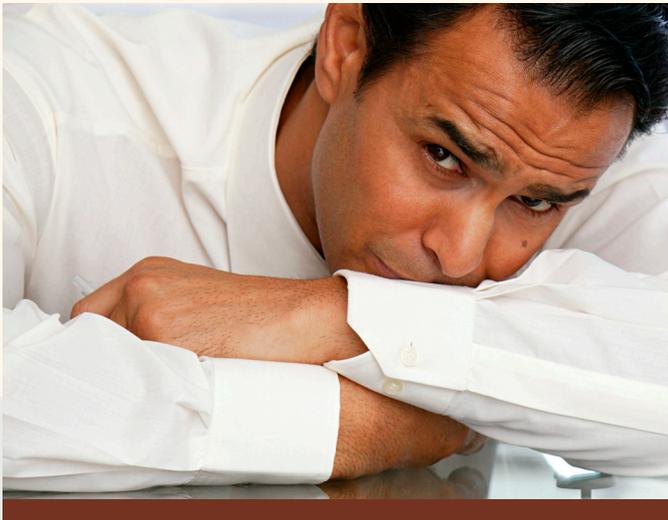


Recovering from a Substance Use Disorder

Addictive substances, like alcohol and other drugs, may help you temporarily avoid uncomfortable feelings and experience pleasure. With addiction, though, these same substances destroy your body, your well-being and your relationships. Overcoming an addiction requires self-



discipline, patience, the determination to lead a healthy life, and the help of others through treatment and support. The tempting power of any addictive substance is too great to conquer alone. People in recovery need support in their recovery. Three components of the process may include the following stages:

Acceptance

Acceptance means no longer denying that you have a substance use disorder. There are no more excuses or stories. You accept that you're in pain and have been using substances as a tool to avoid your pain, history, family and the rest of the world. Acknowledging your substance use disorder is the first and most important step in recovery.

Grief

Grief is the next step toward healing. A person, in or seeking, recovery grieves the loss of the addictive substance and the lifestyle it brought as well as the original hurt or traumas that caused or contributed to the addiction. While grieving, people in recovery find healthier

ways to get through their emotional pain. This eventually leads to the freedom to reconstruct their life rather than living a life controlled by the pain of the past.

Behavior change

Behavior change occurs only after grief has been fully experienced. Staying with recovery means riding waves of good and bad times while moving slowly toward inner peace, hope and health. In recovery, individuals learn to surrender, accept and behave in ways that aren't self-destructive.

There are many resources to help individuals through recovery. Counseling, for instance, helps people in recovery identify situations and feelings that trigger the urge to use, and find new ways to cope without addictive substances. Confidential treatment is available at doctors' offices, residential centers or hospitals, inpatient or outpatient, depending on the needs of the individual and the severity of the situation.

Because family members also help with recovery, many treatment programs offer brief marital counseling and family therapy. Some programs also link individuals with vital community resources, such as legal assistance, job training, childcare and parenting classes. Addiction usually affects the individual's whole life, and a variety of support is needed.

Getting through recovery isn't easy, but the results and rewards it brings are well worth the journey.

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Additional Substance Abuse Resources

For more articles and resources about substance abuse, visit the Live and Work Well website, liveandworkwell.com, and enter the access code: 00832.

- Alcohol and drug use screening assessments
- Supporting a family member or coworker
- Signs
- Treatment
- Recovery
- Support groups

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The Road to Recovery: Helping a Loved One Deal with a Substance Use Disorder

When a loved one has a substance use disorder, it can be frightening. The problems created aren't limited to the person using the drugs or alcohol. It's difficult for family members and friends to know how to help.

You can support your loved one to seek appropriate treatment and make a recovery. Equally important is taking care of yourself. Get help if you feel that your life is out of balance or if you notice that caring for the person is taking control of your life.

Helping a Loved One in Recovery

- Learn about substance use disorder and its treatment.
- Find out how substance use affects the family.
- Encourage your loved one to talk with you or with a counselor, or to find other outlets to express feelings.
- Help your loved one avoid people, places or activities that may trigger their urge to use the substance. Some triggers are difficult to avoid, such as a spouse who uses. Support your loved one to face these challenges and make changes.
- Help your loved one find and stick to scheduled activities, especially during times when the substance use may have occurred, such as in the evening after work.

Interventions

Many people who use substances deny that they have a problem. Through an intervention, family and friends can gather and help them recognize the impact of their use on themselves and others. They present the reality of the abuse in a non-judgmental and caring way, to try to break down any denial that may be keeping the person from seeking treatment.¹ Having a substance-use professional involved helps the family prepare for appropriate treatment after a successful intervention.

