

2019

MINNESOTA
RECOVERY FRIENDLY
WORKPLACE TOOLKIT

CREATE A HEALTHY, SAFE AND STIGMA-FREE WORK ENVIRONMENT

BROUGHT TO YOU BY



WELCOME

Thank you for taking this step in learning more about Recovery Friendly Workplaces (RFW). At Recovree, we believe that employers play a critical role in fighting the disease of addiction and want to make it easier for you to better understand how to create and maintain recovery friendly practices in your company.

Recovery is good for business! Employers are becoming more proactive in recognizing the economical and cultural benefits of being better informed about this disease and ways to support talent who are seeking help. Savings for employers include:

- Employees who get effective substance use treatment can, on average, **save \$3,200** in annual costs for their employer.
- Employees in recovery take less unscheduled leave than their peers. On average, **they miss 5 days fewer** than employees with active substance use disorder and 1 day less than their co-workers.
- Employees in recovery stay with their employers at almost identical rates as their co-workers. And, compared to those with active substance use disorder, employees in recovery can save their organization **up to \$4,000 in turnover** and replacement costs.
- Employees in recovery **save an average of \$536 a year** in health care utilization costs compared to those with untreated substance use disorder.

Employers have felt the impacts of substance use disorder for decades through absenteeism, loss of productivity, safety issues and poor job performance. Through RFW, we can accomplish a number of things. We can fight the stigma associated with this disease and encourage employees to get help sooner by providing resources that meet people where they're at and support their own unique recovery pathway. There is no right way to recover from this disease and it is important that we encourage employees to find what works best for them.

In this toolkit, Recovree introduces you to the disease of substance use disorder, its impact on the workplace, and how to create and support a RFW. Our goal is to provide you with practical tools and information. Too often we admire problems and do not provide resources to help people take action. This is just a small sample of what you can do for your employees. If you're interested in learning more or have questions, please contact us at hello@recovree.com. We'd love to hear from you.

All the best,
Melissa Kjolsing
CEO, Recovree

CONTENTS

03

INTRODUCTION TO SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER

05

IMPACT OF SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER IN THE WORKPLACE

09

CREATING A RECOVERY FRIENDLY WORKPLACE

11

CREATING AN ONGOING RECOVERY FRIENDLY CULTURE

13

RESOURCES & CONTINUING EDUCATION

15

RECOVERY FRIENDLY WORKPLACE CHECKLIST

INTRODUCTION TO SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER

DEFINING SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER

The [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\)](#) defines substance use disorder by stating:

Substance use disorders occur when the recurrent use of alcohol and/or drugs causes clinically significant impairment, including health problems, disability, and failure to meet major responsibilities at work, school, or home.

Substance use disorder (SUD) is a chronic disease that does not discriminate based on socioeconomic status, gender, age or race. And, it's more common than you may think. According to the [National Survey on Drug Use & Health](#), there are over 21 million people in the United States who are affected by substance use disorder. This means that 1 in 3 households are directly impacted by the disease.

Substance misuse is another commonly used term defined by the [World Health Organization](#) as *use of a substance for a purpose not consistent with legal or medical guidelines*. This means using alcohol, illegal and/or prescription drugs in a way that causes harm to ourselves or those around us.

THE SCIENCE OF ADDICTION

Contrary to what some may think, addiction is not a moral failing or lack of willpower. It is, however, a chronic and complex disease that affects the brain's reward system. The [National Institute on Drug Abuse \(NIDA\)](#) states:

Addiction is a chronic disease characterized by drug seeking and use that is compulsive, or difficult to control, despite harmful consequences.

While the initial decision to use a drug is usually voluntary, the brain is altered over time and the decision to use no longer becomes a choice.

There are three main risk factors that influence the likelihood of addiction:

- Genetics - The [NIDA states](#) that genetics account for between 40 to 60 percent of a person's risk of addiction
- Environmental - Family, school, home life, peer pressure and early exposure to substances can all influence the risk of addiction
- Developmental - [Studies show](#) that the earlier in life drug use begins, the more likely it will progress to addiction

