

13 SUBSTANCE USE



PURPOSE

Drug and alcohol use plays a large role in occupational injuries. Some young workers engage in risky behaviors off the job that can affect their safety on the job. An important step in addressing the implications of substance use related to job safety is raising awareness in younger workers.

PREPARATION

- Handouts are included in the activity book on pages 28–31. Alternatively, you can print the handouts from the website. The handouts can be found at: www.promotingusafetyhealth.com Click on "Start the Conversation Activities," then find the "Substance Use" activity and click on the "Handout" link. Print one handout per attending staff, letter size, single sided. There are four different worksheets in each handout. Print enough copies of the worksheet so that each student has at least one handout, but there are an equal mix of worksheets in the group.
- Print PUSH Cards.

DIRECTIONS

Supervisor reads out loud

Supervisor reads out loud

SUPERVISOR READS QUESTION

✘ *Do not read out loud*



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BACKGROUND

Many job sites, like ours, have a zero tolerance policy for alcohol and drug use—meaning being under the influence at work can get you in some big trouble.

WHAT DOES UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF DRUGS AND ALCOHOL MEAN? WHAT ARE SOME SYMPTOMS OF “BEING UNDER THE INFLUENCE?”

✘ *Let staff answer.*

Answer to “What does under the influence mean?”: “A person is under the influence of alcohol or drugs when their mental or physical function is impaired because of the use of a substance.”

Answer to “What are some symptoms of alcohol and drug use?”:

- ☉ Lack of impulse control (makes bad decisions, acts without thinking, no self-control)
- ☉ Blurred and impaired vision
- ☉ Slurred speech, incoherent or rambling talk
- ☉ Slowed reaction time/slower movement and slowed thinking
- ☉ Feeling ill/poor balance (dizzy, barfing, burping, spinning-feeling)
- ☉ Emotional outbursts (anger, sadness, inappropriate emotional responses)
- ☉ Memory loss and disorientation
- ☉ Loss of consciousness
- ☉ Poor sleep quality or sleepiness
- ☉ Increased urination
- ☉ Sudden change in behavior/mood swings
- ☉ Erratic (strange) behavior
- ☉ Changes in physical appearance (jittery, ticks, floppy, jerky, anxious)

Whether alcohol and drugs are consumed on or off the job, they still have a negative impact on your ability to safely do your job. In fact, many times alcohol and drugs have lasting effects, long after they “feel” like they have left our bodies.

For example, because alcohol decreases sleep quality, daytime sleepiness, an inability to focus on tasks, irritability and brain cloudiness can linger, even after a few days!

One thing that should be emphasized is that although many people use drugs and alcohol recreationally, drug and alcohol use is often something people engage in if they feel anxious or depressed. If you feel this way, or engage in frequent or heavy alcohol and drug use, visit the promotingusafetyhealth.com website for resources.

ACTIVITY

In today’s exercise, we’re going to review some stories that will help bust some myths about drinking alcohol and using drugs. I’m going to hand out some worksheets. Your job is to fill them in. We’ll discuss our answers in a few minutes. You can work alone or together in a group.

✘ *Hand out the worksheets or ask employees to turn to pages 28–31 in their activity workbooks. Give them time to come up with answers. Help as needed. Discuss as a group when people seem ready.*

MYTH: YOU CAN “SLEEP OFF” THE EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL.

- ✘ *Have a staff member read the scenario and questions out loud while the group discusses.*

Maura is 22-years old and loves to watch all of the Trailblazers basketball games with her friends at her local bar. Most of the time, the games are on Thursday evenings and she usually has several beers during the game. On Friday mornings, she starts her shift at 8AM and usually feels terrible (has a hangover), although she doesn't think she is drunk. Mainly, she is nauseous, has a headache, and feels tired.

WHY IS A HANGOVER AT WORK UNSAFE?

Not focused on the tasks; more likely to have an accident/get injured.

Performance drops.

You feel terrible and are less likely to be engaged and motivated at work.

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL ABUSE THAT CARRY OVER BEYOND BEING DRUNK?

Increased incidence of injuries and accidents.

Sleepiness/drowsiness, poor sleep quality.

Loss of focus.

Irritability.

Brain tissue damage, especially in youth (memories, comprehension, attention span).

Depression and anxiety.

Increased likelihood of being a victim of a violent crime (while drunk), which can have long-lasting negative impacts on physical and emotional health.

CAN MAURA GET IN TROUBLE FOR BEING HUNG OVER AT WORK?

Yes, in the event of an injury or accident at work, her alcohol use prior to her shift can be investigated.

Poor performance (an outcome of getting wasted before work) is often used as a standard method to evaluate staff.

Okay great answers. Let's move on to Scenario 2.

MYTH: SMOKING WEED CHILLS YOU OUT.