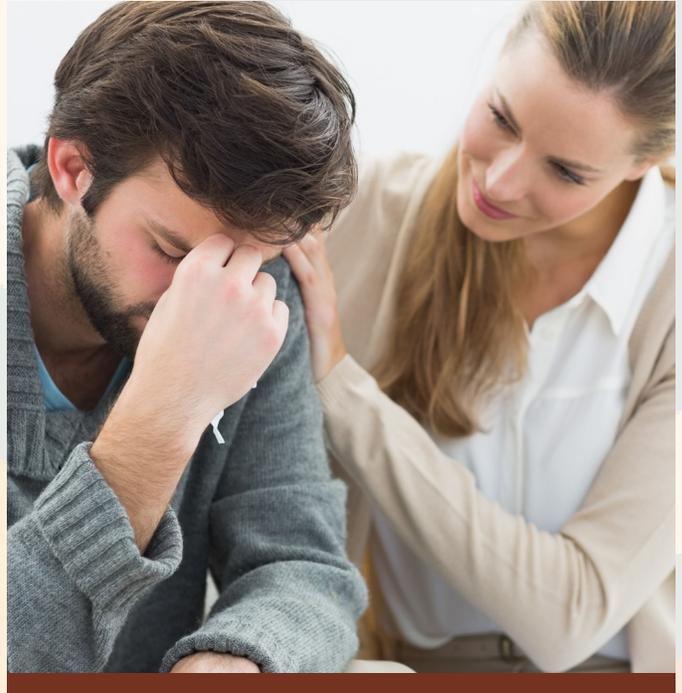
Are You Worried about a Co-worker?

Signs that a co-worker may have a substance use problem include:

- Frequently being late to work or absent;
- Not completing work correctly or on time;
- Not paying attention;

- Forgetting things;
- Asking coworkers to cover for poor work and absenteeism; and
- Feeling tired constantly.

Don't cover up behaviors that may be resulting from substance use. Also, don't let a co-worker put your health or safety in danger. If a co-worker threatens your safety, tell your supervisor immediately. If you see a co-worker get high or deal drugs on the job, tell a supervisor as soon as you can. If a co-worker asks you for help, refer him or her to a helpline or hotline.



Avoiding Unhealthy Codependency

When you're concerned about a loved one's substance use problem, you can play an important role in recovery. However, if you treat the user's needs as more important than your own, this is known as "codependency" or "co-addiction." This can put you in an unhealthy situation.

It starts when you try to fix the problem, seemingly a good idea, but your attempts don't help.² Then you try harder by doing the same things more often and more intensely, without the situation improving. You feel anger, frustration, anxiety or guilt. You may also begin to suffer from mental health and even physical problems as a result of being chronically stressed.

To avoid co-addiction or to overcome it, you need to accept your powerlessness over the addiction, understand that you can't control it and detach from the symptoms of your loved one's addiction.²

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Healthy Tips for Helping Your Loved One

- Set limits on your relationship; for example, refuse to spend time with your loved one when he or she is under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Don't help in any way that might promote or continue the addiction. For example, don't make excuses for your loved one's behavior while under the influence or lend money that might go toward drugs or alcohol.
- Voice your concerns the day after a binge or high. Describe your feelings: "I care about you and I'm worried about how drugs and alcohol are affecting you." Do NOT call your loved one an alcoholic or an addict.
- Let them know you're available when they're ready to get help. It's not your fault if you can't get through to them. Back off and let them have space to recognize they need help on their own. Never give up hope during those times.
- Encourage your loved one to speak with a mental health or substance use professional. Talk to the professional yourself about how to stay supportive when the person is resistant to seeking help.



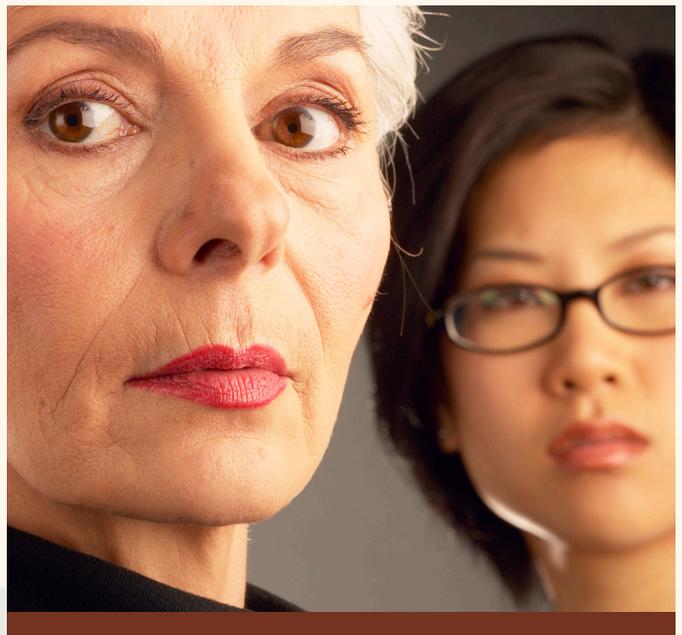
Consider Support Groups

Al-Anon, Narcotics Anonymous and other groups can help you cope with a loved one's substance use and avoid codependency. Typically these groups consist of relatives and friends of substance users who share their experiences to help each other overcome common problems. There are no dues or fees, and the meetings are kept confidential.