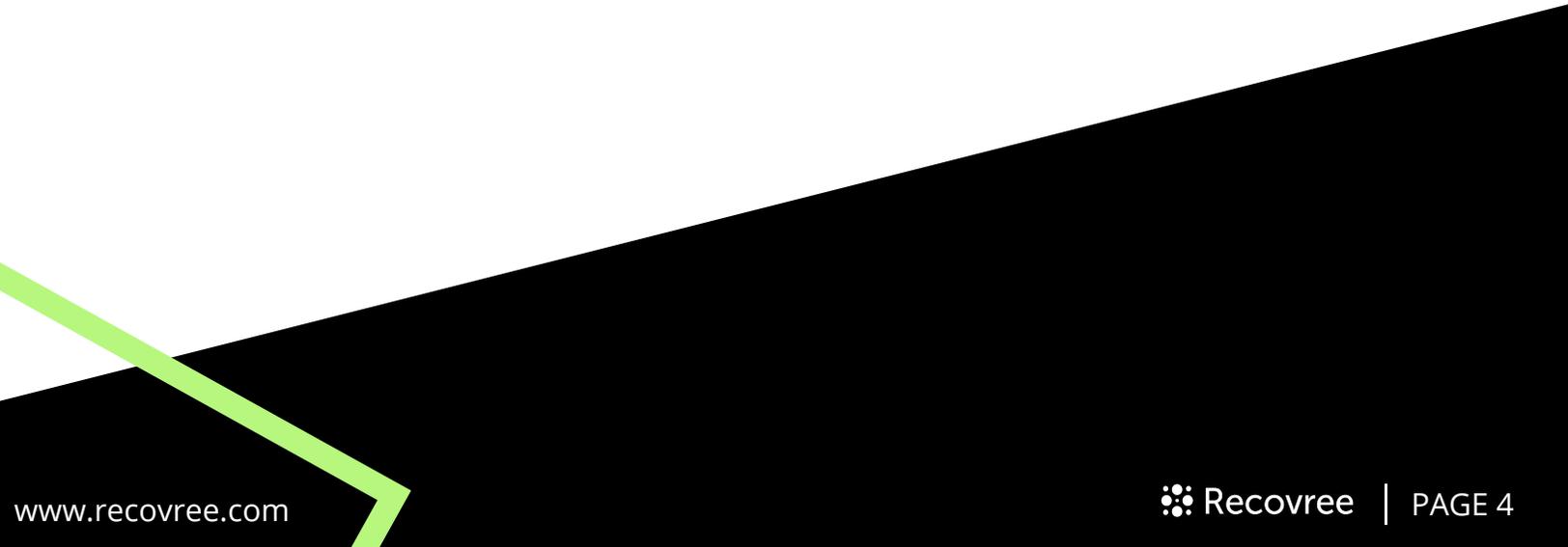
RECOVERY IS POSSIBLE

The good news is that substance use disorder is a treatable and manageable disease. As with other chronic diseases such as diabetes, asthma, and heart disease, SUD treatment should be ongoing and frequently assessed.

It's important to note that there are multiple pathways to recovery. Every individual is unique and there is no "one size fits all" recovery program that will work for everyone. While only [10% of people with SUD receive traditional treatment services](#), there is an expanding network of support services to address the continuum of care.

People no longer need to "hit rock bottom" before they receive help. [Peer recovery coaching](#) brings services upstream and helps people who are still employed, live at home with their families and have supportive relationships. Coaching services can be used before, during, after or in lieu of treatment.

[SAMHSA defines recovery](#) as *a process of change through which people improve their health and wellness, live self-directed lives, and strive to reach their full potential*. There are an estimated 23 million Americans in recovery who are creating healthy lifestyles, relationships, and communities.



IMPACT OF SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER IN THE WORKPLACE

SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER COST TO EMPLOYERS

Substance use disorders will cost our health care system and economy over \$400 billion this year. Despite this large price tag, many employers don't know how SUD is affecting their bottom line.

Workplaces bear a large portion of the national cost, mostly in hidden fees associated with turnover, absenteeism, loss of productivity and healthcare expenditures. But exactly how much is your business being affected by substance misuse?

The National Safety Council, Shatterproof and NORC at the University of Chicago teamed up to create [The Real Cost of Substance Use to Employers Tool](#).

The calculator is an authoritative, easy-to-use tool providing business leaders with specific information about the cost of substance use in their workplace based on the size of their employee base, industry and state.

[CALCULATE YOUR COSTS](#)



75% of adults with untreated substance use disorder are in the workforce



\$82 billion in workplace productivity is lost annually due to heavy drinking



Employees with SUD miss nearly 50% more days than their peers



Employees who misuse alcohol are 270% more likely to have a workplace accident



7 out of 10 employers have felt the effects of opioid drug misuse

The rate of occurrence varies by industry with construction, entertainment, recreation and food service having twice the national average of employees with SUD.

