, the decline is rapid. With others, like alcohol, it can be more gradual.

Primary—Addiction is not just

a symptom of some underlying psychological problem. Once the use of alcohol or drugs becomes an addiction, the addiction itself needs to be treated as the primary illness.

Terminal—Addiction to alcohol or other drugs often leads to death through damage to major organs of the body.

Inside this issue:

How Can I Know If I Am At Risk For Addiction? 2

What Are The Typical Signs Of Addiction? 2

What Is Enabling? 2

What Are Substances Of Abuse? 3

What Are The Possible Effects Of Drug Abuse? 3

Is Everyone Who Tries Alcohol Or Drugs Destined For Addiction? 4

What Are The Components Of An Employee Drug-Free Work Place Program? 4

• **Once addicted, it is almost impossible for most people to stop the spiraling cycle of addiction on their own without treatment.**

• **Addiction often becomes a chronic recurring disorder for which repeated treatment episodes are required before an individual achieves long-term abstinence.**



When in denial, the user rejects the notion that his or her use is out of control or that it is causing any problems at home or on the job.

How Can I Know If I Am At Risk For Addiction?

Many factors can lead to developing a problem with alcohol and other drugs. Unfortunately, accurate prediction is difficult. There is, however, some evidence that suggests certain behaviors or histories can increase the likelihood of addiction.

Addiction is a family disease—People with a history of drug abuse in their family are more susceptible to developing problems with addiction. Children of alcoholics or addicts are three



times more likely to develop problems. If both parents are addicts or alcoholics, the risk increases fivefold. This is due to heredity as well as learned behavior. It is important for parents to realize that children learn much from watching the behaviors of others.

Prior abuse of alcohol and other drugs has a great impact on developing future problems—A pattern of abuse develops and can lead to addiction and psychological reliance on drugs or alcohol. According to the Department of Labor, research demonstrates that the later in life an individual first

drinks alcohol or uses other drugs, the less likely he or she will progress to drug abuse or addiction.

Other contributing factors—Some people use alcohol or drugs as part of a self-destructive lifestyle. Other people start to use drugs to seek relief from depression or crisis in their lives. Although some fortunate individuals never develop serious problems, and use diminishes or ceases once the precipitating events change, others develop a serious problem before they even realize it.

Absenteeism is often two to three times higher for drug and alcohol abusers than for other employees

Emotional—Aggression, anxiety, burnout, denial, depression, and paranoia.

Behavioral—Excessive talking, impaired coordination, inability to sit still, irritability, lack of energy, limited attention span, poor motivation, slow reaction time, and slowed or slurred speech.

Physical—Chills, the smell of alcohol, sweating, and weight loss.

Can addiction be recognized in the workplace? Yes. According to the Department of Labor, while the aforementioned emotional and physical signs will likely be present, employers and coworkers also should be cognizant of continual missed appointments, excessive and unexplained absences or days off from work, and repeated mistakes.

According to the International

Labor Organization:

For workers, substance abuse can result in deteriorating health, injury, disciplinary action, family problems, job loss, and subsequent problems with personal finances.

For employers, substance abuse leads to safety problems affecting the enterprise, the workforce, and the public at large, and it gives rise to increased costs, lower productivity, and loss of competitive edge.

What Is Enabling?



Substance abuse often leads to lower productivity.

Enabling includes any action by another person or an institution that intentionally or unintentionally has the effect of facilitating the continuation of an individual's addictive process. Examples of enabling behavior include:

Covering up—Providing alibis, making excuses, or doing an impaired coworker's work rather than allowing it to be known that he or she is not meeting his or her responsibili-

ties.

Rationalizing—Developing reasons why the person's continued use is understandable or acceptable.

Withdrawing—Avoiding contact with the person with the problem.

Blaming—Getting angry at the individual for not trying hard enough to control his or her use.

Controlling—Trying to take responsibility for the person's use by throwing out his or her drugs or cutting off the supply.

Threatening—Saying that you will take action (e.g., turning the person in) if he or she does not control his or her use, but not following through when he or she continues to use.

What Are Substances of Abuse?

A psychoactive substance is any substance that people take to change either the way they feel, think, or behave. This includes alcohol and tobacco, as well as natural and manufactured drugs. In the past, most drugs were made from plants, such as the coca bush for cocaine, opium poppies for heroin, and cannabis for hashish or marijuana. Now, drugs such as Ecstasy or LSD are produced by synthesizing various chemicals. Drugs of abuse fall into three categories: depressants (e.g., heroin, barbiturates), stimulants (e.g., cocaine, crack, amphetamines), and hallucinogens (e.g., marijuana, Ecstasy,

LSD), and are either ingested, inhaled, smoked, injected, or snorted.

