TITLE: 4665 DEALING WITH DRUGS & ALCOHOL ABUSE (FOR EMPLOYEES)

LENGTH: 9 MINUTES

PRODUCTION YEAR: 2008

PROGRAM SYNOPSIS:
Many people enjoy an occasional beer or glass of wine with dinner without seeming to have any problems, but if they find themselves needing alcoholic drinks to relax they are starting down a path that could lead to "substance abuse." Unfortunately, people don't always recognize the danger of drinking alcohol and using drugs. They start out thinking that they are in complete control, only to find themselves ruled by the substances that they use. This program discusses the major effects that drugs and alcohol can have on someone, both at home and at work. It also reviews what employees can do to help combat substance abuse in their workplaces.

SHOOTING LOCATION: A variety of industrial and office environments

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES: After watching the program, the participant will be able to explain the following:
• What substances are commonly abused;
• The effects and dangers of various types of substances;
• How people can get "hooked" on drugs or alcohol;
• How their company can help employees overcome substance abuse.

INSTRUCTIONAL CONTENT:

WHAT IS SUBSTANCE ABUSE?
• The term "substance abuse" can mean:
  — The overuse of alcohol.
  — Misuse of over-the-counter medications and prescription drugs.
  — Use of illegal drugs.
  — "Huffing" chemicals that produce noxious vapors, such as solvents, lighter fluid and glue.
  — Eating "magic mushrooms" and other toxic plants.
• Substances that produce a "high" affect how the central nervous system functions.
  — Depressants, such as alcohol, marijuana and tranquilizers, slow down brain activity.
  — Stimulants, including cocaine, crack and methamphetamine, speed it up.
  — Narcotic analgesics, such as heroin, morphine and OxyContin numb the senses.
  — Hallucinogens like LSD alter the way that the brain processes information.

EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL
• Alcohol is by far the most commonly abused of all drugs.
  — In the United States alone there are over 50 million binge drinkers.
  — Nearly half of all serious workplace accidents are caused by people drinking on the job.
  — And 25,000 people die each year in alcohol-related vehicle crashes!
• Impairment starts with the first drink!
  — And after only a few drinks it's extremely unsafe to operate vehicles or machinery of any type.
• A person who is drunk may act irrationally, have emotional outbursts… even become violent.
  — Although no one should be allowed behind the wheel while they are intoxicated, it may not be safe for you to try and get their keys.
  — Notify your supervisor if a coworker who appears to be under the influence is attempting to drive (call the police if you are not on the job).

EFFECTS OF MARIJUANA
• Marijuana is the most commonly used illegal drug, and is second only to alcohol in its frequency of abuse.
• Like alcohol, marijuana is a depressant. This makes it unsafe for a user to be working because marijuana:
  — Impairs short-term memory.
  — Reduces the ability to concentrate.
  — Affects coordination.
  — Slows reaction time.

OTHER NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF DRUGS
• Combining drugs can also lead to an overdose.
  — For instance, consuming alcohol with strong depressants, such as barbiturates and tranquilizers, can be fatal.
• In the workplace, the most commonly overlooked depressants are the chemicals that you may use every day.
  — Breathing in fumes from aerosol cans, glue or gasoline can cause immediate, irreversible damage to your brain, lungs and respiratory tract.
  — You have to be especially careful when working around these substances, because it can be easy to "get hooked" on the vapors and not even know it.
• Even when the negative effects of a substance are well known, some people are still drawn to them.
  — Illegal stimulants, such as cocaine, crack (a concentrated form of cocaine) and methamphetamine, as well as narcotic analgesics like heroin, are all extremely addictive, dangerous drugs with terrible side-effects.
• Crystal meth (methamphetamine), for example, is made from highly toxic materials, including anhydrous ammonia, red phosphorus and lithium from old batteries.
  — This mixture is so powerful and corrosive that people who routinely smoke it have had their teeth disintegrate.
• Contrary to popular belief, most "hard drug" users manage to hold down jobs… and for a while they may even excel at them.
ABUSE OF PRESCRIPTION & OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICATIONS

• In recent years it has become very popular to abuse prescription and over-the-counter medications on the job.
  — Unfortunately, many people don't recognize the danger of getting high on these substances.
  — They wrongly presume that... “Since it's a medicine, it must be fairly safe.”
• But medication abuse can be just as addictive, and even more deadly, than using illegal drugs.
  — In fact, with some pain relievers only one pill can cause complete respiratory failure.
• Commonly abused prescription drugs include:
  — Stimulants such as amphetamines and Ritalin.
  — Narcotic analgesics, such as OxyContin and medications containing codeine.

DANGERS OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE

• Substance abuse of any kind is dangerous. It can:
  — Take away a person's job, savings, friends and family.
  — Put them in jail.
  — Destroy their health.
  — Cause severe mental problems.
  — Even kill them.
• Worst of all, what a substance abuser does while under the influence can endanger coworkers and anyone else that they come into contact with.
• The risks are obvious, yet intelligent people continually allow themselves to “get hooked.”
• It is absolutely critical that you don't use alcohol or drugs to “help” you deal with your problems.
  — They aren't the solution.
  — Alcohol and drugs will only make the situation worse… much worse!

KEEPING SUBSTANCE ABUSE OUT OF THE WORKPLACE

• Keeping substance abuse out of the workplace should be a top priority for all companies.
  — Even moderate drinkers and occasional drug users can be dangerous if they show up for work “under the influence.”
• Workers are expected to be completely sober and drug-free when they report for work.
  — And they must remain that way throughout their shift.
• They should also adhere to the company’s drug and alcohol policy when they are:
  — Representing the company at social gatherings.
  — Attending company sponsored recreational events.
  — “On call” or awaiting assignment.
• In addition to listing behaviors to avoid, your company's drug and alcohol policy will outline the steps that you should take if you are having a substance abuse problem.
  — It will also contain information on what you should do if you suspect that a coworker may be under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
  — Remember, keeping quiet about substance abuse in the workplace is dangerous!
• When substance abuse is brought to management’s attention, the company will investigate the situation.
  — Workers who are suspected of being under the influence will immediately be removed from any tasks that could endanger themselves or others.
  — They will then be interviewed by someone who is trained to recognize and deal with substance abuse problems.
• When confronted, some substance abusers immediately ask for help.
  — But if a suspected abuser denies that they are under the influence, a “reasonable suspicion” alcohol or drug test can be given.
• A company can also perform periodic alcohol and drug tests to uncover substance abuse problems that might otherwise go unnoticed.
  — Government regulations require random substance abuse tests for truck drivers, pilots and other transportation industry employees who have “safety-sensitive” jobs.

ADDRESSING EMPLOYEE SUBSTANCE ABUSE PROBLEMS

• Failing a substance abuse test will not necessarily result in disciplinary action.
  — However, the employee will normally be required to enter an alcohol or drug rehabilitation program.
• You can also help a coworker overcome substance abuse by being understanding and encouraging their rehabilitation efforts.
  — People who are trying to recover from drug or alcohol abuse need as much support as they can get… from family, friends and coworkers.
• It is also crucial for them to seek help from people who have been down the road of addiction themselves, and found another path to follow.
  — That's why groups like Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous are so important.