

Workplace Substance Abuse Prevention

What the Evidence Tells Us

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Focus of this Talk

- What is the scope of the problem of workplace substance abuse?
- What is the evidence for workplace substance abuse prevention?
- What does the research tell us about the most promising approaches?
- What national governmental policies can help facilitate workplace substance abuse prevention?

Scope of the Problem

Alcohol and Drug Use

- Of the 20.2 million current illicit drug users aged 18 or older in 2010, 13.3 million (65.9 percent) were employed.
- About 22.6 million people used illegal drugs in 2010 and 7 million used prescription drugs non-medically
- Most binge and heavy alcohol users were employed in 2010. Among 56.6 million adult binge drinkers, 42.3 million (74.7 percent) were employed. Among 16.5 million heavy drinkers, 12.2 million (74.0 percent) were employed.

Scope of the Problem

Cost

- Cost of Alcohol Abuse in US: \$184.6 Billion
 - \$134.21B Lost Productivity
 - \$26.34B Health Care Costs
 - \$24.09B Crime, Property Destruction, Welfare
- Cost of Drug Abuse in US: \$180.8 Billion
 - \$128.57B Lost Productivity
 - \$15.84B Health Care Costs
 - \$36.41B Crime, Welfare Costs

Summary of Employer Costs: 2007 Survey of HR Professionals

- The most significant problems experienced due to employee substance abuse
 - Absenteeism
 - Reduced productivity
 - Lack of trustworthiness
 - Negative impact on company's reputation
 - Missed deadlines
 - Increased health care costs
 - Unpredictable, defensive interpersonal relations

Solutions to Workforce Substance Abuse

Workplace substance abuse prevention and interventions can take many forms and include

- Universal Prevention
 - Workplace policy
 - Wellness and substance abuse education
 - Strengthening social support/peer referral
- Selective Prevention
 - Confidential screening
 - EAPs
 - Brief Therapies
- Treatment/Maintenance
 - Outpatient and inpatient treatments
 - Confidential follow-up care

Solutions to Workforce Substance Abuse

Workplace substance abuse can also have very different targets including:

- Individual Risk/Protective Factors
- Social Interactions/Peer Support
- Workplace Environment

Solutions to Workforce Substance Abuse: Universal Prevention - Workplace Policy

- Factual information on the harmful health and productivity effects of AOD
- Confidentiality and privacy
 - Combat stigma by telling employees they can seek treatment confidentially without jeopardizing their jobs
- Support treatment for and recovery from substance use disorders

Solutions to Workforce Substance Abuse: Universal Prevention – Health Promotion and Substance Abuse Prevention

- While stand alone SAP programs can reduce substance use, often no one will participate or participants include only those in recovery.
- Imbedding SAP into standard health promotion has shown promise. For example we tested a web-based stress management program resulted in less binge drinking.
- A General Motors plant offered education about cardiovascular disease
 - 42% of plant's at-risk drinkers reduced their drinking to safer levels
 - Medical costs dropped by 13 percent

Solutions to Workforce Substance Abuse: Peer Support/Social Health Promotion

- Bennett has evaluated programs to promote social support and peer referral among workers.
- Team Awareness focused on enhancing workgroup strengths and climate to reduce drinking
 - Increased EAP referral
 - Reduced problem drinking
 - Increased of positive activities to relax.
- Operation RedBlock is a railway program for employees to aid co-workers in confidentially seeking assistance for substance abuse problems.

Solutions to Workforce Substance Abuse: Universal Prevention Changing the Work Environment

- Lower social and physical accessibility to alcohol and strict, unambiguous policies reduce drinking that occurs just before coming to work and on the job drinking.
- Differences in corporate culture in two manufacturing plants in the same company found significant differences (28% to 3%) in drinking at work.