Depressants are sedatives that act on the nervous system. They provide artificial relaxation and relief from anxiety and mental stress, but tend to produce psychological dependence; withdrawal from heavy use is severe.

Stimulants are agents that activate, enhance, or increase activity of the central nervous system. They include amphetamines and synthetic appetite suppressants, such as phenmetrazine or methylphenidate. Stimulants can give rise to symp-

tomys suggestive of intoxication, including tachycardia, papillary dilation, elevated blood pressure, and nausea or vomiting. They can also cause violent and aggressive behavior, agitation, and impaired judgment. A full-blown delusional psychosis may occur.

Hallucinogens are chemically diverse and produce profound mental changes such as euphoria, anxiety, sensory distortion, vivid hallucinations, delusion, paranoia, and depression. They include mescaline and LSD.



Drugs of abuse fall into three categories: depressants, stimulants, and hallucinogens.

What Are The Possible Effects of Drug Abuse?

Drugs can be harmful in a number of ways, both through immediate effects and through damage to health over time. Even occasional use of marijuana affects cognitive development and short-term memory. In addition, the effects of marijuana on perception, reaction, and coordination of movements can result in accidents.

Hallucinogens (such as LSD) distort perceptions, alter heart-rate and blood pressure and, in the long term, cause neurological disorders, depressions, anxiety, visual hallucinations, and flashbacks.

Cocaine and **amphetamines** cause tremors, headaches, hypertension, and increased heart-rate. Long-term effects include nausea, insomnia, loss of weight, convulsions, and depression.

Heroin use initially results in nausea, slow respiration, dry

skin, itching, slow speech and reflexes. Over a long period of time, there is a serious risk of developing physical and psychological dependence, which can result in acute overdose and even death due to respiratory depression.

There is a tendency to present some drugs (such as **cannabis** and **Ecstasy**) as less harmful than they actually are, without taking into consideration their long-term consequences and the effects they have on adolescent development, particularly on the development of certain critical functions (cognitive ability and capacity to memorize). Ecstasy

has been presented as having little or no side effects, but studies show that its use alters, perhaps permanently, certain brain functions and also damages the liver and other both organs.

Although not regarded as illicit, inhalants are widely abused, especially by disadvantaged youth. Some of these volatile substances, which are present in many products such as glue, paint, gasoline, and cleaning fluids, are directly toxic to the liver, kidney, or heart, and some produce progressive brain degeneration.

The major problem with psychoactive drugs is that when people take them, they focus on the desired mental and emotional effects and ignore the potentially damaging physical and mental side effects that can occur. No illicit drug can be considered "safe." In one way or another, the use of psychoactive substances alters the normal functioning of the human body, and in the long run they can cause serious damage.

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There are effective strategies employed by professionals for helping break through denial, which must be overcome before treatment can take place

If you need help in locating trained addiction specialists, please contact Lee Gagon, USD Director of Human Resources.

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Drug-free work place programs generally include all or some of the following five components:

Written Policy—Serves as the foundation for a drug-free workplace;

Employee Education—Provides employees with information they need to adhere to and benefit from the drug-free workplace program;

Supervisor Training—Teaches supervisors to enforce the policy and helps them recognize and deal with employees who have performance problems stemming from substance abuse;

Employee Assistance Program (EAP) - Offers assistance to help employees resolve problems, such as alcohol and drug abuse, that can interfere with job performance;

Drug Testing—Provides concrete evidence for intervention and/or disciplinary action.

Is Everyone Who Tries Alcohol or Drugs Destined For Addiction?

No. Not everyone who uses alcohol or experiments with illegal drugs ends up addicted. Unfortunately, it is not possible to tell early on whose use may lead to addiction. The following are several different ways that people use alcohol and drugs:

Experimental Use—Out of curiosity or through peer pressure, individuals may try drinking alcohol or using illegal drugs. If the use of the alcohol or drug continues irresponsibly, experi-

mentation may become problematic.

Social/Recreational Use—If an adult's use of alcoholic beverages does not cause problems for the user, or for others, most people consider such use to be social or recreational.

Abuse—Abuse is a condition in which the use of alcohol or other drugs has become such a central part of an individual's life that he or she is willing to let go of important activities in order to use the drug. Drug abuse involves the intake of a drug under circumstances that significantly increase the hazard potential. Examples of abuse include: use of alcohol or drugs in spite of a drug-free workplace policy, taking prescription drugs without a prescription or taking drugs in

a way that are not prescribed, or use of over-the-counter drugs to the point of impairment.



Uintah School District is committed to maintaining public trust and confidence by providing a safe school environment for students and a safe work place for employees. The District is committed to providing a drug-free, smoke-free, and alcohol-free workplace. Employees of the Uintah School District are expected to follow the federal, state, and local laws which prohibit distribution, manufacturing, and/or possession of alcohol, drugs, and tobacco at school or in any other school district location.