

DURG AND ALCOHOL USE DISORDERS **IN OFFICE ENVIRONMENTS... FOR** **MANAGERS AND SUPERVISORS**

COURSE OUTLINE

- **Substance use disorders are a worldwide problem.**
 - In the United States alone there are roughly 60 million binge drinkers, and almost 40 million drug users.
 - 60% of the people who are battling drug or alcohol use disorders have jobs.
- **An employee with an alcohol or drug problem can...**
 - Decrease productivity.
 - Create a hostile work environment.
 - Damage your company's good name.
 - Undermine your efforts to make your company a safer place for everyone to work.
- **Substance use disorders in the workplace account for...**
 - 65% of on-the-job accidents.
 - 50% of workers' compensation claims.
- **As a result, substance use disorders cost American companies more than \$80 billion every year through...**
 - Decreased productivity.
 - Absenteeism.
 - Turnover.
 - Healthcare costs.
 - Workplace accidents.
 - Workers' compensation.
- **If an employee with a substance use disorder makes a mistake or causes an accident on the job, their coworkers may have to pay as well.**
- **An accident can also result in lawsuits that can directly jeopardize your own career and financial well-being.**
 - The family and friends of an employee with a substance use disorder can pay a heavy emotional price too.

- **So to keep everyone safe, you need to be able to recognize and control drug and alcohol use in your workplace before accidents or injuries occur.**
- **Unless you're looking for them, you might not see the drugs and alcohol that are in your office at all.**
 - So it pays to know what "substances" people are likely to use on the job.
- **The most commonly misused substance, both on and off the job, is alcohol.**
 - It's a "legal intoxicant", so it's easily available.
- **Workers who are drinking can be very clever in hiding it. They may...**
 - Carry a flask.
 - Stash a bottle in a filing cabinet.
 - Spike the coffee they bring to work in their thermos.
 - Mix alcohol with soda, juice or other beverages.
- **The next most popular substance used in the workplace is marijuana.**
 - While at one time pot was illegal throughout the country, it has now been legalized in a number of states for both recreational and medical use.
- **But changes in marijuana's legal status do not change its effects on the user, or on workplace safety.**
 - Pot is usually smoked in either small pipes or rolled into "joints," which you may see in the work area of someone with a substance use disorder.
- **Tranquilizers, codeine, OxyContin and other prescription drugs are all substances that are often misused.**
 - Many of these medications are chemically similar to heroin and other narcotics.
 - This makes them just as addictive and deadly as illegal drugs.
- **A drug that is also commonly misused is the painkiller Fentanyl, a powerful, lab-made opioid.**
 - Fentanyl can be consumed knowingly or unknowingly.
 - It can be 50 to 100 times more potent than morphine.
 - So a lethal dose can be very small.
- **Some workers misuse solvents, gasoline, glue and other chemicals that they work with by purposely inhaling the fumes.**
 - So you should talk to any employee who appears to be breathing or "huffing" these materials.

- **Remember, it's your responsibility to ensure that everyone who uses these types of substances in their job wears the proper respiratory protection.**
- **To make sure that employees are drug-free and sober, you need to understand the laws that focus specifically on substance use disorders in the workplace.**
 - These regulations are designed to protect employees' health and safety.
 - They affect people who have substance use disorders, while at the same time safeguarding their privacy and civil rights.
- **OSHA's "General Duty Clause" requires employers "to provide working conditions which are free from recognized hazards that are causing or likely to cause death or serious physical harm".**
- **Since substance use disorders are considered a "recognized" hazard you must ensure that an employee who appears to be using drugs or alcohol does not pose a danger to themselves or others.**
- **Typically, private employers aren't required by law to give their employees drug tests.**
 - There are exceptions for federal contractors and safety-sensitive positions.
- **But even if there is no law enforcing drug testing in your facility, it's a good idea to test employees periodically anyway.**
 - This can help you identify potential problems early and get employees the help that they need.
- **Companies have to adhere to the Department of Transportation's "Procedures for Workplace Drug and Alcohol Testing Programs" when they employ...**
 - Truck drivers.
 - Dispatchers.
 - Mechanics who have "safety-sensitive" jobs.
- **This regulation requires that employees in these types of positions be given random alcohol and drug tests.**
 - It also states that if there is a "reasonable suspicion" that they are under the influence of drugs or alcohol, they must be immediately removed from their "safety-sensitive" tasks and be given a substance use test.

