

A Presentation to Ontario Association of Demolition Contractors on identifying substance abuse in the workplace

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Overview

- ▶ What is addiction?
- ▶ Impact of addiction in the workplace
- ▶ Signs and symptoms in the workplace
- ▶ Detection, intervention and communication
- ▶ Benefits of treatment
- ▶ How to return to the work force



Goals for Participants

1. To receive guidance on how to address substance abuse issues with staff.
2. To be able to identify the signs and symptoms of substance abuse in the workplace.
3. To be able to effectively intervene when a situation arises.
4. To be able to help a staff member return to work



Addiction Definition

“An uncontrolled dependence that
continues
in spite of causing

“physical, psychological,
Social and spiritual harm.”

There is also a heavy impact to relationships, with families
or friends and employment



Addiction in the Workplace

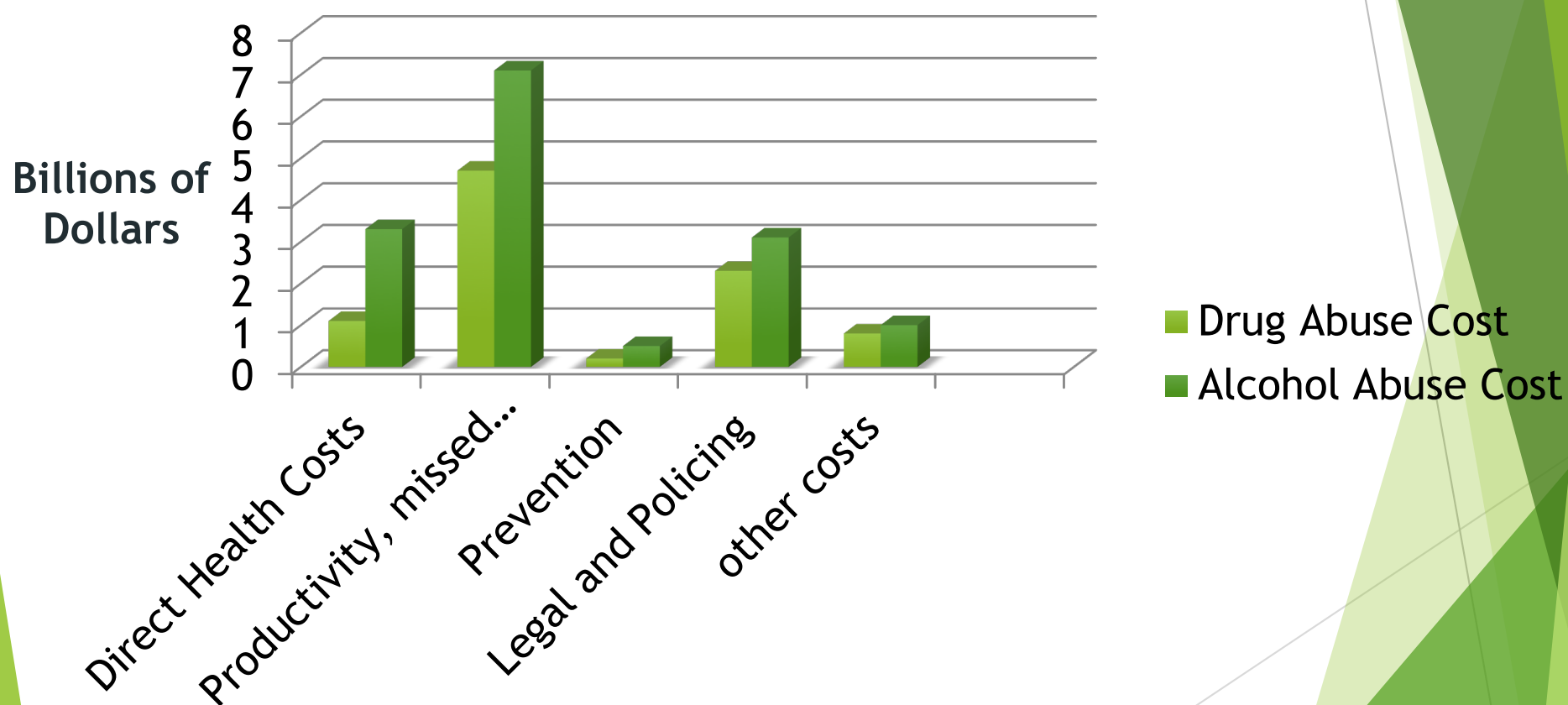
Productivity Losses

	Alcohol	Drugs
TOTAL LOST PRODUCTIVITY	\$7.1 B	\$4.7 B
- Long-term Disability	\$6.2 B	\$4.4 B
- Short-term Disability (days in bed)	\$15.9 M	\$21.8 M
- Short-term Disability (days with reduced activity)	\$23.6 M	n/a
- Premature Mortality	\$923 M	\$248.5 M

(Source: Dr. Rehm et al, 2006)



The Cost of Substance Abuse in Canada (In Billions of Dollars)



National Release of the Cost of Substance Abuse in Canada, 2010
Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse (CCSA)

What is safe drinking?

- ▶ No more than 3 drinks a day and 12 per week for men or
- ▶ 2 drinks a day and 10 a week for women

Source Centre for Addiction and Mental Health



What percentage of people with alcohol and illicit drug problems are employed

- ▶ 25%
 - ▶ 45%
 - ▶ 75%
 - ▶ 85%
-
- ▶ The answer is 75% (and that number should scare everyone) that is employed any where, but especially in the construction industry.

Source: Linda Bell/ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services.



What percentage of the population has problems with alcohol, drugs, gambling, gaming and porn?