The annual cost of a single employee with an untreated SUD ranges from \$2,600 in agriculture to more than \$13,000 in the information and communications sectors.

You can see how your industry is affected [here](#).

RECOGNIZING TROUBLING BEHAVIORS

A [recent study](#) found that 80% of HR decision-makers recognize that substance use disorder is impacting their employees. But, 25% feel unprepared to deal with the issue. What should you do if you suspect substance misuse in your workplace?

While the signs aren't always easy to detect, here are some troubling behaviors that may (but not always) indicate substance misuse:

- Increased absenteeism, both unexpected leave and excessive use of vacation/sick days
- Frequent and unexplained disappearance from office or worksite
- Poor and/or inconsistent job performance
- Increased accidents, both on the job and at home
- Difficulty or lack of concentration
- Increased errors, poor judgment, and decision making
- A decline in physical appearance and hygiene

ADDRESSING SUD RELATED ISSUES

It is important for employees to know what actions to take if they suspect or observe substance use in the workplace. Employees should notify their supervisor or HR representative if they notice a co-worker exhibiting troubling behaviors. A swift response increases the chances of the situation being properly addressed.

Addressing Issues with Employees

Employers should approach conversations about substance use disorder with caution and care. There should be legitimate, reasonable and documented observations that initiate the conversation.

Outside of drug testing, performance reviews are a good way to open the door to a more candid discussion about substance use. Consider asking questions such as, *"I've noticed that you have missed quite a few deadlines in the past month. Your performance has declined and it appears that you are having trouble concentrating. Is everything ok? Is there anything I can help with?"*

Some employees may take the opportunity to open up and share information about their substance use. In this case, the employer can begin discussing next steps and options (see below).

Denial of the issue can also occur. In this case, employers should move forward with standard procedures to address performance-related issues or inappropriate behavior. Clear expectations and consequences should be set. Continued performance discussions and any related issues should be addressed according to company disciplinary policies.*

Any and all disciplinary actions need to be based on performance, conduct, and adherence to workplace policies. They cannot be based on suspicion of addiction or substance use disorder.

DOs	DON'Ts
LISTEN OBSERVE DOCUMENT OFFER HELP UTILIZE MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING	ASSUME BE AGGRESSIVE IGNORE THE SIGNS MAKE ACCUSATIONS JUMP TO CONCLUSIONS

The Society of Human Resource Management offers a [comprehensive article](#) on employing and managing those with substance use disorder.

**These are suggested practices. Employees, managers, supervisors and HR professionals should refer to their internal policies and procedures. Some employers and industries may have [legal obligation](#) to address substance use disorder in the workplace.*

Providing Options

Once an employee has opened up and confirmed substance misuse or substance use disorder, there are a variety of options that an employer can provide.

- [Recovery Coaching Services](#) - Peer recovery coaching allows employees to remain employed throughout the coaching process. Services are done by phone, easy to access, and traditionally come at no cost to the employee.
- Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) - Some employers may offer Employee Assistance Programs, which can provide resources for those seeking help related to substance use disorder.
- Treatment - There are employees who may benefit from in-patient or out-patient treatment. In this case, employers can help by providing treatment options with a resource such as [Fast-Tracker](#). Collaborating on a "Return-to-Work Plan" after treatment will help the employee feel confident about their return and eliminate concerns over losing their position.

Legal Considerations

There are two sets of federal laws that may pertain to someone with substance use disorder in the workplace. Please note that laws and requirements can vary by state and business type.

AMERICAN WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)

The American with Disabilities Act prevents an employer from discriminating against an employee simply for having a disability, disease, or medical condition, such as substance use disorder. Current alcohol or illegal drug use is not protected, but those in recovery or treatment are covered by the ADA.

[LEARN MORE](#)

FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE ACT (FMLA)

The Family Medical Leave Act legally ensures that employees are able to take unpaid leave for serious medical conditions, including treatment for substance use disorder. Covered employees can take job-protected leave for a total of 12 work weeks in any 12-month time period for treatment that is administered by a health care provider or as a referral from a health care provider. However, not all companies or employees are eligible for FMLA.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Benefits of Recovery

While the cost of untreated SUD can be high, recovery is good for business! Employees in recovery improve productivity, decrease healthcare costs and reduce workplace injuries.

Investing in helping workers get effective substance use treatment can, on average, avoid \$3,200 in costs annually for each employee who recovers.

ABSENTEEISM

Employees in recovery take less unscheduled leave than their peers. On average, they miss 5 days fewer than employees with SUD and 1 day less than the general workforce. Read more [here](#).

