

CLAREMONT EAP

IMPACT

Employee Newsletter

April—June 2008

Did you know?

- Free “Simple Will” Kits are available from Claremont EAP
- A free credit report is available once per year
- Claremont EAP provides legal referrals for family law, consumer issues, traffic violations, and personal injury
- Referrals are available for child care, adult/eldercare, adoption assistance, school/college selection, and pet care

Claremont EAP
800.834.3773

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We're on the web
www.claremonteap.com

April is Alcohol Awareness Month

When many people think of alcohol abusers, they picture teenagers sneaking drinks before high school football games or at unsupervised parties. However, alcohol abuse is prevalent within many demographic groups in the United States. People who abuse alcohol can be:



- College students who binge drink at local bars.
- Pregnant women who drink and put their babies at risk for fetal alcohol syndrome.
- Professionals who drink after a long day of work.
- Senior citizens who drink out of loneliness.

In 2003, almost 23 percent (54 million) of Americans participated in binge drinking within 30 days prior to taking SAMHSA's National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH). That same year, approximately 21.6 million adults abused alcohol or were alcohol dependent.

To recognize the serious problem of alcohol abuse, April is designated “Alcohol Awareness Month.” The month of April marks the annual observance of National Alcohol Screening Day (NASD). At locations across the United States, people can be screened— anonymously—to see if their drinking habits may be risky.

Participants who come into a screening site will have the opportunity to view an educational presentation and pick up educational materials, such as a questionnaire that screens for risky drinking and dependence. People can also meet one-on-one with a health professional to discuss any concerns. The screenings are free and anonymous.

Last year, more than 203,000 people participated in NASD activities at more than 5,400 screening sites nationwide—the largest NASD yet!

If you suspect that you might have a drinking problem, or you know someone who abuses alcohol, please contact SAMHSA's National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information (NCADI) at 1-800-729-6686 or find a screening site located near you.

Warning Signs of Alcohol Abuse

If you answer "yes" to any of the following questions, you may have a problem with alcohol:

- Do you drink alone when you feel angry or sad?
- Does your drinking ever make you late for work?
- Does your drinking worry your family?
- Do you ever drink after telling yourself you won't?
- Do you ever forget what you did while drinking?
- Do you get headaches or have a hangover after drinking?

Source: How to Cut Down on Your Drinking

National Alcohol Screening Day takes place in April, visit www.nationalalcoholcreeningday.org to find a screening site near you.



Responding to the Human Factor in the World of Work

Use or Abuse? Recognizing Dependency

Dependence on alcohol or other drugs is a widespread problem. Many times, people don't recognize it. Chemical dependency is the inability to control the use of some physical substance -not being able to quit and not being able to limit how much is used. If you have a dependency problem, recognizing it can help you to move toward a happier and healthier life.

Myths

You might think of a chemically dependent person as someone who can't live without their drink or drugs, who is often drunk or stoned, who uses every day or is irresponsible, immoral, weak-willed or bad. The fact is, a person can be chemically dependent without showing such obvious signs. We are gradually beginning to realize that a person's genetic makeup may affect his or her chances of becoming dependent, and that dependency is often a physical condition that can't be cured by willpower alone.



Symptoms of Dependency

Here are some signs that might indicate a chemical dependency problem in you or someone you love:

- "blackouts," or lapses of memory after use
- using the substance while alone or hiding the evidence of use
- using the substance to forget about problems or worries
- doing things while "under the influence" that cause regret afterward
- not being able to enjoy an event without the substance
- neglecting responsibilities in order to use the substance
- family, friends or employer expressing concern about substance use
- being willing to do almost anything to get the substance
- financial or legal problems from using the substance

Problems Caused by Dependency

Chemically dependent people often act unwisely or inappropriately while under the influence of their drug. They may act in ways that will embarrass them later. They may endanger their health and lives, and the lives of others, by having unsafe sex or by driving while intoxicated. They may lose their jobs or families as people around them are hurt by their actions.

What to Do

Recognizing that there's a problem is the first step toward recovering from chemical dependency. If you think you might have a problem of this type, here are some steps you can take:

- Acknowledge the problem openly.
- Limit time spent with people who encourage drug use or drinking.
- Seek professional help from Claremont EAP or your medical doctor. You might benefit from counseling or a recovery program at a hospital or private clinic.
- Call Claremont EAP at 800-834-3773 for a free and confidential consultation.
- Seek out the support of people who are recovering themselves. Many 12-step programs, such as Alcoholics Anonymous, are available for various types of dependencies. Claremont EAP can help you find these and other helpful resources or check your



Getting Clean and Sober

For a chemically dependent person, the first step toward recovery is recognizing that there's a problem. The second step is to quit using the chemical, whether it's alcohol or another drug. Unless the chemicals are out of the way, the chemically dependent person never can know which problems in life are drug-related and which are not. Getting sober involves the body and the mind. Learning about the process can help make it easier to start and maintain.

Body

Getting sober starts with the body. If you've been dependent on alcohol or drugs, your body has gotten used to that substance, and will take some time to adjust to being drug-free. It's best to have professional help—either from a treatment center or a doctor experienced in chemical dependency issues.

You can help your body adjust to sobriety by exercising, eating nutritious foods and getting plenty of rest. Exercise is generally healthful, and also produces endorphins, a natural body chemical that helps relieve anxiety and increase positive feelings.

It's best to build up a regular exercise program, starting small, and gradually increasing the amount you do. Be moderate. It's possible to become obsessive about exercise or injure yourself by exercising too much.

Good nutrition for sobriety requires lots of fresh vegetables, fruits and complex carbohydrates, such as whole grains. Processed foods, additives, refined sugar, caffeine and high-fat foods should be avoided. Caffeine and sugar, in particular, may tend to increase cravings for drugs or alcohol.

Getting plenty of rest is also important, as sleep helps you adjust psychologically to living a sober life. You may have trouble sleeping at first. If so, try getting more exercise.

Mind

Becoming sober involves breaking old habits that contribute to chemical dependency, learning to solve problems that chemicals allow you to ignore, and learning chemical-free ways to manage stress. We recommend the following:

- Think about situations that "trigger" you to take your drug. If possible, avoid them.
- Practice meditation, visualization or other relaxation techniques to manage stress.
- Think about the roles your friends play in your life. If some friends don't support you in sobriety, avoid their company and seek out new ones who will.
- Call Claremont EAP at 800-834-3773 for confidential assistance in addressing your chemical dependency.
- Join a 12-step program such as Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous. Claremont EAP can refer you to local groups which can help you maintain and enjoy sobriety. Or check your local telephone directory.

It's Your Life

In chemical dependency, your drug controls a big piece of your life. In sobriety, you get your life back, and can begin the process of making it into the life you want.



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www.ClaremontEAP.com

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Claremont distributes this newsletter to provide employees with general behavioral health information. If you have concerns about these or other behavioral health issues, you can call Claremont to arrange for assistance. You will be directed to an appropriate, experienced professional who can offer guidance in a variety of work and family matters.