

Alcohol Awareness Month

We've come a long way over the last half-century in our understanding of the disease of addiction, and yet the stereotypes of the loveable lush and the skid-row bum remain pervasive. Next to nicotine, alcohol is the most abused substance in our culture. It's cheap, it's legal, and it's an effective anesthetic for life's problems.

One person in ten develops an addiction, meaning that she/he continues to use despite health, relationship, financial and work problems caused by abusive use. Anyone can be an alcoholic: physicians, teachers, truck drivers, traders, full-time mothers, police officers, mechanics, carpenters, government bureaucrats, and skid-row bums. They are female and male; brown, white and black; straight, gay and bi-; retired senior citizens, middle-age taxpayers and adolescent students; big-city dwellers and small town folk; criminals and responsible law-abiding citizens. There is no "alcoholic personality" and no lab test to determine who will become an alcoholic or addict.

Employers are concerned because problem drinkers who are hung-over, drinking on-the-job, or anxiously anticipating the next drink, are making decisions that influence the success of the organization. They interact with customers, handling finances, and using hazardous materials and machinery. In addition to productivity, attendance and morale problems, increased workers' comp claims and medical use, they also create legal risk.

No one chooses to have alcoholism, any more than choosing to have diabetes or cancer. The patient however is responsible for treatment. If alcohol is causing problems and you can't seem to stop, consider professional help.

Resources for further information:

www.wseap.com

www.jointogether.org

www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/alcoholism/html

www.niaaa.nih.gov/

www.thecoolspot.gov

www.alcoholics-anonymous.org

For family members:

www.al-anon.alateen.org

A "yes" answer to 2 or 3 of these questions means that alcohol is causing problems.

1. Have you ever thought that you should cut back on your use of alcohol or other drugs?
2. Have you ever gotten annoyed when some one suggested that you have a problem with alcohol or other drugs?
3. Have you ever felt guilty for something that you have done while drinking or using other drugs?
4. Have you ever drank or used more than you intended?

For free, confidential assistance with this and other health and wellness related concerns call
Workplace Solutions at 800-327-5071.