TURNOVER RATE

Employees in recovery stay with their employers at almost identical rates as their co-workers. And, compared to those with SUD, employees in recovery can save their organization up to \$4,000 in turnover and replacement savings. Read more [here](#).

HEALTH CARE COSTS

Employees in recovery save an average of \$536 a year in health care utilization costs compared to those with untreated substance use disorder. Read more [here](#).

CULTURAL IMPACT

People in recovery often have a high degree of self-awareness, resilience, compassion, dedication and understanding. These skills and behaviors are highly sought after by employers due to the positive impacts the employee can have on a team, company and culture.

CREATING A RECOVERY FRIENDLY WORKPLACE

COMPANYWIDE STATEMENT

Becoming a Recovery Friendly Workplace (RFW) promotes the physical health and mental wellness of your employees. Now that you've made the commitment to becoming a RFW, assure your employees know!

Making a companywide declaration will increase awareness of your commitment to the RFW initiative. Here is an example statement:

“COMPANY has made a commitment to become a Recovery Friendly Workplace. We value the health and safety of all our employees and are dedicated to helping those with substance use disorder. We are also committed to fighting the stigma associated with addiction and mental illness. We intend to promote positive changes within our workplace and the community.”

Once your declaration is completed, you can share the good news through companywide emails, newsletters, social media postings, and at companywide meetings and events.

ASSESSING CURRENT HEALTH & SAFETY PRACTICES

As you start to create a RFW, it is important to assess your current health and safety practices. Reflecting on the following questions will provide you with an understanding of the gaps that may be happening within your organization.

- Does your organization have a [high prevalence of substance use disorder](#)?
- What resources do you currently offer for employees seeking help related to SUD and mental illness? Do all employees know of current offerings?
- Does your organization employ individuals in the [safety- and security-sensitive industries](#)?
- Has your organization been impacted by substance use or misuse in the past? How was the situation handled and what could be improved?
- Are employees educated on substance misuse and what to do if they observe troubling behavior?
- What ideas do your employees have to support recovery in the workplace? Create an anonymous survey to better understand their needs and ideas.
- What are the gaps in your policies and procedures that would prevent an employee from accessing the help they need?

SUGGESTED RECOVERY FRIENDLY PRACTICES

Here are some suggested practices to promote recovery, reduce barriers and encourage overall healthier employees.

- Share the Recovery Friendly Workplace initiative with new employees
- Ensure current employees are aware of all available health and wellness programs
- Be proactive in addressing substance use disorder-related issues
- Provide employees with resources (see below) to support recovery for themselves and their families
- Offer on-demand [Recovery Coaching Services](#)
- Ensure supervisors and employees receive yearly training and education on substance use disorder
- Support employees who seek treatment, hospitalization or temporary leave
- Develop a Return-to-Work Plan for those returning from treatment to alleviate stress and set expectations. Recovery coaching can provide and support an aftercare plan to help sustain the positive outcomes following treatment.
- Promote a message of hope in recovery
- Design safeguards to protect the confidentiality of employee health information

EMPLOYEE EDUCATION

Prescription Medication Training

The coverage of prescription medication continues to be an essential part of employer health care plans. However, with the surge in opioid addiction and overdose, it's important to educate employees on the proper disposal of unused opioids. [Research shows](#) that up to 40% of people who misuse prescription medicine obtained the opioids from a friend or relative.

Share [this map](#) of medication disposal locations with your employees.

Overdose Prevention Training

On average, 130 Americans die every day from opioid overdoses. And, a [recent report](#) found that Americans are more likely to die of an opioid overdose than a car accident. Education is key to overdose prevention, and there are free naloxone trainings that provide employees with the tools needed to save a life.

STEVE RUMMLER HOPE NETWORK

The Steve Rummmler Hope Network offers free naloxone training across the state of Minnesota (and beyond). They provide education on the signs of overdose and hand out free naloxone kits to those who participate.

[CONTACT](#)

RURAL AIDS ACTION NETWORK

The Rural Aids Action Network administers naloxone kits at their offices in Mankato, St. Cloud, Duluth, Moorhead, and Grand Rapids.

[CONTACT](#)

CREATING AN ONGOING RECOVERY FRIENDLY CULTURE

FIGHT THE STIGMA

Unfortunately, stigma still exists around substance use disorder and mental illness. A [recent survey](#) found that 42% of people believed addiction was a moral failing and 65% said it is a justifiable reason to fire an employee, which research shows to be incorrect.

