

**Interviewer:**

Is there anything else we can do?

**Robert:**

Be aware of the signs and symptoms people exhibit. There is usually ample evidence of the problems that the use of alcohol or drugs cause. You can see it in the person's life and you can see it when they bring it to work. They'll complain about many things but when they bring it to work, it usually means a lot of other things have happened in their lives that are problematic. Their job is often the very last thing that someone with a serious alcohol or drug problem gives up or loses. That is because the money they earn is important to help continue to supply their substance of choice.

**Interviewer:**

What are some of things that we can observe that tell us there is an issue?

**Robert:**

First, there are the emotional symptoms. There can be mood swings or aggression. There can be burn-out where they just don't care about the job anymore or the people around them.

There's anxiety or anxiousness. There's depression. There's paranoia and there is certainly denial. Denial is a very interesting concept because people will actually deny that they have drug or alcohol problems even when it's apparent to everyone around them. This has probably got something to do with the neurological effects of the drug or alcohol on the nervous system and not just because this is unacceptable behavior in our country. It is almost always present with severe abuse or addiction.

**Interviewer:**

What are the things that we need to be on the lookout for?

**Robert:**

A person can exhibit a slow reaction time, slurred speech, or even become irritable. This irritability can result in people lashing out and becoming aggressive. There can be excessive talking or the inability to sit still. There can be a limited attention span or the inability to make decisions. They can be poorly motivated or simply lack energy. These are effects we can see and observe.

Seeing these things in individuals doesn't necessarily mean that they have an alcohol or drug problem because there are medical conditions that can also cause some of these issues. Even high levels of stress can make people behave in these manners. However, if you observe these signs over a period of time, they are considered good indicators and should make one highly suspicious of drug or alcohol use.

**Interviewer:**

Are there other indicators or warning signs of an abuse problem?

**Robert:**

There are a number of indicators. Ask yourself has there been:

- A recent change in behavior such as sudden lack of pride in personal appearance.
- A dramatic change in appetite or eating habits with a weight loss or gain.
- Do they say they have trouble sleeping or do you find them sleeping on the job.
- Additionally, poor performance on the job.
- Difficulty concentrating.
- Nervousness or agitation.

- Loss of energy or excessive fatigue.
- Constant expressions of worthlessness or self-hatred.
- Unnecessary risk taking.
- Sudden change in choice of companions.
- Items of value missing from the office.
- Lying, avoiding friends, and concealing problems.
- Or do they carry unexplainable large amounts of money.

If there's more "yes" responses than "no" responses to this list, consider referring them on to a professional service. You don't have to be a supervisor. A coworker you can do this. Please remind them that the Ohio State Employee Assistance Program is a free and confidential service from which they can seek help.