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Checklist

Signs and Symptoms

Below is a checklist frequently used to see if alcohol and other drug abuse may be an issue in someone's life.

1. Absenteeism

- Instances of leaving without permission
- Excessive sick leave
- Frequent Monday and/or Friday absences
- Repeated absences, particularly when they follow a pattern
- Lateness to work, especially on Monday mornings, and/or returning from lunch
- Leaving work early
- Peculiar and increasingly unbelievable excuses for absences or lateness
- Absent more often than other employees for colds, flu, gastritis, and so forth
- Frequent unscheduled short-term absences (with or without medical explanation)

2. "On-the-Job" Absenteeism

- Continued absences from post more than job requires – "goofing off"
- Long coffee breaks, lunch breaks
- Frequent trips to the restroom

3. Uneven Work Pattern

- Alternate periods of high and low productivity

4. High Accident Rate

- Accidents on the job
- Accidents off the job (but affecting job performance)
- "Horseplay" that causes unsafe conditions

5. Problems with Memory

- Difficulty in recalling instructions, details, conversations, and so forth
- Difficulty recalling nurse's own mistakes

6. Difficulty in Concentration

- Work requiring greater effort
- Jobs taking more time
- Repeated mistakes due to inattention
- Bad decisions or poor judgment
- Errors in charting
- Forgetfulness

7. Confusion

- Difficulty following instructions
- Increasing difficulty handling complex assignments

8. Reporting to Work in an Inappropriate State

- Coming to/returning to work in an obviously altered condition

9. General Lowered Job Efficiency

- Missed deadlines, unreliability
- Complaints from patients, family members
- Improbable excuses for poor job performance
- Undependability
- Refusal to take job assignments, failure to complete assignments

10. Poor Employee Relationships on the Job

- Failure to keep promises; unreasonable excuses for failing to keep promises
- Overreactions to real or imagined criticism
- Borrowing money from co-workers
- Unreasonable resentments
- Avoidance of associates
- Lying and exaggerating
- Complaints from co-workers, supervisors, other staff
- Blaming others for problems

11. Inappropriate Appearance

- Decreased attention to personal appearance and hygiene
- Odor of alcohol on breath
- Glassy, red eyes
- Tremors

12. Other Problem Behaviors

- Sleeping on the job
- Withdrawal from others, self-isolation
- Mood swings
- Increasing irritability
- Problems at home, with relationships, with finances

13. Drug Diversion

- Consistent volunteering to give medications
- Patient complaints of no relief; discrepancies on records
- Consistent administration of IM (prn) and maximum doses when other professionals do not demonstrate such patterns
- Frequent wastage, such as spilling drugs or breaking vials
- Unobserved wastage, no co-signatures
- Work on a unit where drugs are missing or have been tampered with
- Frequent volunteering for additional shifts; appearing on unit when not assigned.