

Q. I don't feel comfortable having a discussion with an employee I think is suffering from a SUD

A. That's OK. There is a good chance your employee doesn't want to have that discussion with you either. It is important, however, that you understand your company's Drug and Alcohol Policy and who to contact in your Human Resources Department if you suspect your employee has a SUD that is impacting his/her work performance. Your role is to respectfully address the work performance issues that are causing you concern, and provide the appropriate resources (i.e. contact person in Human Resources (HR) or Employee Assistance Program (EAP)) that may assist the employee in addressing them.

Q. Who can I go to with Questions on how to address an SUD?

A. As a manager, it is **NOT** your responsibility to address a SUD with an employee. That is a job for the professionals in HR and/or the EAP. If you are interested in learning more about SUDs and how it can impact employee performance please refer to our resource guide (*where in library can they go to get this information).

Q. If I suspect an employee is dealing with a Substance Use Disorder and/or has a history of Substance Use Disorder, how should I address it with them?

A. As a manager, it is **NOT** your responsibility to address a SUD with an employee. You do however want the employee to know that you see a difference in his/her work performance and that you are concerned. One way of doing this, is to clearly and specifically state the work performance issues you see (attendance, tardiness, disengagement, etc.). It is best not to make assumptions as to why the employee's behavior has changed, but rather to respectfully remind the employee of available resources that may assist the employee in addressing the performance issues (i.e. EAP).

Q. Am I allowed to discipline an employee who states that he has a SUD? Aren't they covered by the American with Disabilities Act (ADA)?

A. Yes, you are allowed to discipline an employee regardless if he is covered by the (ADA). According to the ADA, "an individual's SUD cannot be used to shield the employee from the consequences of poor performance or conduct that result from these conditions." It is important to refer to your company's Drug and Alcohol Policy, as some employers may suggest that the employee go to the EAP in lieu of or in addition to discipline.

Q. One of my employees comes into work smelling like alcohol, what should I do?

A. Refer to your company's Drug and Alcohol Policy. Depending on your industry, this answer will be different. If you don't know your company's policy, call HR or your EAP for guidance.

Q. An employee came to me asking for help with a SUD, I want to keep it confidential but I don't know all the answers, who can I go to without betraying their trust?

A. As a manager, you are not in the position to help your employee with a SUD. If an employee discloses that he/she has a SUD, think of it as any other chronic illness and handle it as such. Refer to your company's Drug and Alcohol Policy for direction. Many companies refer employees to their EAP in such situations.

Q. I have an employee that has asked to take FMLA to support his/her teenage son currently going through outpatient treatment for a SUD. What can I do to support him/her while they are out?

A. Refer the employee to HR for direction on how to take FMLA.

Q. I have to fire someone on my team who is having performance issues as a result of a SUD. How do I go about this so that it is done in a respectful and caring way?

A. Terminating someone is rarely easy. Terminating someone due to poor performance as a result of SUD is no different, and shouldn't be treated differently.

Q. If I suspect an employee is suffering from a SUD, what are some of the questions I can ask?

A. Refer to your Drug and Alcohol Policy, as the answer may change depending on industry. When in doubt it is best to focus on the employee's job performance issues that lead you to suspect that he is suffering from a SUD, and not make assumptions as to why the employee is exhibiting poor job performance. Then remind the employee of appropriate resources available to the employee (HR, EAP).

Q. What steps should I take if an employee asks for help with an SUD?

A. As a manager, you are not in the position to help your employee with a SUD. If an employee discloses that he/she has a SUD, think of it as any other chronic illness and handle it as such. Refer to your company's Drug and Alcohol Policy for direction. Many companies refer employees to their EAP in such situations.

Q. What are some of the appropriate words to use when speaking about SUDs?

A. Words matter when referring to Addiction. Substance use disorder is a chronic illness, no different than cancer, diabetes or heart disease. When referring to someone who has a chronic illness we refer to the person as *having* a chronic illness, not *being* the chronic illness. The same holds true for substance use disorders. A person with a substance use disorder is just that, a person *with* a substance use disorder, not an alcoholic, addict, user or abuser.