Sources:

- 1 Johnson, Vernon E. *Intervention*. City Center, MN: Hazeldon Foundation. 1986.
- 2 Gorski, Terence and Merlene Miller. *Staying Sober: A Guide for Relapse Prevention*. Independence, MO: Herald House/Independence Press. 1986.

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Supervising a Recovering Employee

Typically, after an individual completes Substance Use Disorder/Chemical Dependency (SUD/CD) treatment, he (or she) feels inspired to maintain the new lifestyle and is positive about the future. However, individuals can also experience fatigue and apprehension. Expect a significant adjustment period.

A recovering addict must remain free of all mood-altering drugs for the rest of his life. For example, an individual who completed treatment for cocaine addiction cannot switch to smoking pot "occasionally" without ultimately having negative results. "Occasional" substance use may or may not include mood-altering drugs prescribed by a physician.

As a supervisor, please remember that it is not your job (or anyone's in the workplace) to keep the employee sober. Your responsibilities do include being supportive, honest and expectant of success. If you ignore the employee or his experiences, you can exacerbate problems. By the same token, excusing the recovering employee from reasonable job expectations because of the employee's recovery status can sabotage their recovery process.

The following are guidelines for supervisors regarding recovering workers:

Do —

- **State your performance expectations clearly.** Your worker cannot live up to your expectations if they are not fully understood.

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- **Be open with your worker.** If you have concerns about the person's performance, express them directly. Keep communication open.
- **Be fair when asked for sick or personal time.** Follow company policy regarding other illnesses employees may have. Time for therapy, aftercare, and Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous meetings can usually be scheduled outside of work hours.
- **Use the same standards of performance for this worker that you use for any other worker.** Treat this person as you would any other worker.
- **Expect success.** If you expect your worker to do well, you may help to increase the chances that he (or she) will.

Don't —

- **Be protective of the worker.** Be fair, but do not coddle.
- **Be overly demanding of the worker.** Constant scrutiny and negative criticism will deter success.
- **Delay in confronting job problems which begin to surface again.** Job problems could indicate a relapse or other difficulty.
- **Talk about your worker's problems with others in the work group.** Personal information about your worker is none of their business. Suggest they direct their questions to the worker.
- **Focus your expectations on drinking or drug-taking behavior.** Keep attention on the job. You are on solid ground when you comment on work.
- **Expect failure.** Expect success.¹

Relapse

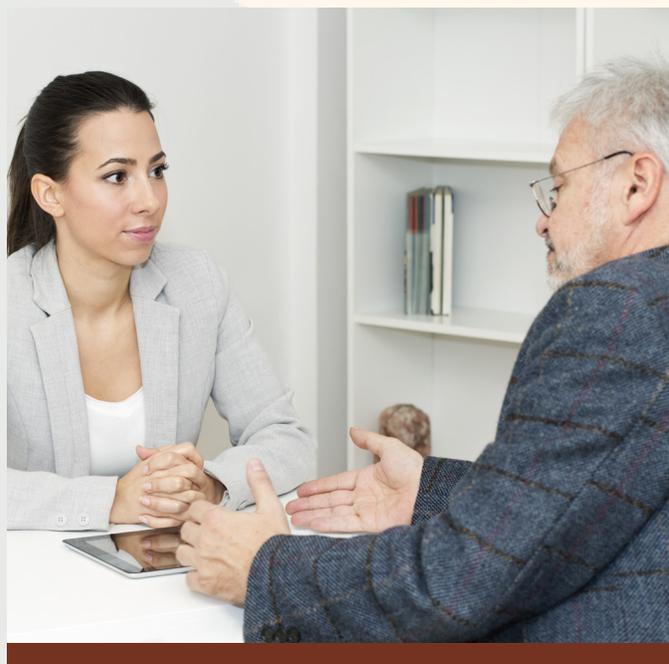
It is not uncommon for a recovering individual to relapse or have a "slip" in recovery. Whether this relapse signals the return of regular substance use or is part of the recovery process depends on how the person manages the event. Sometimes relapse occurs because the individual does not follow the recovery program designed by the treatment team. At other times, the individual loses focus that abstinence is a significant priority in his life. If the individual immediately seeks assistance from the treatment provider and treatment is temporarily intensified, the usage may only be a temporary setback. Relapse is a symptom of chronic chemical dependency disorders, and it is impossible to predict the outcome of an isolated use. Additionally, relapse can occur with someone who has been in recovery for a significant amount of time.

