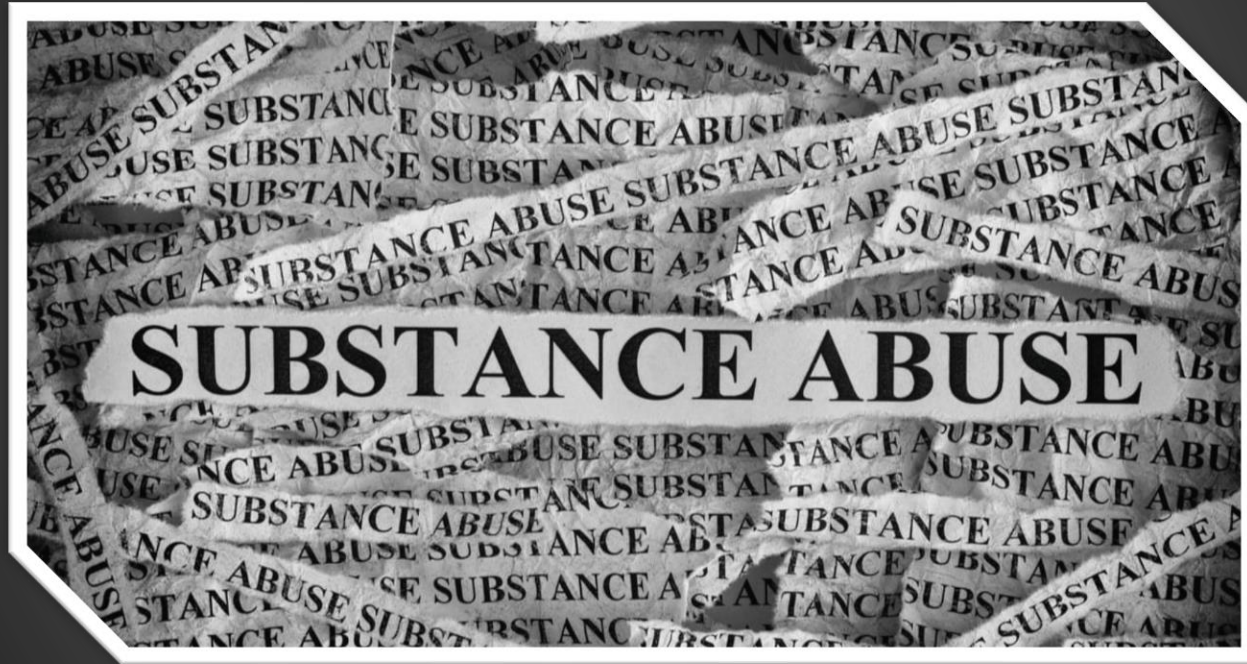


# Safety Educational Webinar Series – Substance Abuse In The Workplace



# Public Health Crisis

- Pennsylvania now ranks No. 1 on a list it doesn't want to be on.
- 1 in 7 people will suffer from substance-use disorder, or addiction.



# Substance Abuse Stigma

- Substance use negatively affects U.S. industry through lost productivity, workplace accidents and injuries, worker absenteeism, low morale, and increased illness.
- Among working adults, 8.7% had a substance use disorder within the prior year.
- We are still learning about the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the workforce.

# 1<sup>st</sup> Step: Education

- Education plays a key role in addressing this epidemic.
- Understand the difference between:
  - Substance Misuse
  - Substance Use Disorder



# Opioids

- Types of Opioids – Prescription Pain Relievers.
- Examples:
  - Hydrocodone (Vicodin)
  - Oxycodone (OxyContin)
  - Fentanyl
- These medications decrease how much pain you feel, but do not treat the cause of the pain.



# Cannabis/Marijuana

- Contains THC and hundreds of other compounds.
- Developing a workplace policy to cover cannabis use can be challenging.
- Can lead to dependence and withdrawal symptoms.



# Stimulants

- Types of Stimulants – Illicit Stimulants.
- Examples
  - Cocaine
  - Crack
  - Methamphetamine
  - “Crystal Meth”
- Prescription Stimulants.



# Psychoactive Substances

- Much like “synthetic marijuana”
- Unregulated, unpredictable, and potentially very dangerous
- Inexpensive substitutes for illegal stimulants





# Alcohol

- What is risky alcohol use?
- Associated with short- and long-term health risks.
- Statistics may surprise you.



# Policies Are Essential

- Part of the hiring process.
- Random testing during employment.
- Reduces liability & risk.



# Know The Signs

- Can be seen in individual employees and in workplace trends.
- Impairment can manifest in different ways.
- Follow policies and procedures you have in place – AIPP.

