

Steps to Tackle Employee Alcohol Addiction

1. Recognize The Signs

The first step in addressing alcohol addiction is identifying the symptoms. Employees may exhibit changes in behavior, such as erratic mood swings, decreased productivity, frequent absenteeism, or difficulty concentrating. Physically, they might show signs like bloodshot eyes, tremors, and the smell of alcohol on their breath.



2. Create a Safe Environment

Workplace safety is your top priority so make sure that your employee is not jeopardizing others. Beyond that, create a safe space for your employee by addressing the topic with sensitivity. Keep the conversation private, and approach the employee with compassion and concern.

3. Offer Access to Resources

Employees should have access to counseling services, addiction recovery centers, and medical support. Consider integrating a comprehensive wellness program that includes education on the effects of alcohol use, stress management, and other wellness initiatives that could help prevent future challenges.



4. Implement and Enforce Workplace Policies

Given the potential of alcohol to impair an employee's judgment, make sure to set up clear policies about drinking on the job or coming to work drunk. Set up a clear schedule for drug and alcohol testing with punishments attached.

5. Foster a Supportive Culture

A workplace that fosters open communication and support can have a powerful impact on recovery. Leaders should model empathy, respect, and understanding, particularly when an employee returns to work after seeking treatment. Consider creating a return-to-work plan to ensure a smooth transition.



6. Promote Education and Prevention

Educate all employees about the risks associated with alcohol use and offer training on how to recognize signs of addiction. This can embolden employees to seek help early and reduce the stigma surrounding alcohol abuse. It can also empower coworkers to offer support when needed.

7. Be Patient and Empathetic

Recovery from alcohol addiction is a long-term and challenging process. Be patient and empathetic, acknowledging that setbacks may occur. Be a helping hand in your employee's journey, offering ongoing support and celebrating small and big successes.

