



Addiction in the Workplace? Tips for Talking to Your Colleague

What Employees Can Do To Help

When a colleague shows signs of abusing alcohol or drugs, it can be difficult to know what to do or say. But, if a coworker's alcohol or drug use affects either your work or his or her health, it is important you try to help. In fact, this may be the time your colleague needs you the most. Following are some suggestions developed by Hazelden counselors to help you broach the subject with your colleague:

- **Be Resourceful** - Make use of company resources to help you assist your coworker, especially if he or she resists your efforts. Denial is a common reaction among those who are abusing or addicted to alcohol or other drugs.
- **Timing** - Wait to talk to your colleague when he or she is sober and clearheaded.
- **Rehearse** - Consider writing down what you want to say and practice how you'd answer a variety of responses from your colleague. This will make your discussion easier.
- **Choose Your Words Carefully** - Express your concern in an honest and caring way. Be sure to use 'I' phrases such as 'I'm worried.' This way, your colleague can't argue with your feelings.
- **Determine What Is Important To Your Colleague** - Talk to your coworker about the effect of alcohol or drugs on whatever he or she cares about most: career, family, etc. Even if your coworker doesn't care for himself, he may get help for the sake of his family.
- **Remember That Addiction Is A Disease** - Don't blame or criticize your colleague for his or her behavior. Addiction is a medically proven disease and often causes individuals to act in ways that are not normal for them.

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