# Ensure Workforce Can Recognize Signs/Symptoms

- Common signs and symptoms:
  - Rapid shift in physical appearance;
  - Concerning or changing behavior; and
  - Job performance.



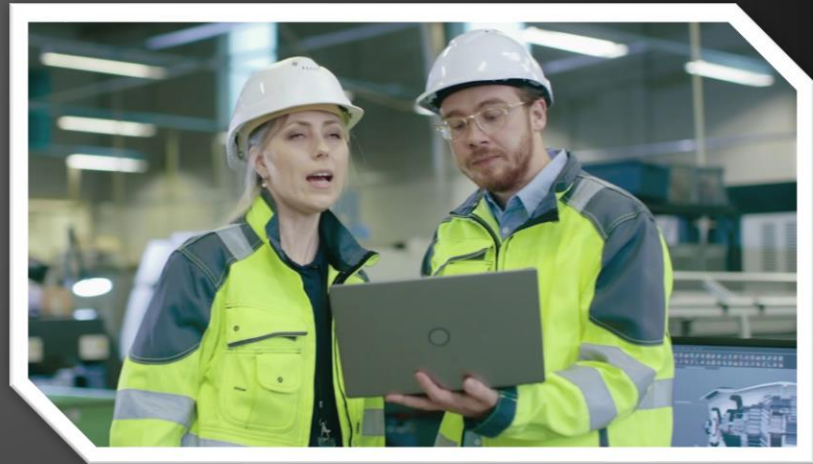
# Ensure Workforce Can Recognize Signs/Symptoms

- Can be seen when looking at the workplace and workforce.
- Employers may see:
  - Frequent turnover;
  - Declining productivity;
  - Frequent WC claims; and
  - Increased rates of + drug screens.



# Supervisors Are The Key

- Supervisors should be trained on the following:
  - The organization’s Drug-Free Workplace Policy;
  - Communication with employees;
  - Understanding disorders;
  - Recognizing symptoms;
  - Required procedures;
  - Knowledge of a resources; and
  - Using “person-first” language.



# Provide Other Support Programs

- Employee Assistance Programs (EAP's) are important.
- Secure and Private Assistance.
- Worker Peer Support Programs.



# Workplace Policies

- Clear policies around substance use.
- Focus on four key policy areas.
- Drug Free Work Programs.





# Drug-Free Workplace Programs

- Program should include:
  - Clear written policies;
  - Education and resources;
  - Guidelines;
  - Effective employee benefits; and
  - Direction.



# Support & Understanding

- A well-communicated plan with strong employee buy-in can support:
  - Safer environments for workers;
  - Increased morale;
  - Decreased workplace accidents;
  - Reduced worker theft;
  - Increased productivity;
  - Reduced turnover; and
  - Decreased cost of insurance



## Addressing Substance Misuse: Hypothetical Scenario

- Imagine you are a supervisor at a manufacturing plant. One of your team members, John, who has always been a reliable employee, starts to show signs of a shift in behavior. Over the past month, you've noticed he's been late several times, his productivity has declined, and there have been a couple of minor safety incidents involving his work. His colleagues have also mentioned that he has become unusually irritable and isolated.

# Addressing Substance Misuse: Hypothetical Scenario

- What steps should you take as John's supervisor?
- Should you confront him directly, or involve HR first?
- How can you balance supporting John's well-being with ensuring workplace safety?

# Real-Life Case Study – Addressing Opioid Use in the Workplace

- Background: A mid-sized construction company in Pennsylvania was facing increased absenteeism and declining productivity. After a drug-free workplace audit, it was discovered that several employees were struggling with opioid misuse, following surgeries or injuries sustained on the job. The company lacked clear substance-use policies, leading to inconsistent handling of these issues.

# Actions Taken

- The company implemented a comprehensive Drug-Free Workplace Program (DFWP), including employee education on substance misuse and access to an Employee Assistance Program (EAP).
- Supervisors were trained to recognize signs of impairment and were instructed on how to intervene in non-punitive ways, focusing on offering support.
- The company expanded their health benefits to include coverage for substance use disorder (SUD) treatment.

# Outcome

- 50% decrease in absenteeism
- 30% reduction in workers' compensation claims
- Employees expressed appreciation for the company's supportive approach
- Morale improved significantly.
- Several workers entered rehabilitation programs and successfully returned to work.

# The Impact of Proactive Substance Use Policies – Success Stories in Numbers

Research shows that implementing proactive workplace substance-use programs not only improves employee health but also leads to significant business benefits:

- Reduced Turnover
- Increased Productivity
- Lower Healthcare Costs
- Fewer Workplace Incidents



# Conclusion

- This is a complex issue.
- Employers hold the key to prevention.
- Employers can not be expected to address it all.



# Questions, Comments or Concerns?

