

Recovery Friendly Workplaces

Employers who adopt Recovery Friendly Workplace practices can make a difference in the lives of their workers while decreasing costs associated with turnover, absenteeism, loss of productivity, and healthcare expenditures. Substance use disorder is a treatable disease and people in recovery are assets to the workforce.

Here are some ways that your organization can create a recovery friendly work environment.

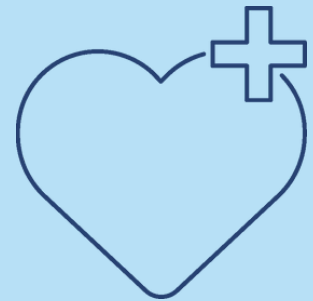
GET STARTED

Connect employees to resources that support recovery

- Identify your organization's existing benefits related to recovery. Pull them all together in one list, along with external resources like the Recovery Resource List.
- Promote resources early and often to build awareness and connect employees to support as their circumstances change.
- Create a recovery-specific section in the Employee Handbook, internal website, and other HR tools.
- Train managers and mentors to connect employees to support resources at critical times.
- Offer and promote an Employee Assistance Program or a healthcare point of contact who can confidentially guide employees to resources and provide referrals.

Create a recovery friendly workplace culture

- Use person-centered language when discussing SUD. A helpful flyer can be found on Partner4Work's website.
- Celebrate National Recovery Month in September.
- Promote a message of hope in recovery.
- Offer a variety of appealing non-alcoholic options at company-wide events.
- Encourage healthy after-hour activities in addition to or in lieu of happy hour.
- Offer health and wellness programs and actively encourage awareness and use.
- Commit to adopting supportive job practices and identify your organization as a Recovery Friendly Employer both internally and publicly.



The best approach is to promote resources with all staff and create judgment-free opportunities for employees to discuss their challenges and seek support.

The Recovery Resource List, found on the Partner4Work website, provides a short list of local support resources that can be shared with employees.

DIVE IN DEEPER

Organizations with a core set of recovery friendly workplace practices can reduce stigma, increase transparency, build staff knowledge, and ensure issues are addressed in a fair and supportive manner.

1. Drug and Alcohol Policy

Create a clearly written Drug and Alcohol workplace policy that outlines the rights and responsibilities of the organization and employees. Policies should be underpinned by the principle of “fitness to work,” where the issue is about job performance rather than drug use. Consult legal counsel to ensure the policy adheres to applicable laws. Periodically revisit the policy to make updates. Include staff in this revision process.

2. Procedures

Maintain clear, proactive, written procedures regarding substance use that include:

- How recovery support resources will be shared with staff
- How staff should respond to suspected substance use in the workplace
- How the organization will address suspected substance use in the workplace
- The method and frequency of all staff training related to SUD and recovery
- The method and frequency of specialized training for SUD response leads and other key personnel

3. All-staff Training

Staff training promotes awareness, transparency, and understanding and fights the persistent stigma around SUD. Training topics should include:

- an overview of SUD that provides foundational knowledge and addresses stigma
- a review of the company’s drug and alcohol policies and procedures
- methods for recognizing SUD behaviors and how to respond
- an overview of the support resources that are available to employees and their family members

Additional topics could include safe use of prescription medications, low-risk drinking guidelines, proper disposal of unused prescription drugs, and overdose prevention.

4. Specialized Training

SUD response leads need specialized training in order to be effective in their role.

Consider also including managers, mentors, and other personnel with direct reports.

Training topics should include:

- in-depth review of their role within the company’s SUD response procedures
- methods for recognizing and documenting signs of substance dependency
- supportive intervention tactics that include referrals to resources
- steps to ensure confidentiality

Additional topics could include motivational interviewing, trauma-informed management, and unconscious bias or similar DEI content.

Partner4Work is here to assist local employers interested in adopting recovery friendly workplace practices.

For more information or to start collaborating, contact Bonny Yeager, Manager of Industry Solutions at byeager@partner4work.org or 412-745-0269.