

Substance Misuse & Addiction

Seirbhís Chúnaimh
d'Fhostaithe na Státseirbhíse



www.cseas.per.gov.ie



Introduction

Research shows that alcohol misuse features strongly in Irish society*. One of the aims of the National Drugs Strategy 2009 – 2016 is to create a safer society by minimizing problem drug use. This leaflet is intended to raise awareness and provide information on alcohol/substance misuse and addiction; the potential impact on individuals, families and the workplace; and what steps you can take to seek help.

About substance misuse and addiction

Substance misuse may lead to addiction which can be defined as a dependency on a substance or behaviour. This dependency may be physical and/or psychological. Addictions may be grouped into:

- Substance addiction, e.g. alcohol, narcotic and/or prescription or non-prescription drugs.
- Process addiction, e.g. gambling, internet, sexual addiction, eating disorders, etc.

On-duty EAO available at 0818 008120

Monday – Thursday: 9am – 5.15pm

Friday: 9am – 5pm

**Appointments are available evening
and weekends if required**

Email: cseas@per.gov.ie

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Impact of substance misuse/addiction on the individual

Substance misuse/addiction can have devastating consequences for an individual. Health, family life, relationships, work and finances can all be affected. Violent behaviour may occur. Individuals may engage in criminal activity such as fraud or theft to provide money to enable destructive habits.

Impact of substance misuse/addiction on families

Living with substance misuse/addiction can put family members under severe stress. Normal routines can be interrupted by unexpected or sometimes alarming events that are part of living with substance misuse and/or addiction. Family members may deny this reality in their attempt to maintain a family order that is being threatened. The entire family system can be affected by a problem that is slowly spinning out of control. Financial problems, domestic violence and other secondary issues can emerge.

Impact of substance misuse/addiction on the workplace

The impact in the workplace can also be considerable. Where an employee has a problem with alcohol or substance misuse/ addiction, the ability to carry out normal duties at work can be severely hampered. Work performance, attendance and relationships with colleagues and managers are likely to suffer.

While concern for the individual with the problem is often apparent, patience can wear thin. This becomes particularly evident when targets are not met and colleagues have to carry a heavier workload.

Living with substance misuse/addiction in the home can also impact on the workplace. A staff member may be so caught up with managing and controlling the family problem, it can spill over into his/her work attendance, performance and relationships. The effect may be felt acutely by colleagues and managers and may ultimately impact on organisational effectiveness if not addressed.

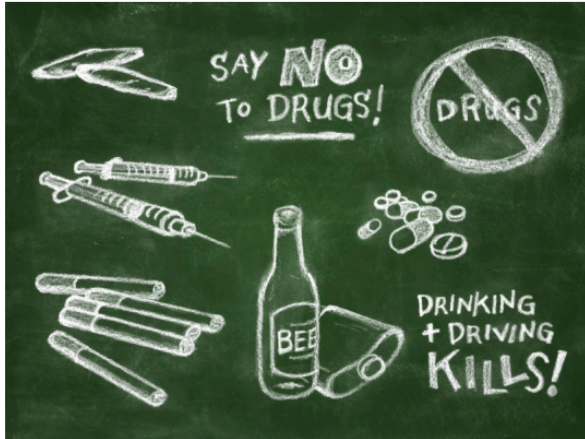
Managers and HR Divisions have a responsibility and duty of care to all staff. When it becomes apparent that there might be a problem, it is advisable to seek guidance on how best to address the issue.

Alcohol and you

It is important to recognise that if alcohol is consumed, it should always be in moderation. Binge drinking is dangerous. Never drink and drive. Should someone in your life approach you with concerns about your drinking, try to listen and take what is said seriously.

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Enabling

Enabling is the act of supporting someone's behaviour when it is contrary to their best interests.

"Enabling", "Enabler", "Co-dependent" are terms often associated with those who are in relationships with people who have substance abuse/addiction problems. Enabling occurs when the person with the problem never has to face the consequences of his/her actions because the enabler, e.g. a concerned person such as a partner, a family member or work colleague covers up for, or rescues, the individual. This is usually done with good intention, however, it results in the individual continuing his/her destructive pattern of behaviour.

Enabling behaviour can include paying gambling debts, facilitating work absenteeism, and making excuses on behalf of the person concerned. Co-dependence can develop from this, whereby enabling becomes a way of life for the concerned person.

Tips - what can you do?

Breaking the cycle of dependence and addiction can be difficult. With help and support, recovery is possible.

- Seek help if you are concerned about your own or someone else's drinking/ drug use or other behaviour which could lead to addiction, e.g. gambling
- Don't enable - i.e. don't cover up or bail out
- Become informed about the effects of substance use, misuse and dependency
- Review your own alcohol and/or drug use or other behaviour that could lead to addiction, e.g. gambling

- Take care of yourself
- Where difficulties arise at work, talk to your line manager, HR Division or CSEAS

Supports available

- Civil Service Employee Assistance Service (CSEAS)
- GP
- Self-help groups, e.g. Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), Gamblers Anonymous (GA), AI Anon - support for families
- Health Service Executive Drug and Alcohol Services



How the CSEAS can help

The CSEAS can support the individual, managers, colleagues and HR Divisions where issues of substance misuse and addiction are impacting on the work environment. Confidential support and assistance can be provided to facilitate the exploration of the issues involved and options available to address the matter. Referrals to relevant professional agencies and self-help groups can be discussed.

How the CSEAS can help

- Circular 08/2009: Civil Service Alcohol and Drugs Misuse Policy
- Department of Finance "Guide to Alcohol and Drug Misuse in the Workplace 2010"
- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 - This legislation sets out the duties of employees in the workplace with regard to alcohol and other intoxicants.

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