

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

ADDRESSING ADDICTION

The first step toward recovery is acknowledging the problem

Millions of Americans of all income levels, ethnicities, and social groups misuse or are dependent on alcohol or other drugs. Chances are you know someone with a substance use disorder. People struggling with an addiction may experience financial, health, and job problems that can make their home lives stressful and chaotic. Signs of a problem include the following:

- Losing control over the drinking or drug use, in spite of personal intentions or promises to stop or cut back.
- Neglecting other activities in order to drink or use drugs.
- Hiding the amount of alcohol or drugs consumed.
- Lashing out at loved ones or anyone attempting to address the problem.
- Serious changes or deterioration in hygiene or physical appearance.
- Using more of the substance to feel the same effects.
- Blacking out.
- Experiencing withdrawal symptoms such as anxiety, shakiness, sweating, nausea and vomiting, insomnia, depression, irritability, fatigue or loss of appetite, and headaches.
- Experiencing legal troubles related to substance use, such as an arrest for driving while impaired.

Even though addiction is a treatable medical condition, many people never seek treatment out of fear and shame. The stigma of having a substance use disorder is a double whammy: people suffer needlessly even though effective treatments are available, and they're also at higher risk of physical and mental health problems and premature death.

The first step toward recovery is acknowledging the problem. EAP can offer confidential screening and referral. Treatment options include professional help from doctors and therapists who understand addiction and recovery, as well as medication-assisted treatment (MAT).

MAT refers to certain prescription drugs used to manage substance dependence. For example, MAT for opioid addiction uses medications such as buprenorphine to block the euphoric effects of opioids, relieve cravings, and stabilize brain chemistry. Research shows that MAT is effective in decreasing opiate cravings and preventing relapse among people addicted to opiates.

Detoxification and addiction services at private clinics, hospitals, and community-based treatment centers are often covered by health insurance. In addition, Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, Al-Anon, Nar-Anon and other similar groups can provide support for the individual and their family members.

