



ATLANTIC CANADA COUNCIL

on Addiction

Problematic Substance Use That Impacts the Workplace



A Step-by-Step Guide & Toolkit
to Addressing it in Your Business/Organization



About This Training Package

This training resource is designed to provide a quick overview and assist you in using the comprehensive resource *Problematic Substance Use That Impacts the Workplace: A Step-by-Step Guide & Toolkit to Addressing it in Your Business/Organization*.

The toolkit includes information designed to build an understanding of problematic substance use as well as a step-by-step guide to addressing problematic substance use that impacts the workplace.

For each step, tools are provided to assist you.

To help illustrate the steps outlined in the toolkit, a case study is provided to demonstrate how the steps may be applied in the 'real world'.

A resource page of local supports available in your community is provided at the end of the toolkit.

Employers can take the following steps to prevent and address problematic substance use, and to promote a healthy and safe work environment¹:

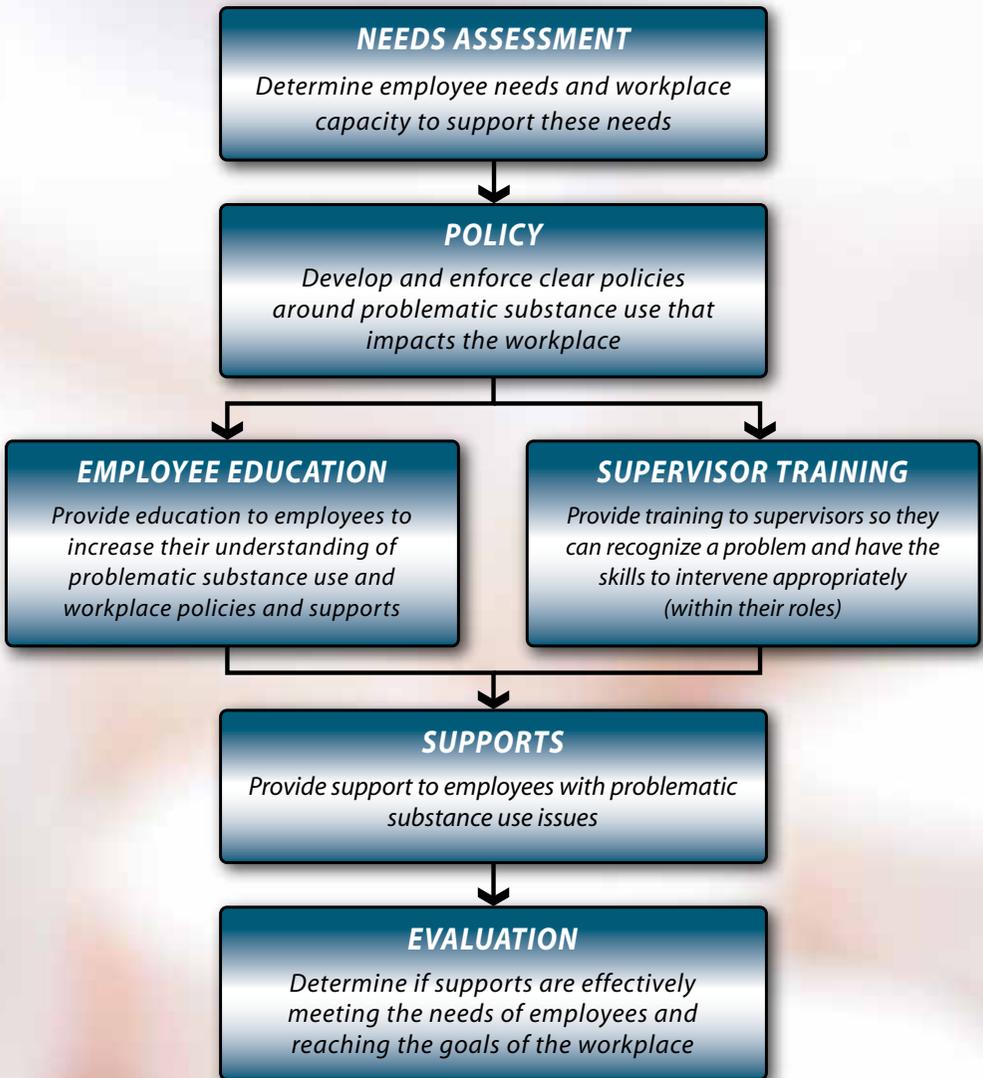


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A Step-by-Step Guide



Step 1: Needs Assessment

1. Start with a needs assessment to answer these four key questions²:
 - a. ***What is the impact of problematic substance use on my workplace?***
e.g., Are employees in safety or security sensitive positions, do employees perform functions such as client relations or financials, what are the statistics on turnover, absenteeism, and productivity?
 - b. ***Is this a problem/concern in my workplace?***
e.g., What is the workplace culture around problematic substance use, what do people think of those who have substance use problems, how supportive is the workplace towards employees' work-life balance?
 - c. ***Are we prepared if we have a problem?***
e.g., Do you have a drug/alcohol policy, do supervisors and employees know what to do if a colleague reveals a substance use problem?
 - d. ***What resources are available for persons with substance use problems?***
e.g., What supports are available for employees, what are the costs, what is available in the community?

You can conduct a needs assessment through a questionnaire, meeting or focus group with diverse workplace representation. If your workplace has a Workplace Health Committee, they may be able to help with or conduct the needs assessment (if not, a committee could be set up to support this and other steps in addressing problematic substance use).