As the [Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation states](#), "Today, the stigma of addiction is seen as a primary barrier to effective addiction prevention, treatment and recovery efforts at the individual, family, community and societal levels."

In addition to your organization becoming a RFW, there are other ways you can fight the stigma and create an ongoing recovery friendly culture.



TALK OPENLY ABOUT ADDICTION & RECOVERY



PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR LANGUAGE



BE SUPPORTIVE OF OTHERS



KNOW THE FACTS



CELEBRATE RECOVERY

Change the Narrative

We all play a part in eliminating the stigma. We can start by:

- #1 Shatter the Myths: Recognize that substance use disorder is a chronic disease, not a moral failing
- #2 Change the Language: The way we talk about substance use disorder matters. Here is a suggested language guide:

- Instead of "addict", "junkie", "druggie" say "person with substance use disorder"
- Instead of "abuse" say "misuse"
- Instead of "dirty" say "actively using"
- Instead of "clean" say "in recovery" or "substance-free"

ONGOING RFW CULTURE PRACTICES & ACTIVITIES

Here are some additional ideas to establish an ongoing RFW:

- Participate in one prevention or recovery focused community event each year
- Provide stress management, wellness, and self-care education
- Establish a relationship with a [local recovery community organization](#) (RCO) as a resource for employees
- Provide a variety of non-alcoholic options at companywide events (everyone will enjoy tasty non-alcoholic options!)
- Encourage healthy after-hour activities in addition to or in lieu of happy hour
- Send anonymous employee surveys to ask for feedback and suggestions surrounding the Recovery Friendly Workplace initiative

RESOURCES & CONTINUING EDUCATION

MINNESOTA RESOURCES

Crisis Response Phone Numbers

In a crisis or emergency situation, utilize this list of emergency response numbers which are listed by county. Access numbers [here](#).

Minnesota Fast-Tracker

[Fast-Tracker](#) is a searchable directory and health care connection resource. It connects individuals to mental health and substance use disorder providers, physicians and care coordinators in real-time.

Recovery Community Organizations

[Recovery community organizations](#) (RCOs) are independent, non-profit organizations led by local representatives in recovery. Here is a list of Minnesota RCOs:

- [Minnesota Recovery Connection](#) - Metro (Statewide)
- [Continuum Care Center](#) - St. Paul
- [Minnesota Alternatives](#) - Spring Lake Park
- [Recovery is Happening](#) - Rochester
- [WEcovery](#) - Mankato

Sober Housing

Sober housing can be a stepping stone back into every-day life for those leaving treatment.

- [Minnesota Association of Sober Homes List](#)
- [Minnesota Recovery Connection Sober Housing List](#)

NATIONAL RESOURCES

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

[SAMHSA](#) is the agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that leads public health efforts to advance the behavioral health of the nation. SAMHSA's mission is to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America's communities.

- [SAMHSA National Helpline](#)
- [National Behavioral Health Treatment Locator](#)

Faces & Voices of Recovery

[Faces & Voices of Recovery](#) is dedicated to organizing and mobilizing the 23 million Americans in recovery. They promote the right to recover through advocacy, education and demonstrating the power and proof of long-term recovery. Visit their website [here](#).

RECOVREE

[Recovree](#) helps people find recovery from drug and alcohol addiction through peer relationships. Recovree works with companies to support their employees that are struggling with substance use disorder by connecting them with a recovery coach, a professional who personally understands the disease of addiction. Recovree is different because it uses technology to meet people where they're at and on their timeline, and is much more accessible than traditional treatment. More information is available at www.recovree.com.

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Thank you for your interest in becoming a Recovery Friendly Workplace (RFW)! Use the checklist below as a guide to start creating a healthy, safe and stigma-free work environment.

- Download the [Recovery Friendly Workplace Toolkit](#)
- Learn the basics of substance use disorder by reading pages 3 & 4 of the toolkit
- [Calculate](#) how much substance use disorder is costing your organization
- Share the good news! Release a companywide statement about your commitment to becoming a RFW
- Reflect on the discussion questions in “Assessing Current Health & Safety Practices” on page 9
- Determine which recovery friendly practices your organization is going to implement (see page 10 for examples)
- Host an educational meeting to discuss the RFW initiative with employees
- Pick two ongoing RFW practices to add to your internal event calendar (see page 12 for examples)
- Add the Minnesota and national resources listed in the toolkit to your employee handbook or internal resource guide
- Contact hello@recovree.com with questions or inquiries into recovery coaching services

Thanks again for your commitment to the mental and physical health of your employees! Follow [@recovree](#) on social media for more tips.