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Addressing Substance Use and the Workplace: Policy and Practice Implications

September 27th, 2017
Housekeeping Notes

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• This webinar is being recorded.
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Speakers:

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Research and Policy Analyst
Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction
Addressing Substance Use and the Workplace:
Policy and Practice Implications

Mental Health Commission of Canada – Workplace Webinar Series
Shawna Meister, Research and Policy Analyst
Bryce Barker, Knowledge Broker
September 27, 2017
About CCSA

- **Vision:** A healthier Canadian society where evidence transforms approaches to substance use.
- **Mission:** To address issues of substance use in Canada by providing national leadership and harnessing the power of evidence to generate coordinated action.
- **Value Proposition:** CCSA was created by Parliament to provide national leadership to address substance use in Canada. A trusted counsel, we provide national guidance to decision makers by harnessing the power of research, curating knowledge and bringing together diverse perspectives.
Canadian context

- Opioid crisis
- Legalization and regulation of marijuana

Health

- Substance use disorder is a disease and should be treated like other chronic diseases and health conditions
- Contributes to mental health conditions, family violence and suicide
- Contributes to 60+ diseases like cancer, heart disease, diabetes, HIV/AIDS
- Illicit drug dependence directly accounted for 20 million disability adjusted life years
Why Our Work Matters (cont.)

Public Safety
• Significant factor in the commission of crime; as many as 80% of federal offenders have a history of problematic substance use
• Impaired driving accounted for 9,000 deaths in Canada from 2000–2010

Economics
• Substance use costs over $40 billion per year in Canada

Effective Interventions and Supports
• Recovery is attainable and sustainable
National Priorities and Areas of Action

- Problematic Substance use & Co-occurring Issues
- Children & Youth
- Cannabis
- Prescription Drugs
- Alcohol
- Impaired Driving
- Treatment & Recovery
- Workforce Development
- Monitoring & Surveillance
- Canada’s Indigenous People


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Objectives for this Webinar

• Report on findings from a research study on Canadian workplace policies and practices

• Discuss considerations for applying the findings from this research
Overview

• Background and Context
• Research Study
  – Methodology
  – Environmental Scan
  – National Survey
  – Key Informant Interviews
• Steps in Developing and Refining Policy
  – Development
  – Implementation
Impact of Substance Use on the Workplace

- Absenteeism or presenteeism
- Cognitive impairments
- Chronic diseases
- Injuries and accidents
- Fatalities
Workplace Risk Factors

- Access to alcohol and drugs
- High stress
- Boredom
- Repetitive duties
- Isolation
- Fatigue
- Low job satisfaction
- Long hours
- Shift work
- Remote supervision
- Negative work environment
- Lack of opportunity for promotion
- Meetings with clients involving alcohol
The Need for the Study

- 2016: Meeting with industry stakeholders
- 2017: Industry stakeholder poll
- 2018: Legalization and regulation of cannabis
Methodology

- Environmental scan: publicly available policies
- National survey: select safety-sensitive industries
- Key informant interviews: select safety-sensitive industries
Comprehensive Substance Use Workplace Policies

1. Objectives and scope
2. Prevention
3. Observation and investigation
4. Support
5. Return to work
6. Non-compliance
7. Review and evaluation
8. Meet legal requirements
Characteristics of Data Collected

**Environmental Scan**
- Identified 35 policies, 11 policy statements, 22 position statements
- 15 of 35 policies were comprehensive
  - Majority safety-sensitive, large, well-established

**Survey and Interviews (select safety-sensitive industries)**
- 87 survey respondents; 12 interviews
- Majority private sector
- Range of small to large organizations
- Range of unionized and contract staff
Findings: State of Canadian Substance Use Policies

**Environmental Scan**

- Overall lack of substance use policies, particularly among non-safety-sensitive industries
- Policies acknowledge illegal and legal drugs; however, no explanation of legal drugs and risks
- Absence of review and evaluation
- Emergence of “risk-sensitive” positions (e.g., doctors, nurses)
- About half of policies acknowledge substance use as a disability
Survey Findings: Content of Policies