Be aware of these behaviors:

- Weight change;
- Mood swings;
- Poor skin color;
- Unreliability;
- Frequent intake of antacid or aspirin; and
- Large amounts of coffee.

If you observe the return of old behavior, be concerned and schedule an immediate time to talk with your employee. Ask if she or he has been attending aftercare meetings, encourage following community support programs and remind him/her that the Employee Assistance Program can provide recovery support.

In order to avoid confrontation about a substance use disorder, employees use a variety of "traps." Lakeside-Milam identifies the following.



- **Sympathy** – Tries to get the supervisor involved in his personal problem.
- **Excuses** – Is defensive and has a reason for everything.
- **Apology** – Is very sorry; says it won't happen again.
- **Promises** – Says he will do better; that the supervisor can depend on him in the future.
- **Diversions** – Tries to get supervisor off the subject.
- **Innocence** – Says it's someone else's fault and insists that everyone is against him.
- **Anger** – May say, "How dare you question what I do? Look at the loyalty I've shown to you and all that I've done for you!"

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'Supervising a Recovering Employee' continued from Page 4

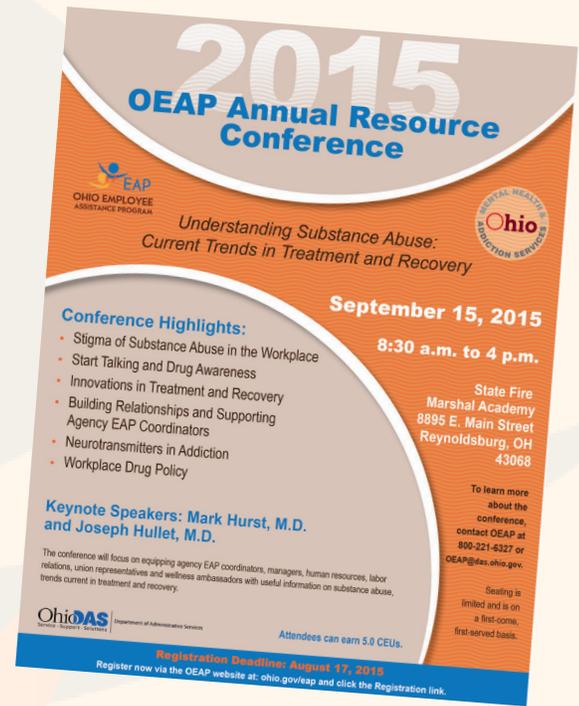
- **Pity** – May say, "I can't do anything right. I am worthless, see?"
- **Tears** – Falls apart in the confrontation.

As stated previously, managing the disease of addiction is a daily challenge. Relapse, however, is not failure. Resist the urge to see it as a lack of commitment. If your employee does relapse, continue to be supportive and encourage him to reenter treatment. Since many companies have specific policies and procedures regarding drug and alcohol use, remember to consult your company's specific policies regarding relapse and the Human Resources Department if there are required disciplinary actions.

Source:

1 The Recovering Worker, Lakeside-Milam Recovery Centers, Washington

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OHIO EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Your employee assistance program offers confidential help for personal problems

and concerns. Concerned about a troubled family member who won't get help? Feel tired and exhausted, but don't know if it's burnout, loss of motivation, depression or all three? Late for work too often? Has the use of alcohol or drugs created a crisis you are facing right now? The bottom line, never wonder if your concern is appropriate to contact OEAP. So, if you've been putting off taking action to solve a serious issue that is weighing on you, give OEAP a call today.

30 E. Broad St., 27th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

800-221-6327/614-644-8545
www.ohio.gov/eap

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OEAP Conference to Focus on Substance Abuse

In response to statistics indicating substance abuse is a growing concern among state employees, the Ohio Employee Assistance Program (OEAP) will address the issue head on at the 2015 OEAP Annual Resource Conference, Sept. 15, at the State Fire Marshal Academy.

Keynote presentations, panel discussions and breakout sessions will focus on the theme: "Understanding Substance Abuse: Current Trends in Treatment and Recovery." Featured speakers include Joseph Hullett, M.D. national medical director of Optum Behavioral Solutions and Mark Hurst, M.D., medical director of the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OMHAS).

A plenary session will feature two experts from OMHAS: Andrea Boxill, deputy director of the Governor's Cabinet Opiate Action Team, and Sarah E. Smith, director of Start Talking! – an initiative launched by Gov. John R. Kasich and First Lady Karen W. Kasich to prevent drug abuse in Ohio's children.

The conference is offered at no cost and is designed for supervisors and managers as well as agency EAP coordinators, HR administrators, union and labor representatives, and wellness ambassadors.

Registration is open through Aug. 17. To register, visit ohio.gov/eap and click the Registration link.