

November 1, 2001

EAP News #92

How Can I Tell If There's a Problem?

Probably the most frequently asked question about alcohol and drug problems is: "How can you tell if someone is an alcoholic or otherwise chemically dependent?"

Here is a sample quiz that can help answer that question and suggestions about how to intervene if there is. If the person about whom you are concerned is willing to answer the quiz questions, that's great, but unlikely. Nevertheless, you can take it on their behalf based on your observations of their behavior. This will help you decide if there is a need to intervene and get them to accept help.

The "Is There a Problem" Quiz:

- ? Do you consistently break promises to yourself about drinking/drug use?
- ? Do others have a different version of your drinking/drug use than you have?
- ? Are you paying an emotional price for your alcohol/drug use?
- ? Do you do things under the influence that violate your own values?
- ? Did you lie to yourself when you answered the first four questions?

If the answer is yes to even one of those questions, a professional assessment of a person's alcohol or drug use is in order. How do you get them to go? Before you attempt any kind of intervention it is useful to know that, after successful intervention and treatment, recovered alcoholic or otherwise chemically dependent persons consistently report five elements of their earlier denial:

1. They really could not see what others could see
2. They truly were not aware of how bad things had gotten
3. They honestly did not realize how much they were hurting others
4. They didn't believe anybody still cared
5. They couldn't see a way out with dignity (*cont. on pg 2*)

Winter Driving Safety Tips

Traveling can become dangerous as a result of wet weather. This can make fall and winter driving conditions hazardous. By preparing yourself, and your vehicle, you can help to ensure that you and your family travel safely to all of your destinations.

Prepare your vehicle

- ? Buy proper tires or make sure your tires have adequate tread.
- ? Have an automotive technician check important components in your vehicle to assure that they are in proper working condition.
- ? Always keep a windshield scraper and small broom in your vehicle for ice and snow removal.
- ? Make sure you maintain at least a half tank of gas during the winter season.
- ? Keep the following items in your vehicle throughout the winter months: jumper cables, flashlight with extra batteries, first aid kit, blankets, and a small bag of sand for generating traction under wheels.

Know your vehicle's brakes.

In order to determine whether or not your vehicle is equipped with anti-lock brakes, check your dashboard for an illuminated ABS symbol after you turn the ignition on. If your vehicle has anti-lock brakes, it is important to know how to use them properly should you have to make an emergency stop or find yourself in a hard braking situation. The following are some tips from the ABS Education Alliance:

- ? Keep your foot on the brake while making a panic or sudden stop. Maintain firm and continuous pressure on the brake while steering to enable ABS to work properly.
- ? Allow enough distance to stop. Follow three seconds behind vehicles when driving, more in bad weather.
- ? Consult the owner's manual for additional driving instructions on anti-lock brake systems.

Need to get a hold of us? Remember, our services are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. During especially busy times or after hours your call may be transferred to a medical exchange. There will be a slight silence during the transfer. Please don't hang up! When your call is answered, please let them know if you are experiencing an emergency. Your call will be forwarded to us immediately.

EAP NEWSLETTER

CREATING AN
INTERRUPTION-FREE ZONE

Workplace interruptions can be a source of stress and frustration. Next time it happens, try any of these steps:

- ? Post a sign on your door that tells others when you can be interrupted, such as "Available after 1:00."
- ? Hold discussions in your co-workers' offices. Even if a discussion starts in your office, move it to your co-worker's. That way, you can get up and leave when you're ready.
- ? If your boss is the one who interrupts, ask if s/he would please arrange a specific time of day to meet.
- ? Try being assertive. Ask the person, "I really have so much on my plate right now. Can we arrange another time to discuss this?"

Give Your First Aid Kit a
Check-Up

Most of us have scattered supplies of first aid items that we've accumulated for years. Now is a good time to take an inventory and re-stock your first aid kit.

Your first aid supplies should be clearly marked in a separate container that is easy to access rather than stored in your medicine cabinet among the deodorant and cosmetics. Everyone in your family should know the location of the kit and its contents. It's very important to know how to use any medications you add to your kit. Be sure to discard out-dated items and replace bandages that may no longer be sterile. You should also keep a basic first aid book in your home and be familiar with its contents before an emergency. Make sure you and your family members are educated in basic first aid procedures. The following is a list of suggested items for a family first aid kit:

Thermometer, bandages, scissors, adhesive tape, antibiotic ointment, alcohol or alcohol swabs, cotton swabs, rolls of gauze or cling gauze, bandages, antibacterial soap, peroxide, razor blades, tweezers, aspirin or Tylenol, Benadryl for allergies and itching, Dramamine for Nausea and motion sickness, Kaopectate or Imodium AD for diarrhea, assorted sizes of adhesive bandages, flashlight, Calamine lotion, baking soda, latex or vinyl gloves, insulated blanket, matches, safety pins, salt, ammonia inhalants.

PROBLEM?

Continued from page 1

These elements are clues to the nature and severity of their denial. In a way, they are unspoken needs or disguised cries for help. Thus any form of intervention should aim at helping the chemically dependent person see what others see; demonstrate how bad the situation has become; let them know how much pain they are causing others; tell them someone still cares; and offer dignified help options. One way to relate efforts to intervene to these unspoken needs and also avoid arguments and win-lose reactions is to devise and rehearse what is called a core message. Here is a sample outline for a core message:

- ? We care
- ? Here's what I see and hear (Sights, sounds, smells, specific events, etc.)
- ? I know where there is help (This will take a bit of local research)
- ? Let me connect you with that help (Offer to make reservations, or take them to the place, person, or meeting)

One intervention attempt by one person may not do the trick. But if several

concerned persons learn and apply these simple intervention ideas, it may produce results. If a reasonable number of attempts are not fruitful. Your EAP or local Council on Alcohol and Drug Dependence can refer you to a trained intervention counselor. **Caution:** If there is a history, threat or fear of violence, do not attempt to intervene without professional help.



WHAT IS DEPRESSION? – A mental illness that impairs certain brain chemicals, thus affecting a person's mood, behavior, appetite and sleeping habits. People react differently to depression, however, so symptoms can vary widely. Depression affects more than 19 million Americans each year.

COMMON SYMPTOMS – Feeling sad and empty, Loss of pleasure in formerly enjoyable activities, recurring thoughts about death or suicide, feeling guilty, hopeless or worthless, Insomnia or oversleeping, poor appetite or overeating, Inability to concentrate, think clearly or make decisions, loss of energy, feeling restless or irritable.

HBA is your 24-hour employee assistance program. Eligible employees and family members may call for confidential assistance with personal, legal, childcare, financial, alcohol/drug and other problems. HBA has identified a variety of community resources and self help associations. Also available is a panel of professional counselors and hospitals that have agreed to provide free or low cost counseling and treatment services to persons who have been referred by Human Behavior Associates. Dial 1-800-937-7770 for information or assistance.