Solutions to Workforce Substance Abuse: Selective Prevention: Screening

- Goal is early identification and direct employee to appropriate interventions
 - Not a substitute for a complete assessment or drug testing
 - 4-item CAGE is an example
- Can be done as part of a company wellness program, EAP, physician's office, or online
 - Computer-based assessments tend to promote greater disclosure of stigmatized behaviors

Solutions to Workforce Substance Abuse: Model of Abuse

- Substance abuse should be viewed as a chronic, manageable condition similar to diabetes and asthma
- As with other chronic diseases, relapse is not uncommon
 - Does not mean failure
 - Indicates that treatment should be reinstated or adjusted

Solutions to Workforce Substance Abuse: Treatment Outcomes

- Outcomes for substance use treatment are as effective as outcomes for other chronic

Disease	Adherence	Relapse
Hypertension	Less than 60%	50 – 60%
Diabetes	Less than 50%	30 – 50%
Asthma	Less than 30%	60 – 80%
Substance Use Treatment	30 – 50%	50 – 60%

Solutions to Workforce Substance Abuse: Treatment Options - EAP

- Designed to help identify and resolve productivity problems affecting employees who are impaired by personal concerns
 - Telephone-based services
 - Face-to-face programs
- Prospective cost-benefit analysis by the Federal Occupational Health agency found for every \$1 spent on their EAP
 - 1st year savings would be \$1.27
 - 5th year savings would rise to \$7.21

Solutions to Workforce Substance Abuse: Treatment Options – EAP II

- Gillette Company saw a 75 percent drop in inpatient substance abuse treatment costs after implementing an EAP
- International holding company found that employees who used an EAP had fewer inpatient medical days than those who only participated in the company's medical insurance plan
 - \$426,000 in savings each year on mental health and substance abuse treatment

Solutions to Workforce Substance Abuse: Treatment Options – Brief Intervention

- Focused process that relies on assessment, client engagement and rapid implementation of change strategies
 - Goal is to reduce risky substance use before the individual becomes dependent
 - Can be conducted in the workplace by EAPs, physicians' offices, or online
- Each \$1 invested in screening and brief counseling interventions saves approximately \$4 in health care costs

Solutions to Workforce Substance Abuse: Treatment Options – Out/Inpatient

- 5-year study of 4,411 clients who received substance use treatment in 78 programs
 - 50% decrease in drug and alcohol use one year after completing treatment
 - 19% increase in employment and income
 - 80% decrease in criminal activity
 - 53% decrease in alcohol/drug related medical visits

Solutions to Workforce Substance Abuse: Maintenance and Follow-Up Care

- Following acute care, activities that promote self-management and reduce relapse should be initiated
 - Community support programs (e.g., AA/NA)
 - Booster sessions

Solutions to Workforce Substance Abuse: Web-Based Approaches

- Can reach large numbers of users
 - Overcomes problem of insufficient providers
- Perfect fidelity across time and place
- Decreased costs
 - Require far less staff training, preparation, and delivery time
 - Can be used as a stand-alone intervention or as an adjunct
- Flexibility in accessing
- Effective for addressing sensitive issues such as drug abuse
 - Practice communication and refusal skills with little or no embarrassment

National Policies Supporting Workplace Substance Abuse Prevention

U.S Federal Drug-Free Workplace Program – Model Programs

1. A written policy describing the employer's expectations about drug use and consequences of policy violations
2. An employee assistance program (EAP) to provide confidential problem assessment, counseling, referral to treatment, and follow-up support after treatment
3. Supervisor training to orient supervisors to the employer's drug abuse policy, to define the supervisor's responsibility to refer employees when job performance deficits are noted, and to recognize and respond to employees with problems
4. Employee education to describe the signs and symptoms of drug abuse and its effects on performance and to explain the program
5. Drug testing on a controlled and carefully monitored basis.

National Policies Supporting Workplace Substance Abuse Prevention

Policies to ensure that organizations implement *evidence based* practices for workplace substance abuse prevention

Policies and standards that treat substance abuse as a chronic disease and not a moral failing or solely a criminal justice issue

Incentives for employers to provide prevention, treatment options and return-to-work follow up care