

# Momentum

Addiction awareness in the workplace



Employee Assistance Program  
Available 24 hours  
**1-800-424-5988**

## Signs of workplace substance abuse

- ☑ An employee may exhibit slurred speech, unsteady gait or glassy-eyed appearance; scent of alcohol on the breath; unusual, erratic, secretive or aggressive behavior; deterioration of physical appearance.
- ☑ Impaired work performance such as inefficiency and missed deadlines; unexplained and/or frequent absenteeism; extended lunch breaks; needing others to pick up part of the employee's workload.
- ☑ Withdrawal from responsibilities; unusual borrowing of money from others; unexplained trips to storage rooms or restrooms, i.e., to use drugs or alcohol.

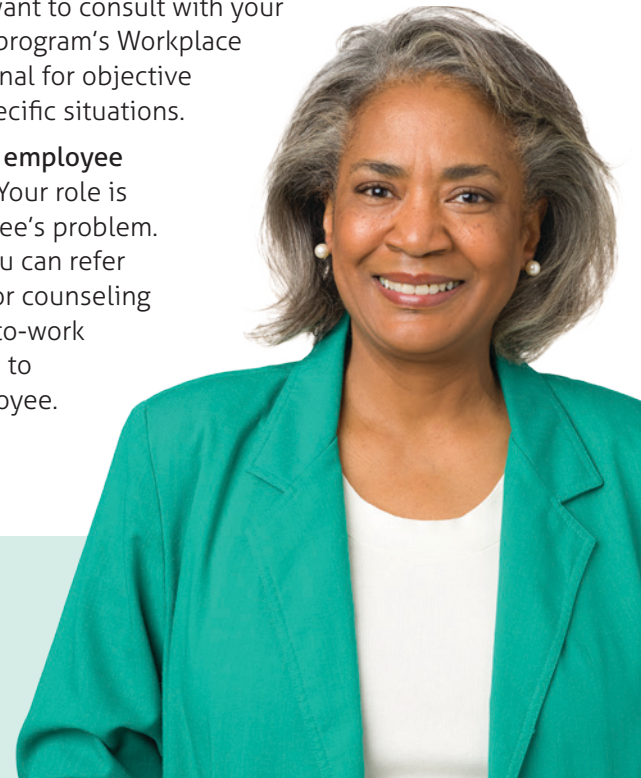
## Dealing with a substance-using employee

Observing a team member's impaired work performance—and suspecting substance use as a cause—can be a challenging situation for a supervisor or manager.

A team member's substance use can harm employee morale, safety, work quality and productivity. If you learn of an employee's substance use, your role as a leader is to administer disciplinary action consistent with your organization's policies. In some cases, immediate employee termination is appropriate.

- **Document what you have observed.** If you suspect a problem, begin by documenting the employee behaviors and actions that may indicate a work performance issue. Write down your specific observations about the employee's performance, including dates and times of the observed situations.
- **Obtain counsel.** You may want to consult with your HR representative or your program's Workplace Support Services professional for objective input on how to handle specific situations.
- **Refer the individual to the employee assistance program (EAP).** Your role is not to diagnose an employee's problem. However, in many cases you can refer the employee to the EAP for counseling and rehabilitation. A back-to-work agreement may be needed to help re-integrate the employee.

Learn to recognize signs of drug and alcohol use. Don't ignore them. Refer the employee to the EAP for help with problems impacting their work performance. Don't attempt to counsel an employee yourself.



Log on to [MagellanHealth.com/member](https://www.MagellanHealth.com/member) today!

**Magellan**  
HEALTHCARE<sup>SM</sup>

# Consulting with Workplace Support

Workplace Support provides professional consultation to help supervisors manage employees who have work performance problems including substance abuse.

- While most people will recognize when they have a problem and will contact the EAP on their own, in some cases you will be the first to notice something is wrong.
- To access professional guidance, call your program's toll-free number to be connected with an experienced consultant.
- An EAP counselor will meet with the employee, assess the problem, and if necessary, refer the employee to a treatment resource or program.
- Evaluation and treatment are just part of the long process of recovering from substance abuse. To help employees sustain recovery, a Workplace Support consultant establishes a structured, individualized follow-up plan.
- If an employee requires hospitalization for chemical dependency treatment, the Workplace Support consultant helps smooth the back-to-work process through employee re-integration, performance monitoring and follow-up.

## Keep personal and performance problems separate



### Confronting an employee

As a supervisor, it's sometimes difficult to distinguish between personal and professional issues, especially if you have worked with the employee for some time and may even maintain a friendship. Arrange a meeting where you constructively confront the employee's performance issues objectively without getting into personal problems or acting judgmental.



### Steps to take

Take the responsibility to intervene. It's vital to address an employee's behavior when it is affecting work performance and/or other employees. Have documentation of poor work performance and absenteeism ready. State that you're concerned with the employee's performance decline. Review the functions of the EAP, emphasizing that confidential help is available.



### Tactics to avoid

Don't try to diagnose the employee's problem, and don't make value judgments. Limit your comments to job performance and attendance. Don't get sidetracked by sympathy-evoking tactics. Don't cover up for the employee. Don't discuss the employee's problem with anyone except your supervisor, a personnel representative, or the EAP.



**Webinar**—Join us Wednesday, March 22 for *Be the Meeting Hero Your Organization Needs*, a webinar about making your meetings more efficient and successful. Register [here](#).