

Q. I don't feel comfortable having a discussion with my manager about my substance use issue. Can I take time off without telling my manager?

A. It is important to contact someone in your Human Resources Department and/or refer to your company's Drug and Alcohol Policy. If you qualify for medical leave, you may be able to take time off without informing your manager as to the reason why.

Q. How do I know what my organization offers in terms of time off, benefits, etc.?

A. Usually someone in your Human Resources Department will have this information.

Q. I think I might have a substance use disorder. Who can I go to with questions on how to address it without it affecting my employment?

A. If you think you may have a substance use disorder, a great resource to learn more is your Employee Assistance Program. Often times, an EAP counselor can confidentially walk you through various treatment options to determine what may be right for you.

Q. If I suspect a colleague is dealing with a substance use disorder, how should I address it with him/her?

A. As a colleague, it is not your responsibility to address a SUD with a fellow employee. If you choose to reach out to your colleague, focus on the concerning behaviors you have witnessed without making assumptions as to the cause of those behaviors. It is best not to make assumptions as to why his or her behavior has changed, but rather to respectfully remind him or her of the available resources (i.e. EAP) that may assist him or her in addressing the concerning behaviors.

Q. What will happen if I come to work intoxicated? I have an alcohol use disorder, doesn't that mean my job is protected under the ADA?

A. No. The ADA does not protect an employee who is actively using substances at work. The ADA covers an employee who has been diagnosed with a SUD and is actively in treatment and/or in recovery.

Q. A colleague 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 colleague, you are not in the position to help another 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. Can I take FMLA to support my teenage child who is currently going through outpatient treatment for a SUD?

A. You may qualify for intermittent leave to support your child. Contact your Human Resources Department to obtain Leave of Absence information.

Q. Can I be fired for poor performance if it is the result of a SUD?

A. Yes you can be terminated for poor performance, regardless of the reason. Refer to your company's Employee Conduct Policy and Drug and Alcohol Policy.

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, similar to 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.

Q. What do I say when other employees ask me where I've been if I was out due to a SUD?

A. You do not have to go into detail as to why you were not at work. You can reply with, "Thank you for your concern. I was out for personal reasons and it's good to be back." Keeping it general and vague is usually the best course of action to take.