Step 2: Policy

The purpose of drug and alcohol policies are to demonstrate risk management, provide guidance to employees and managers, establish good workplace relations, and protect employers from disputes³. Developing a policy can be a daunting task, however, the tools provided in the toolkit can help in developing a comprehensive policy that meets your unique workplace needs. The tools provided are comprehensive, so that you can ***pick and choose what to include and adapt the components as needed.***

How to use the tools:

1. Review the suggested policy components.
2. Indicate 'yes' or 'no' to the components you would/would not like included in your policy.
3. If required add, delete or adapt the wording of the components you plan to include in your policy. The components include⁴:
 - Introduction
 - Objectives
 - Scope
 - Rules
 - Policy violations
 - Procedures
 - Roles and responsibilities
 - Prevention
 - Assessment and rehabilitation
 - Aftercare
 - Confidentiality and privacy
 - Policy evaluation
4. After developing a policy, use the checklist provided in the toolkit to ensure key aspects of a policy have been covered (please note not every workplace will include all items covered by this checklist). The areas that should be addressed include:
 - Overview
 - Scope and application
 - Responsibility
 - Investigation
 - Consequences
 - Supports
 - Evaluation
 - Employer liability
 - Procedures and guidelines
5. The communication of a new drug and alcohol policy is essential.

A sample 'ideal' policy communication plan is provided in the toolkit

Step 3: Educating Employees

Employee education is a critical step in workplaces addressing problematic substance use. Areas to focus educational efforts include:

- **Prevention of problematic substance use** (comprehensive workplace health)
 - **General information** on problematic substance use
 - The **impact of problematic substance use** on safety, health, personal life and work performance
 - Details of the **problematic substance use policy**
 - How to report a co-worker who is showing warning signs or obvious **indicators of problematic substance use**
 - Types of help and supports available for employees and their immediate family
1. Use the checklist provided in the toolkit to ensure all areas of policy education are addressed.

<i>Policy Education Checklist</i>	
The benefits of the policy and program, and the dangers of work-related alcohol and other drug use	<input type="checkbox"/> It is especially important that all employees become familiar with the benefits of the drug-free workplace policy and program, especially when they are supported by other health and wellness programs and activities.
<i>Continued...</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Hold information sessions or use posters to remind employees that they are in a drug-free workplace, that supports are available, and what they should do if they encounter or suspect drug/alcohol use (or the after effects) in the workplace among co-workers.

Sample posters are provided in the toolkit

Step 4: Supervisor Training

Supervisors are a key element of addressing problematic substance use that impacts the workplace as they are often responsible for implementing many elements of drug/alcohol policies, and programs².

Supervisors need to be trained on:

- The workplace's **policy** (and how to explain the policy to employees)
 - Legally sensitive areas (e.g., **confidentiality** of employees, union contracts, etc.)
 - Recognizing **signs and symptoms** of potential problematic substance use
 - Handling drug or alcohol **crisis situations**
 - **Acting** in the event that problematic substance use is detected
 - **Referring** to appropriate programs/supports
 - **Reintegrating** employee back to work
1. Educate supervisors on their role in addressing problematic substance use

2. Teach supervisors how to respond to a substance use crisis

The toolkit outlines recommended steps to address a crisis

3. Develop and implement an incident report

The toolkit provides a sample incident report which may be adapted to suit your workplace needs



Step 5: Supports

The most effective way to address problematic substance use that impacts the workplace is through a comprehensive program/approach including³:

Health Promotion & Prevention: Problematic substance use can be integrated into existing workplace health strategies.

The toolkit provides suggested health topics where problematic substance use may be incorporated

Early Identification: Staff and supervisors can be educated to recognize the signs and symptoms of problematic substance use/impairment, which will result in increased early identification of problems.

The toolkit provides a checklist of the signs and symptoms of problematic substance use

Intervention: A common support that the workplace can provide is the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). If your workplace does not have an EAP, other resources such as an occupational health and safety nurse or community supports such as local addiction treatment services may be able to provide support.

Treatment: Under a 'treatment intervention' the employer indicates to the individual that their performance is unacceptable and that there are treatment options available through the workplace's EAP or other resources (e.g., detoxification or withdrawal management, day structured treatment, residential treatment program, outpatient treatment, family therapy, self-help). Relapse prevention is also essential to treatment.

Reintegration: The best practice is to integrate the return to work plan with the individual's treatment, monitoring and aftercare.

The toolkit provides a checklist of supports for reintegration

Step 6: Evaluation

The final step to addressing problematic substance use that impacts the workplace is evaluation. Evaluation does not have to be complicated; a simple survey can gather information about the effectiveness of your policy/program/supports.

Evaluation is important to provide information on:

- The effectiveness of the program/support provided
- The successes of the program/support
- The challenges, areas of improvement or modifications required
- The justification for continuation of the program/support

The toolkit provides a sample survey which can be used or adapted to evaluate programs/supports in your workplace

1. Alberta Alcohol & Drug Abuse Commission (AADAC) (2002). *Substance use and gambling in the Alberta workplace: Technical report*. Government of Alberta
2. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration [SAMHSA] (n/d). Division of workplace programs - workplace resource center.
3. Addiction Services (Nova Scotia) (2007). *Building a Framework: A Resource Kit for Healthcare Organizations*.
4. Alcohol Policy Network (2002). *Laws/Policies - Enacted Legislation*.



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