- **At the same time, since substance use disorders are considered illnesses, you must be careful that you don't violate an employee's privacy or other civil rights.**
 - For instance, medical privacy laws can often prevent you from questioning a worker on their medication use.
- **However, you can insist that an employee tell you if they are taking medications that could cause "drowsiness" or impairment if they...**
 - Drive company vehicles.
 - Operate equipment.
 - Perform tasks that require them
 - to be completely alert.
- **If your company employs 15 or more people you must also comply with the "Americans with Disabilities Act."**
 - This says that you may not "discriminate" against a worker who is trying to overcome a substance use disorder.
- **You also may not discharge or otherwise punish a person with a substance use disorder without giving them a chance to overcome their problem by entering a substance use disorder treatment program.**
 - So it's important for you to keep these "employee rights" in mind when you are dealing with substance use disorder issues.
- **To help prevent employee substance use disorders, a company needs to create a work environment that encourages sobriety.**
 - That's why all companies, regardless of their size, should have a written "Drug and Alcohol-Free Workplace" policy in place.
- **The policy should clearly state what behaviors are prohibited, such as...**
 - Consuming alcohol immediately prior to or during the workday.
 - Possessing, selling, distributing or using illegal drugs.
 - Operating equipment or motor vehicles while using medications that cause drowsiness or other impairment.
- **It should also require that regular education sessions be held for employees, managers and supervisors.**
 - So everyone can better understand substance use disorders and know what they can do to help prevent them.

- **Substance use disorder policies should also specify what happens if a person breaks the rules. Consequences typically include...**
 - Suspension from “safety-sensitive” duties.
 - Mandatory participation in a substance use disorder rehabilitation program.
 - Termination for serious offenses.
- **The policy should also explain the steps that should be followed when an employee is suspected of being under the influence of drugs or alcohol.**
 - For example, your company may conduct various forms of drug and alcohol testing to identify employees with substance use disorders.
- **Many companies also provide Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs).**
 - These help workers and their families deal with substance use disorders and their related issues.
- **It's important that everyone who works in your facility be aware of all of this.**
 - So make sure all your people, including temporary employees and contract workers, have a copy of the company's drug and alcohol policy.
 - And provide one to all new hires as well.
- **You might also take a look at how you might control the use of opioids through the healthcare benefits programs your company offers.**
 - For example, you can limit coverage of opioid prescriptions to seven days.
 - Or you can work with your pharmacy benefits management company to manage the use of prescription pain medications.
 - If you decide to do this, make sure that all of your employees are aware of the policy and its purpose... to protect them and others in your workplace.
- **Every company should provide regular training sessions on the subject of substance use disorders.**
 - This helps employees understand how disorders can occur and the hazards that come with them.

- **Topics should include...**
 - The types of substances that can often become addictive.
 - The effects of drugs and alcohol on work performance, safety, health and personal life.
 - The signs of drug and alcohol use disorders.
 - How to report substance use disorders in the workplace.
 - The resources that are available to help employees overcome drug and alcohol use disorders.
 - A review of the company's drug and alcohol policy.
- **If the policy also includes provisions for drug and alcohol testing, be prepared for some push-back from employees.**
 - Many people feel that testing questions their character.
 - Others believe it's a violation of their privacy.
- **Your best approach is to ensure that everyone understands...**
 - Why testing is a part of the company's drug and alcohol policy.
 - That the goal is to keep all employees safe, healthy and productive on the job.
- **Substance use disorder tests are usually given in five types of situations...**
 - “Pre-employment” tests are used to screen out illegal drug users before they're hired.
 - “Reasonable suspicion” tests are given when there are indications that a worker is under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.
 - “Post-accident” tests are used to determine if substance use contributed to an accident that occurred in the workplace.
 - “Return-to-duty” tests verify that workers who have been removed from “safety sensitive jobs” due to substance use can safely resume their normal job functions.
 - “Random” tests, which are given without notice and by “luck of the draw,” ensure that employees are not violating the company's drug and alcohol policy.
- **Urinalysis is a common form of pre-employment and random drug and alcohol testing.**
 - “Oral fluid” testing is also approved for use by the Department of Transportation (DOT) and for all federal employees and companies with federal contracts.

