



ISSUE: I suspect an employee of coming to work under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

THINGS TO CONSIDER: If you notice anything different about the employee's behaviour, such as slurred or slow speech, or alternately very fast speech, take the time to further observe their behaviour.

- **Prescription medication:** New medical prescriptions may change how a person behaves and may not be indicative of drug abuse. Some medications have side effects that may cause concern, but usually it will pass very quickly and they are back to normal. Close observation of the employee will help assess their behaviour.
- **Hiring someone who is on medication:** There are many reasons that people require medication, and many people require medication to function. Employers who hire an employee knowing that a person has a mental health diagnosis should have a plan in place in the event the employee discontinues their meds (or uses more than the prescribed amount). This plan should list any warning signs an employee may display before becoming ill, and what the employee knows will work to stabilize them in an emergency. The plan should include a friend or family member contact in the event that they need to be picked up and brought home or to the hospital for further treatment.
- **Monitoring:** Monitoring the employee will help you to decide how and when to intervene.

THINGS TO DO: Spending time with your employees gives you a better understanding. When someone is under the influence, it will be much easier to identify any out of the ordinary behaviour patterns if you take the time to know your employee from the outset.

- **Talk to them:** Talk to the employee on a regular basis, and take notice of things like their appearance and hygiene. Put yourself in a position where you have eye contact.
- **Look for change in body language:** Depending on what alcohol or drugs a person may be using, their body posture and movement changes. It can become sluggish along with their speech, or it may pick up a faster pace, they may perspire, avoid being around others, seem agitated, or have a feeling of exaggerated cheerfulness.
- **Tell them what you have noticed:** It is recommended that an employer tell an employee that they have noticed changes in their behaviour. Simply say what it is you have seen and tell the employee what you suspect. This gives them the information that you know something is going on. This in turn also gives the employee a chance to say whether they are or are not under the influence. Always use your discretion when to address the issue of suspected alcohol or drug abuse. The time may not be right, however the employee needs to be sent home. The next day you can follow up with a phone call and set up a meeting with the employee to discuss further. If they already have a relationship with you as a result of your commitment to spending time and interacting with the employee, it will be easier for them to show up to meet with you without fear. Using drugs or alcohol always alters how one "feels". Having an open and honest discussion with your employee may help them to identify why and when they use. This will also let you work together to explore other options to manage their emotions instead of using drugs and alcohol.

For more info on Potluck Recipes for Success: Heather O'Hara - Executive Director

T: 604.683.0073 ext. 379

E: heather@potluckcatering.com

W: www.potluckcatering.com



Find Potluck Recipes for Community Success at www.potluckcatering.com

Potluck Cafe Society 30 West Hastings Street Vancouver, BC V6B 1G6 604.683.0073 x. 379 Potluck Tools & Resources Copyright 2007