



# Substance Misuse and the Workplace: Emerging Trends and Innovative Solutions.

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# Workplace Misuse



- Most people who misuse alcohol or illicit drugs are employed
  - 76% of illicit drug users are employed full- or part-time
  - 80% of the 12.4 million heavy drinkers are employed

# Trends

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- Alcohol deaths up 19% during pandemic
- Withdrawal from Alcohol – dangers – death
- Overall consumption of alcohol has increased considerably

# Trends

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- Isolation is the key killer and influencer of addiction: quarantine, social distance vs. isolation.
- Isolation and Boredom – big triggers for individual with SUD
- More use of electronics – more isolation and less interaction – more dependent on it – kids in school, adults working remotely

# Trends

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- Impact on those who receive daily dose of methadone or suboxone; Vivitrol shots – some places shut down, not available.
- Drug overdose deaths – up 30% (29.4%) in 2020 (CDC) from 2019. Increase in synthetic opioids (primary fentanyl). But also increase in methamphetamine and cocaine and other opioids such as prescription pain medication.

# New Trends for Women

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- **Harvard School of Public Health:**

- 2012-13: 16% increase in women work drink alcohol; 58% increase in women's heavy drinking (vs. 16% for men) and an 84% increase in women's on-year prevalence of alcohol use disorder. Changing social norms.
- 2020-2021 Pandemic: women increased their heavy drinking day by 41% compared to pre-pandemic. More research showing psychologist related to COVID was associated with great drinking for men and not for men.

- **Alcohol affects women differently then men:**

- Biological differences – women absorb more alcohol and take longer to metabolize it. Women biologically at higher risk to alcohol use disorder due to this.

# Trends with remote working conditions

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- Challenges:
  - Less likely to see visible signs of an employee being under the influence
  - Out of site/Out of mind
  - Too soon – research is still out there
  
- Good News:
  - Virtual services are more readily available than ever before – Access
  - Covered by most insurance plans - Availability

# Innovative Solutions at Hazelden Betty Ford

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- Kept residential services open and safe. Detox and residential remain needed more than ever – pandemic modifications along the way.
- Move to Virtual services:
  - Already piloting a project for IOP (Intensive Outpatient) in San Diego at our outpatient center prior to the pandemic.
  - We successfully moved 1500 outpatient pt's from in-person to virtual within a week and only closed programming for 1 day to provide training to staff on the new platform.
- Insurance is now paying Substance Use Disorder Treatment virtually
  - Covering for many years for medical and MH care, but not SUD

# Innovative Solutions at Hazelden Betty Ford

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- Family services; English and Spanish speaking; interpreter services available for other languages: FREE
  - Register at [www.HazeldenBettyFord.org/Parents](http://www.HazeldenBettyFord.org/Parents)
- Children services: FREE
- Seeing similar outcomes between in-person vs. virtual: HBFF is conducting the research
- 12 step meetings across the world – more available
- Teaching clinicians – (more CE training) on virtual best practices; how to find therapeutic alliance, how to handle a crisis with virtual, privacy issues, ethical dilemmas

# Additional Resources



# Treatment

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ASAM PPC IIR – American Society of Addiction Medicine

- Level .5 – early intervention/education
- Level I – Outpatient, Continuing Care or Relapse Prevention(1-2 hours a week)
- Level 2 – Intensive Outpatient treatment (9-12 hour a week)
- Level 2.5 – Day Treatment/Partial Hospitalization (20 hours a week)
- Level 3 Residential treatment – medically managed (24/7 care)
- Level 4 Intensive Residential – medically monitored treatment (hospital; 24/7 care)

# Treatment Works

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Employees return to work better in all areas:

- More productive
- Less stress
- Risk reduction
- Lower healthcare costs



# Work environment

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Provide a work environment that support recovery!

- Flexibility with their schedule to attend Recovery meetings/12 Step Meeting and to follow up with outpatient treatment and continuing care treatment
- Supported and encouraged
- Try to prevent and discourage water cooler talk about the employee in recovery
- Develop a culture that supports recovery from substance abuse
- Support family members whose loved one is struggling with a substance use disorder and they need their own support: Free Virtual family program, family therapy, Al-Anon meetings.

# What Can I do to Help?

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- Accountability and Support
- Nonjudgmental stance
- Empathy yet direct and honest
- Look for discrepancies
- Rolling with resistance – do not personalize it or label them
- Support Self-efficacy
- Seek consultation
- Wellness : Utilize your existing wellness infrastructure and investment in disease management solutions to increase awareness and improve outcomes

# Self Care

## The Importance of taking care of oneself in workplace

- Average hours worked
- Flexibility
- Ensuring staff are taking breaks
- Promote walking groups
- Working during off-hours
- Manager/Supervisor training – incentives for them to support healthy work/life balance.
  - Be an example



# Addiction and Research Resources

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- [www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov)
- [www.nida.nih.gov](http://www.nida.nih.gov)
- [www.niaaa.nih.gov](http://www.niaaa.nih.gov)

## Resources: Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation

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- [www.hazeldenbettyford.org](http://www.hazeldenbettyford.org)
- [www.hazelden.org/web/public/resforemployers.page](http://www.hazelden.org/web/public/resforemployers.page)