- **Oral fluid testing offers a variety of advantages for employees and employers alike. These tests...**
 - Take less time.
 - Are less likely to be tampered with.
 - Eliminate the need for private restrooms and same-gender collection arrangements.
- **A company can also perform periodic alcohol and drug tests to uncover substance use that might otherwise go unnoticed.**
- **You should be aware that OSHA does not allow a company to conduct drug tests on employees as a form of retaliation when they have brought unsafe work conditions to the attention of their company or OSHA.**
- **OSHA has also stated that employers' policies should limit post-incident testing to situations in which...**
 - Employee substance use is likely to have contributed to the incident.
 - The test can accurately identify the impairment caused by drug use.
- **Drug and alcohol testing can make employees think twice about using drugs or alcohol on the job.**
 - But testing is not infallible.
- **There are many types of drugs, and no more than a few can be tested for at one time.**
 - Alcohol and some other drugs can only be detected for a few hours after they are used.
- **Employees with a substance use disorder have also been known to switch out their urine sample with someone else's that doesn't contain drugs or alcohol.**
 - So it can sometimes be a challenge to determine if an employee is really "under the influence".
 - But if you suspect someone is, you have to try.
 - People's health and well-being depend on it.
- **How do you spot employees with a substance use disorder?**
 - Don't expect them to make it easy for you.
 - Most of the time they'll do their best to hide their behavior from you.
 - But one reasonably effective way to detect a substance use disorder is to look for anything "unusual" in how a person behaves.

- **How they act will depend on what they're "using".**
 - Depressants, such as alcohol, marijuana and tranquilizers, slow down brain activity... making a person sluggish.
 - Stimulants, including cocaine, crack and methamphetamine cause a person to become abnormally active.
 - Narcotic analgesics or "painkillers" such
 - as OxyContin, heroin, morphine and Fentanyl numb the user and make them more relaxed.
- **Drug use can also result in extreme mood swings.**
 - For instance, someone who is high on cocaine may be giddy, energetic and extroverted.
 - But as the drug wears off, they can rapidly become angry, depressed and withdrawn.
- **How much of a substance a person has "used" will also influence how they behave.**
 - For instance, a single glass of wine tends to relax most people and make them more “sociable.”
- **But everyone reacts differently when they drink too much.**
 - Some people fall asleep.
 - Others become the “life of the party.”
 - Some may get anxious, depressed, angry... even violent.
- **If you do notice a worker behaving oddly, you can start looking for more “concrete” signs of a substance use disorder.**
 - One way to do this is to look at their job performance.
 - Employees with substance use disorders usually have a lot of difficulty functioning efficiently on the job.
- **You should be keeping written performance reports and safety records for all of your employees.**
 - These reports can help you to deal with everyone's performance or safety issues, regardless of the cause.
 - But they can also reveal patterns in an employee's behavior that may indicate a substance use disorder.
- **Remember, since these notes can affect an employee's livelihood and may be reviewed by others, you should always stick to facts.**

- **If you smell alcohol on their breath, for example, record what you observed along with the date and the time.**
 - But don't write down that they were “drunk.”
 - That may be what you think, but it's not something you know.
- **When these “incident reports” establish a pattern of questionable job performance, you have a solid basis for raising the issue of “working under the influence” with the worker.**
- **As a manager you are representing your company.**
 - So it's important how you proceed when an employee appears to have a substance use disorder.
 - While you definitely have a responsibility to maintain a safe and productive workplace, you must also respect the rights and the privacy of the employee.
- **It's always a good idea to consult your company's drug and alcohol policy to refresh your memory of what you're supposed to do.**
 - Trying to "wing it" can cause you, and your company, a lot of grief.
- **Never accuse the employee of having a substance use disorder! It's not your job to...**
 - Be a police officer.
 - Diagnose a worker's substance use disorder.
 - Function as their therapist.
- **How the situation should be managed will depend on several things.**
 - The employee's apparent level of impairment.
 - Their job functions.
 - The potential for them to have an accident.
- **In most cases a company drug and alcohol policy will direct you to report problems to...**
 - Someone in Human Resources.
 - A manager or supervisor who has received in-depth training on the subject.

- **But any time an impaired employee's actions could endanger themselves or others, you should intervene immediately.**
 - For example, workers who drive vehicles or operate equipment should never be permitted to perform these tasks if they appear to be “under the influence.”
- **If it is determined that a worker does have a substance use disorder, they will usually be required to enter a rehabilitation program.**
 - This may be done through the company's EAP (if one exists) or with an outside group.

*** * * SUMMARY * * ***

- **In your efforts to create a drug and alcohol-free workplace, it's important for you to respect the rights and privacy concerns of your workers.**
- **All employees should have a copy of your company's drug and alcohol policy.**
- **Everyone in your facility should be provided with training on substance use disorder prevention, including temporary employees and contract workers.**
- **You need to be able to recognize the “signs” of drug and alcohol use yourself.**
- **If you suspect that a worker may have a substance use disorder, your company's drug and alcohol policy can provide guidance in how you should proceed.**
- **Any time an employee's actions could create a dangerous situation, you must intervene immediately.**
- **Now that you know the signs of substance use disorders and understand what you can do to help prevent them, you can help make your company a safer and more productive place to work... for everyone, every day!**