- ▶ 5%
 - ▶ 10%
 - ▶ 15%
 - ▶ 20%
-
- ▶ The answer is 20%

Source Linda Bell/ Veldhuze, S. et al, The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry

Alcoholism and Drug Addiction are Disabilities - Government Benefits Can't Be Denied.



On September 16, 2010, The Ontario Court of Appeal rendered an important ruling that examines discrimination based on disability under human rights law. The ruling confirms a lower court judgement that two individuals were entitled to long-term disability benefits under the Ontario Disability Support Program Act (ODSPA) because of their severe dependence on alcohol. The Court decided that denying such benefits violates Ontario's Human Rights Code.



Elements of Work that May Contribute to Problems

- ▶ High levels of stress
- ▶ Low job satisfaction
- ▶ Long hours or irregular shifts
- ▶ Fatigue
- ▶ Undiagnosed mental health issues

Indications of Mental Health Issues



- ▶ Loss of time at work, more than usual.
- ▶ Unusual behaviour
- ▶ Hospitalizations
- ▶ A staff member telling you that they need help.
- ▶ Lack of care to their own hygiene,



Elements of Work that May Contribute to Problems (con't)

- ▶ Repetitive duties
- ▶ Periods of inactivity or boredom
- ▶ Isolation & Remote job sites
- ▶ Easy access to substances
- ▶ Lack of acknowledgement of their work except when there is a problem.



Elements of work that may contribute to the problem (con't)

- ▶ Work functions & parties
- ▶ Frequent travel, away from home
- ▶ Preoccupation - behavioural addictions
 - e.g. gambling, internet, sex, overspending, eating
- ▶ Harassment; sexual harassment,



The Impact in the Workplace

- ▶ Impacts production at all levels
- ▶ Financial investment
- ▶ Overall employee morale
- ▶ Safety-sensitive positions - danger...
- ▶ Publicity



Detection Indicators of a Potential Problem

- ▶ Cognitive Changes and Self Care
- ▶ Unusual/or out of normal individual behaviour
- ▶ Lateness
- ▶ Accidents or Near Misses
- ▶ Morale
- ▶ Absenteeism

Safety Sensitive Issues

Accident Risk

- ▶ Impaired
- ▶ Hung Over
- ▶ In Withdrawal

...from alcohol or drugs while at work





Safety Sensitive Issues Accident Risk (con't)

- ▶ Overly cautious
 - ▶ slows down production
 - ▶ safety hazard to self and others
- ▶ Covers up for accidents rather than openly assuming responsibility
- ▶ Other employees take up the slack



Ways a Co-Worker Could Help

- ▶ Comment from another colleague
- ▶ Not covering up with superiors
- ▶ Allowing consequences to occur
- ▶ Express concern or offer to help

Intervention



- ▶ When someone's alcohol/drug use is causing problems for themselves, families and co-workers, many things can be done.
- ▶ Describe the Behaviours
- ▶ Stop protecting the person from the effects of their use
- ▶ Offer Help in a constructive manner.



Intervention (con't)

- ▶ This is a very humbling experience for the supervisor, as you have all the power and you must be kind with that power, because your employee feels worthless, ashamed, embarrassed, (and wish they had quit their job that morning)(or you had quit yours).
- ▶ Have a Human Resource person involved if you have someone in that role.



Intervention Barriers to Change

Your belief system

- ▶ Our beliefs about someone's ability to recover are dependent on our own experience of people with the problem
- ▶ What is your experience and what do you think?

The organizational culture

- ▶ Norms of each company are different
- ▶ Each has their own environment
 - e.g.. drinks on payday, after project completion



Intervention Barriers to Change (con't)

Denial

- ▶ By employee, management, and peers
- ▶ It is none of my business

Enabling

- ▶ By colleagues, management and peers
- ▶ Let's not talk about it
- ▶ Reluctance to discuss personal topics



Return To Work agreements (RTWA)

- ▶ Developing a RTWA requires:
- ▶ A collaboration between the employee, employer, union, Employee Assistance Program and/or treatment professionals. Compliance with the organization's policies and legal obligations as well as with medical recommendations. Prior notification through company policy documents that an RTWA would be expected as a condition of continued employment.
- ▶ All RTWA's need a legal opinion.



Return to work agreements (con't)

- ▶ This agreement is a written document that explains the expectations that the employer has for the employee; it could include any or all of the following
 - ▶ 1) complete a mandated treatment for a substance abuse problem.
 - ▶ 2) The consequences if the expectations are not met are also outlined.
 - ▶ 3) This agreement can be used if an employee has violated the drug-free workplace policy and has been provided the opportunity to participate in rehabilitation as a condition of continued or re-employment.



Return to Work (con't)

- ▶ Return to duty and unannounced follow-up testing is intended to deter alcohol and drug use in contravention of either an agreed-to treatment program or a “last chance” agreement. The individual could be required to pass a test prior to return to work and then be subject to unannounced testing over a specific period of time, (legal opinion). In a post-treatment situation, it is recognized that relapse is a function of drug or alcohol dependency, and the objective is to support ongoing recovery. Failure to have a strong monitoring program in either situation could present serious safety risks if the known user were to use again in conjunction with work and cause a serious accident or incident. The agreement would be tailored to the individual’s circumstances regarding specific requirements and duration.

How Talking About This Helps the Employee and the Employer

- ▶ Improved health - physical, mental spiritual
- ▶ More positive attitude - at work, at home
- ▶ Less stress
- ▶ Increased job satisfaction
- ▶ More functional team member





Thank You for your Time

Any Questions or Comments? We would love to hear how we can serve you better!

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