



MANAGER SERIES

Tips for workplace Managers dealing with staff Drug and Alcohol challenges

-  **Acknowledge and validate your professional Duty of Care.** Occupational Safety and Health legislation requires employers to take all safety concerns in the workplace seriously. Duty of care dictates that all reasonable steps should be taken to ensure workplace safety.
-  **Awareness of a “Safe Workplace Culture”.** Continually visit and revisit your ongoing workplace culture to ensure that you remain up to date with legislation and policy changes, and to ensure that complacency does not evolve.
-  **Identify and implement a process for employees.** Ensure all employees have an easy and identifiable process to raise concerns about their own or someone else’s drug and alcohol use and its potential effects on the workplace.
-  **Demonstrate organisational support and commitment.** This may include reference to this subject in regular staff meetings. Arrange for guest speakers to attend the workplace to educate the staff on Drug and Alcohol dangers.
-  **Encourage EAP counselling and pathways.** Adopt a supportive and clear pathway for staff (and/or their family members) to confidentially access EAP services. This will help prevent resistance and shame for the employee. Display EAP posters or arrange an EAP awareness presentation in the workplace.
-  **Provide training and education.** Easily accessible information is crucial to workplace safety. This could include access to pamphlets, information packs and referral contact pathways to relevant support agencies.
-  **Risk related behaviours.** Drug and Alcohol behaviours can enter the workplace when the following is present in workplace culture – extended working hours, isolation, boredom, shift work, poor working conditions, poor working relationships, lack of training and supervision, and organisational change. Awareness of these dynamics will ensure a proactive response on a continuum.
-  **Role modelling.** Management and senior staff members should provide an example of behaviours that are considered appropriate, especially around workplace social functions and events. Ensure that food is provided with drinks and alternative transport methods are offered.

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Identification of the problem. It is not possible to clearly identify a person who is intoxicated by alcohol or drugs purely on observation. Feedback on specific behaviours is possible and raising concerns based on that evidence is far more productive. Avoid accusations, debate and arguments and focus on identifying safety concerns and work performance, rather than diagnosing any impairment.



Encourage and support positive steps forward. Recovery can be a slow process and workplace support can be an important contribution to assist the employee to overcome the issue and return to workplace productivity.