

# How to support your employee's fitness for work

## Alcohol, drugs and gambling in the workplace

Employers can improve health, safety and the bottom line when they are informed, have a fitness for work plan and build on people's strengths.

A fitness for work approach is useful to deal with workplace safety and performance concerns related to substance abuse and gambling.

Here are a few tips that make good sense:

- Find out if your workplace has policies and guidelines that support fitness for work.
- Watch for signs that your employee has concerns: excessive sick leave, leaving work early or coming in late, tiredness, moodiness, arguing with co-workers, change in appearance.
- Ask direct questions about the changes you have noticed and express your concerns supportively.
- Check things out and listen to your employee's explanations when talking about your observations.
- Remove an unfit worker from the work site if there is any safety risk.
- Protect your employee's confidentiality.
- Build on people's strengths. Employees are more likely to make the changes when you communicate care, concern and your belief in them.
- Address any barriers or concerns expressed by the employee.
- Stay current by continuing to review workplace health and safety policies, regulations and legislation.

### Meeting with an employee about their fitness for work

Having a plan for this meeting is key to its success. This plan should include the following:

- Review the company policy.
- List the positives that this employee brings to your company.
- List the safety and performance concerns.
- Talk about changes the employee needs to make.
- Have information on hand about resources for the employee to get help.
- Schedule follow-up meetings with the employee to support their fitness for work.
- As hard as it is, don't avoid a problem; it won't go away.

It's important to recognize your employee's positive strengths and skills when talking with them about your concerns for their fitness for work.

If you have any questions about preparing for this meeting, or about the services available to your workplace and employees, talk with your supervisor or call your local addiction services office to discuss your plan.

For more information and to find an addiction services office near you, please call the 24-hour Helpline at 1-866-332-2322.