Aspects addressed in substance use policies

1. Alcohol/illegal drugs
2. Prescriptions
3. Termination procedures
4. Non-compliance procedures
5. Treatment / support
6. Return-to-work program
7. Screening / testing procedures
8. Return-to-work monitoring
9. Accommodation
10. Medical cannabis

Yes (%)  No (%)  Unsure (%)

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## Survey Findings: Response to Suspicion of Use

### Organization response to suspicion of substance use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Refer for assessment / testing</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refer to EAP / EFAP</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give warning</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure / don’t know</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refer to a medical doctor</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leave without pay</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dismiss / terminate</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leave with pay</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

0%  10%  20%  30%  40%  50%
Other Findings

Other findings from select safety-sensitive organizations:*

• 80% orient/educate employees about their workplace policy
• 56% refer employee to EAP/EFAP if use confirmed; 43% refer employees to a program; 18% terminate.
• 57% use SAPs/SAEs to determine fitness to return to duty
• 4% conduct random testing; 12% do this for specific employees
• 69% offer employees a support program to encourage abstinence
• Interviews: employee commitment to recovery and workplace culture are important

*These findings cannot be generalized to the broader workplace context.
Limitations of Study

• Publicly available policies
• Sectors
• Survey sampling
• Privacy
Implications of Findings

• Without a policy, employers open to more risk
  – Be proactive and develop a substance use policy
• Limited focus on employee well-being could contribute to ongoing issues
  – Ensure policies are comprehensive, balanced
• Workplace culture may cause challenges
  – Create a culture of openness, trust and understanding
• Balancing employer and employee needs
  – Invest in education, adhere to human rights and consult with various stakeholders
Developing Comprehensive Substance Use Policies

- Opportunity
- Benefits
- Tailored approach
Everyone Has a Role to Play

Workplace

- Employee
- HR
- Manager
- Union
- EAP
- Senior Executive
Comprehensive Policy Considerations

• Workplace context
• Tailoring
• Legal and regulatory consideration
• Policy development and implementation
Action Steps in Addressing Substance Use

1. Review your data
   Use your organization's existing data to better understand the scope of the issue in your workplace.
Action Steps in Addressing Substance Use

2. Involve employees and unions
Seek ideas and input. Truly engage staff and unions as they have insight and experience on how to achieve a healthy workplace.
Action Steps in Addressing Substance Use

3. Raise awareness
   Make information about problematic substance use available and accessible.
   Provide prevention and resilience building programs.
Action Steps in Addressing Substance Use

Reduce stigma and discrimination
Create an environment where employees can seek assistance without fear by speaking openly about substance use issues.
Action Steps in Addressing Substance Use

5. Leadership commitment

Communicate about available supports. Leadership should be visible and sustained.
Action Steps in Addressing Substance Use

6. Foster a healthy and safe environment

Create or enhance, and communicate, policies and processes related to substance use.

Develop an alcohol and drug policy tailored to your workplace’s culture and specific needs.
Action Steps in Addressing Substance Use

7. Encourage early treatment and support

Provide information on where to get support and services (e.g., EAP, EFAP).
Support employees requiring assistance.
Additional Resources

• Start the Conversation: http://www.conferenceboard.ca/Libraries/PUBLIC_PDFS/MHCC_Workplace-Substance-Use_EN.sflb

• Problematic Substance Use and the Canadian Workplace: http://www.conferenceboard.ca/e-library/abstract.aspx?did=8270


• Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety http://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/psychosocial/substance.html
Register Now / Inscrivez-vous

ISSUES of SUBSTANCE CONFERENCE 2017

Addiction matters • La dépendance, ça compte

November 13–15
Calgary, Alberta

Registration Open
Program Now Available

L’inscription est ouverte
Programme est maintenant disponible
Thank You!

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