- ✘ *Have a staff member read the scenario and questions aloud; lead group in discussion.*

Tim just started a new job as a customer service representative. Tim is a little anxious about his first day on the job, so he decides to get stoned before work to help him calm down.

WHY IS THIS A BAD IDEA?

It's not okay to go to work under the influence.

It's unsafe.

Using marijuana most likely will have the opposite effect. Despite the myth that weed makes you chill, symptoms of a high include feelings of panic, anxiety and fear, increased heart rate, trouble concentrating, decreased ability to perform tasks that require coordination, and decreased short-term memory.

It doesn't fix the problem. At best, it only masks it. More likely, it makes it worse.

HOW CAN TIM SAFELY DEAL WITH HIS ANXIETY?

Breathing exercises or meditation.

Talking to a friend, family member, or specialist about his anxiety.

Exercising before his shift.

WHAT ARE SOME CONSEQUENCES OF TIM GOING TO WORK STONED?

He could get fired.

He could endanger his safety and the safety of his coworkers.

He will probably make his anxiety situation worse.

He'll miss a lot of important information on his first day.

Okay great answers. Let's move on to Scenario 3.

MYTH: EVERYONE IS DOING IT.

Have a staff member read the scenario and questions out loud while the group discusses.

Andre works in as a prep chef for a popular new restaurant. Working in the kitchen is intense—it's hot, fast-paced and people get easily frustrated. Andre feels a lot of pressure to keep up during the dinner rush, which can last until 10 p.m. or later. He's usually tired towards the end of the shift. He's heard that lots of people in the food industry take uppers (cocaine, amphetamines, methamphetamines) to help them get through the stressful nights.

WHY IS THIS A BAD IDEA?

Using drugs on the job is always a bad idea. Despite the seemingly helpful effects, they increase the risk of accidents and injury.

Drugs like these are often highly addictive, horrible for your body and mind, and are expensive.

Starting habits like these as a young worker makes it five times more likely that serious addiction issues will surface later in life.

WHAT ARE SOME HEALTHIER METHODS OF HELPING HIM STAY FOCUSED THROUGH INTENSE SHIFTS?

Getting enough sleep, eating a healthy diet, and getting regular exercise is always a good start to staying focused on the job.

Talk to your boss or co-workers about streamlining processes to minimize stress.

Always take the breaks to which you are entitled. This helps keep your mind sharp and can act as a reset button.

Okay great answers. Let's move on to Scenario 4.

MYTH: IF IT IS A PRESCRIPTION DRUG, IT MUST BE SAFE!

✘ *Have a staff member read the scenario and questions out loud while the group discusses.*

Tegan had her wisdom teeth out last weekend. Her doctor gave her a prescription for strong pain medicine. The label on the pills clearly stated that the drugs could cause impairment, drowsiness, nausea, and vomiting. Tegan has to work as a pizza delivery driver, but is in a little bit of pain.

WHAT SHOULD TEGAN DO?

Call her boss and ask for a substitute and take the prescription pain medication.

Take an over-the-counter pain medication that has less severe side-effects.

Not take the prescription pain medication and go to work.

WHAT ARE SOME POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES OF TEGAN GOING TO WORK UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF PAIN MEDICATION?

She could put her safety and the safety of others at risk. She could get fired.

She might be unable to perform her duties or be unproductive at work or cause herself or others to have to do more work.

CAN SHE GET IN TROUBLE IF SHE TAKES A PILL AND GOES TO WORK?

Yes!

PUSH FORWARD

✘ *Pass out PUSH cards.*

On your card is a link to the Promoting U through Safety and Health page (www.promotingusafetyhealth.com). If you follow this page you can learn about other ways to stay safe at home and at work.

13 **SUBSTANCE USE**
HANDOUT #1

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MYTH: YOU CAN

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CAN MAURA GET IN TROUBLE

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13 **SUBSTANCE USE**
HANDOUT #2

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13 **SUBSTANCE USE**
HANDOUT #3

MYTH: EVERYONE IS

Andre works in as a prep chef for a pop...
and people get easily frustrated. And...
until 10PM or later. He's usually tired t...
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WHY IS THIS A BAD IDEA?

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WHAT ARE SOME HEALTHIER METHO

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13 **SUBSTANCE USE**
HANDOUT #4

MYTH: IF IT IS A PRESCRIPTION DRUG, IT MUST BE SAFE!

Tegan had her wisdom teeth out last weekend. Her doctor gave her a prescription for strong prescription pain...
medicine. The label on the pills were clearly stated that the drugs could cause impairment, drowsiness, nausea of...
vomiting. Tegan has to go to work as a pizza delivery driver tonight, but is in a little bit of pain.

WHAT SHOULD TEGAN DO?

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WHAT ARE SOME CONSEQUENCES OF TEGAN GOING TO WORK UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF PAIN MEDICATION?

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CAN SHE GET IN TROUBLE IF SHE TAKES A PILL AND GOES TO WORK?

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