

Reducing the risk of workplace alcohol and other drug problems.

Alcohol and drug misuse can impact workplaces in several ways, including relationships, safety and productivity. Alcohol and drug misuse can also affect the general health and wellbeing of employees, and impact on co-workers, families, friends and the wider community.

Alcohol affects a person’s concentration, decision-making ability and slows reaction times. These effects can have implications for workplace safety, especially if the work involves operating heavy machinery or driving a vehicle. If a person comes to work hung-over or is absent due to alcohol, co-workers may become resentful of having to cover for them.

Effective responses to alcohol and other drugs in the workplace should be tailored to suit the needs and situation of the individual workplace and incorporate policy, education, training, counselling and treatment.

This fact sheet outlines some of the ways employers can minimise the impact of alcohol and other drugs in the workplace.

Developing a policy

A workplace alcohol and other drug policy is a written document that should aim to provide the basis for the workplace’s alcohol and other drug culture. It should include:

- A statement outlining the workplace’s position on alcohol and other drugs
- A set of guidelines, strategies and processes for addressing alcohol and drug-related issues in the workplace and achieving these objectives
- The roles and responsibilities of the employer, workplace, managers/supervisors, those who implement the policy, and employees.

The policy should be tailored to suit the needs and situation of the individual workplace and incorporate policy, education, training, counselling and treatment.

Education and training

Education and training programs are not only effective ways of ensuring all employees are aware of the workplace’s alcohol and other drug policy, but can also contribute to the health and wellbeing of employees by providing information about:

- Alcohol and other drug-related harm in the workplace
- The impact of alcohol and other drugs on health and wellbeing
- Access to counselling and other treatment.

The provision of ongoing, relevant education and training programs plays an essential role in changing attitudes and behaviours relating to alcohol and other drug-misuse in the workplace.

Treatment

Access to treatment, such as counselling, is an important component of any workplace response to alcohol and other drug misuse. There are a variety of treatment options that employers and employees can use. For example:

- Employee assistance programs (EAPs)
- Private alcohol and drug treatment services
- Community-based alcohol and drug treatment programs.

Accessing counselling and other treatment services may be compulsory when employees breach the conditions of the workplace alcohol and other drug policy; however, employees should also be provided with the opportunity to access these services voluntarily.

If you're worried about an employee's alcohol or other drug use, contact the alcohol and other drug service in your state or territory. You can also contact DrugInfo on 1300 85 85 84 for a free, confidential conversation about information on alcohol and other drug topics, or referral.

● Support Services

DrugInfo • 1800 85 85 84

ADF's free, confidential phone service, providing information and referral for alcohol and other drugs.

DirectLine • 1800 888 236

Free, confidential service offering over the phone counselling, support and referral (24 hours, 7 days a week).

ADF Help and Support Services Directory • adf.org.au/help-support/support-services-directory



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