

RECOGNIZING THE SIGNS OF ALCOHOL & SUBSTANCE ABUSE

The important key to identifying and handling an individual who may have a substance abuse related disorder is to hold this person accountable for the same requirements and responsibilities as others. The primary focus of attention is the individual's performance. Look for a **PATTERN of BEHAVIORS** rather than locking onto a single incident.

One must ask whether this individual's performance is **OUTSIDE** the acceptable range. In addition to job performance problems, one may also look at other aspects of the individual's life to discern if s/he is neglecting other responsibilities or other events that indicate a problem exists (e.g., arrest for DUI). If an individual is found to have an alcohol or substance abuse problem, the **COURSE OF ACTION SHOULD FOLLOW THE ESTABLISHED INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES.**

Job Performance Indicators:

- 1. Chronic Lateness (an unending list of excuses)**
- 2. Numerous Unexplained Absences**
- 3. Difficulty Locating Individual**
- 4. Lapses in Judgment**
- 5. Problems in Decision-Making**
- 6. Problems in Concentration or Follow-Through**
- 7. Unusual displays of Emotions:**
 - Seems "brittle" and falls apart easily**
 - Flares up quickly and out of proportion to event**
 - Shows large mood swings**
 - Emotional responses are "unpredictable" (i.e., not what is normally expected)**

(Note: If a person has an alcohol or substance abuse problem, these performance indicators WILL BE THE SIGNAL that something is wrong. However, an individual can exhibit these performance indicators without having an alcohol or substance abuse problem. Testing for alcohol or drugs is necessary but a negative result will only rule out alcohol or drugs as the cause. The individual must still correct these problem behaviors)