

Recognizing the warning signs of an employee with a problem

Recognizing the signs of chemical dependency can be difficult. Many employees go to great lengths to mask their symptoms. Awareness of certain patterns or changes in behavior helps identify a problem. Warning signs include:

- *Lateness or absenteeism*
- *Smell of alcohol or marijuana on breath, body or clothes*
- *Neglect of appearance or personal hygiene*
- *Slurred or incoherent speech*
- *Unusual nervousness or loss of memory*
- *Nasal problems such as chronic runny nose*
- *Red eyes, dilated or constricted pupils*
- *Sudden weight loss or gain*
- *Missed entrances, forgotten lines or cues*
- *Borrowing money on a regular basis.*
- *Unexplainable mood swings or irritability*

There is no simple, foolproof method for detecting substance abuse problems. Working with a social worker at The Actors Fund who is knowledgeable about substance abuse can help.

The Actors Fund Offices

EASTERN REGION
729 Seventh Avenue
10th Floor
New York, NY 10019
212.221.7300
fax 212.764.0238

CENTRAL REGION
203 North Wabash
Suite 2104
Chicago, IL 60601
312.372.0989
fax 312.372.0272

WESTERN REGION
5757 Wilshire Boulevard
Suite 400
Los Angeles, CA 90036
323.933.9244
888.825.0911
fax 323.933.7615

TOLL-FREE
800.221.7303

www.actorsfund.org

**The Actors Fund,
for everyone
in entertainment.**

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Chemical
Dependency
Services

**CUTTING DRUGS AND ALCOHOL
OUT OF THE SCRIPT**

*A Guide for Supervisors in
Performing Arts and Entertainment*

Entertainment & performing arts professionals are no strangers to the problems of substance abuse

Alcohol, marijuana, cocaine, heroin, and other substances have damaged careers, ruined performances, destroyed families and brought creative lives to an early end. When a professional has a substance abuse problem, the effects can be widespread, impacting the productivity and safety of cast and crew and the stability of the production.

The Actors Fund Chemical Dependency Services works closely with employers and supervisors to identify problems before their destructive effects become irreparable. We provide support, helping the employee confront their addiction, get treatment, stay sober, and get their lives back on track. Together we can have a major positive impact.

Actors Fund social workers provide essential services

Our social workers provide substance abuse assessments, counseling, referrals to treatment and twelve-step programs and ongoing case management throughout the recovery process. **In crisis situations immediate help is available.**

Services are confidential, free of charge and available to EVERYONE who works in performing arts and entertainment – not only actors but all who work on stage and screen and behind the scenes.

Assistance is available to management

We work with company and stage managers, union reps and other supervisors to recognize and respond to substance abuse problems. When an individual enters treatment, we work with both the supervisor and the employee to determine when to return to work and any special accommodations needed. We monitor behavior and progress and stay in communication with the supervisor to ensure a successful recovery.

Why and how to get involved when substance use interferes with the job

Every production has to remain on schedule and within budget. Left untreated, chemical dependency problems can result in injuries, higher insurance premiums, increased liability claims, scheduling challenges, delays, cost overruns, negative press, early closings or simply lowered morale for those who have to cover and pick up the slack. A supervisor can't solve a drug or alcohol problem but a supervisor can recognize the warning signs and **take these steps:**

- **Get advice.** Identify problems and contact The Actors Fund Chemical Dependency Services. You can confidentially discuss your concerns with a social worker who will help you develop a plan.
- **Document.** Keep a detailed record of the worker's performance and behavioral problems. Documentation regarding poor attendance, lateness, accidents, fights and other incidents can reinforce your position.
- **Cite written policy.** Your company's contract with the employee should specify a policy regarding substance abuse problems.
- **Intervene.** In a non-confrontational, nonjudgmental manner, describe performance expectations, concerns and problem behavior. Show concern and be clear. Be sure the employee understands that continued employment is contingent upon abstinence, an improvement in on-the-job performance, and that the job will be in jeopardy unless there is a firm commitment to a course of treatment.
- **Make a referral.** Refer the employee to The Actors Fund for a substance abuse assessment.

While an employee is in treatment

Careful monitoring at work is the best way to recognize improvement or difficulties. It is important for the supervisor to continue to track and document the employee's performance and maintain a dialogue with The Actors Fund Social Worker.

The supervisor's role in addressing substance abuse

As a manager, you have two concerns; the company and the employee. Managing both can be a challenge. You hire a professional to do a particular job, and it is your responsibility to make sure that the job gets done.

When you refer an employee to a program for professional help, you can turn poor performance around and offer the chance to break the cycle of addiction. Your support and referral not only keeps the workplace safe and productive, it may save a career, a family or even a life. The social workers at The Actors Fund are available to assist you in confronting substance use and in getting your employee the right kind of help, opening the door to recovery.

Call The Actors Fund Chemical Dependency Services

NY - 212.221.7300 ext. 114
Chicago - 312.372.0989
LA - 323.933.9244

Or from anywhere in the country
call toll-free 800.221.7303 ext.119

Your questions will be answered
with professionalism, candor
and confidentiality