

Interviewer:

Robert, I get the sense that drug and alcohol abusers tend to affect everybody and everyone around them including their family, their coworkers, and others in their life.

Robert:

That is correct and more often than not when we see these kinds of behaviors, our first tendency is to do nothing, to ignore it, and to hope it will go away. We might become judgmental or we might avoid interacting with this person as much as possible. However, the problem doesn't go away unless somebody can intervene and help them address it. To do nothing is to "enable".

Interviewer:

What can you tell us about enabling that will help us better understand these behaviors? Do you have some examples?

Robert:

Enabling behavior actually allows or in some way, encourages the person with an alcohol or drug problem to continue using alcohol or drugs. Anything that allows the individual to continue to use alcohol or drugs is enabling them and this includes ignoring or pretending it doesn't exist. We can "cover up" for people that have a drug or alcohol problem by not reporting they take long breaks or come in late frequently. This is common.

Interviewer:

What might you see or hear if you approach an individual that you think is using drugs or alcohol?

Robert:

Any number of things.

A person might avoid approaching an individual because they are afraid of what might happen. That alone is enough to indicate that you should try to find some help or advice. Again, the EAP is a good place to call and discuss this. If the conversation makes us uncomfortable or emotional ourselves, it is difficult to follow through with. However, you should decide what you need to say then clearly tell them the message you want to get across to them and do not be distracted.

Once you know your facts, stick to them. Don't be side tracked or afraid because this can help them a lot.

Interviewer:

Is there any other advice you can share with us?

Robert:

Remember - drug and alcohol abuse and addiction is a serious problem. It won't go away if ignored. You did not cause it. You cannot control it. You cannot cure it.

However, you can help others seek professional support and treatment.

You should not tolerate alcohol or drug use in the workplace because it affects everyone in the workplace. Remember, the Drug-Free Workplace Policy prohibits the use of alcohol while on the job, the use of illegal drugs while on the job, and the inappropriate use of prescription drugs while on the job. The policy states that violations should be reported to the police.

Interviewer:

Maybe you can tell us about the resources available to us here at the university.

Robert:

Sure.

I want to remind everyone that the university does provide resources to help people with drug or alcohol problems.

First, there is the Ohio State Employee Assistance Program which is both free and confidential. The EAP services can be reached by calling one eight-hundred six seven eight six two six five. These services are available twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

If someone uses the EAP before they have any workplace conflicts, accidents or manager/supervisory intervention, the service is completely confidential. No one will know.

There is also a wealth of information on alcohol and other drug abuse and addiction on the OSU EAP web page which you can access at [osuhealthplan dot com slash OhioStateEAP](http://osuhealthplan.com/OhioStateEAP).

There is help at the Ohio State Office of Human Resources. You can call either eight-hundred six seven eight six zero one zero or six one four two nine two one zero five zero or review the policy and resources online at [hr dot osu dot edu slash policy](http://hr.osu.edu/policy).

And finally, you can also contact your unit HR representatives with questions of you may have.

Interviewer:

Robert, I want to thank you for taking the time today to help me and our listeners with understanding drug and alcohol problems and for providing this information for employees and managers about a drug-free workplace.

Robert:

Don, it has been my pleasure.