

Recognizing the Signs of Drug and Alcohol Addiction

You may have noticed lately that something seems wrong with one of your coworkers. Could it be a personal problem or a sign of substance abuse? Often, a good indicator of substance abuse is a sudden change to unusual behavior. Common behavior changes in a coworker who's addicted to alcohol or other drugs include:

- Taking frequent sick days
- Increased absences or patterns of absences, such as after payday, before or after a holiday, or every Monday or Friday
- Showing up late or leaving early often
- Taking long breaks
- Making several personal phone calls
- Being involved in accidents at work or outside work
- Acting carelessly when handling dangerous equipment or materials
- Damaging property or equipment
- Deteriorating relationships at home
- Change in friends or social circles
- Borrowing or stealing money from coworkers or the company
- Drowsiness
- Showing less concern for personal appearance and hygiene
- Talking excessively or with slurred speech
- Shaky hands and movements and clammy palms
- Breath that smells like alcohol
- Red eyes or dilated pupils
- Noticeable loss or gain in weight
- Impatient or violent behavior
- Being suspicious of others
- Acting emotional or depressed



help you and your friend. Here are some places to seek help:

- *Alcohol Hotline* – 1-800-ALCOHOL
- *Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT)* – 1-800-662-HELP
- *Families Anonymous* – 1-800-736-9805
- *Parents Resource Institute for Drug-Free Education (PRIDE)* – (404) 577-4500
- *Toughlove* – 1-800-333-1069

Or, look in your telephone book for your local Alcoholics Anonymous, Alateen, Al-Anon, ACOA, Narcotics Anonymous, Nar-Anon, drug treatment center, county-state addiction or mental health agency, or the county/ victim/ mental health hotline.

Alcohol Hangovers

An alcohol hangover is characterized by fatigue, tremulousness, nausea, diarrhea, and headache, combined with decreased occupational, cognitive, or visual-spatial skill performance. In the United States, related absenteeism and poor job performance cost \$148 billion annually (average annual cost per working adult, \$2000). Although a hangover is associated

with alcoholism, most of its cost is incurred by the light-to-moderate drinker.

The way total alcohol consumption affects a hangover is not clearly understood, many people believe that hangovers are punishment for alcohol consumption and therefore prevents subsequent alcohol use. Hangovers have not been shown to effectively deter alcohol consumption.

Individuals with a hangover may pose substantial risk to themselves and others despite having a normal blood alcohol level. Hangovers may also be an independent risk factor for cardiac death. Although a hangover may be interpreted as merely uncomfortable, an individual with a hangover is at increased risk for injury and poor job performance.

If you suspect that someone you know has a substance abuse problem, you may feel ill-equipped to help. The first step to intervention is to learn more about substance abuse and about resources that can

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