

Employers Overview to Managing Substance Abuse in the Workplace



How common is Substance Abuse in the Workplace?

Statistics – taken from the Canadian Alcohol and Drug Use Monitoring Survey (CADUMS) 2011:

- Use of illicit drugs is down
- Since 2004, marijuana use among males dropped from 18.2% to 12.2%, females 10.2% to 6.2%
- Use among youth aged 15-24 down from 37.0% to 21.6% during this time.
- Less than three quarters of youth (70.8%) reported consuming alcohol in the past year, down from 82.9% in 2004
- Because of ability for marijuana to stay in the system longer some workers are turning to cocaine or crack

Is this reflected in your workplace?

Continued from slide 1

- Other surveys show 6.5 – 22% of workers consume alcohol **while at work**
 - (FactFind, compilation of survey data, Canada, 2009)
- 70% of drug / alcohol abusers are employed
 - (statistics Canada, 2007)

Is this reflected in your workplace?



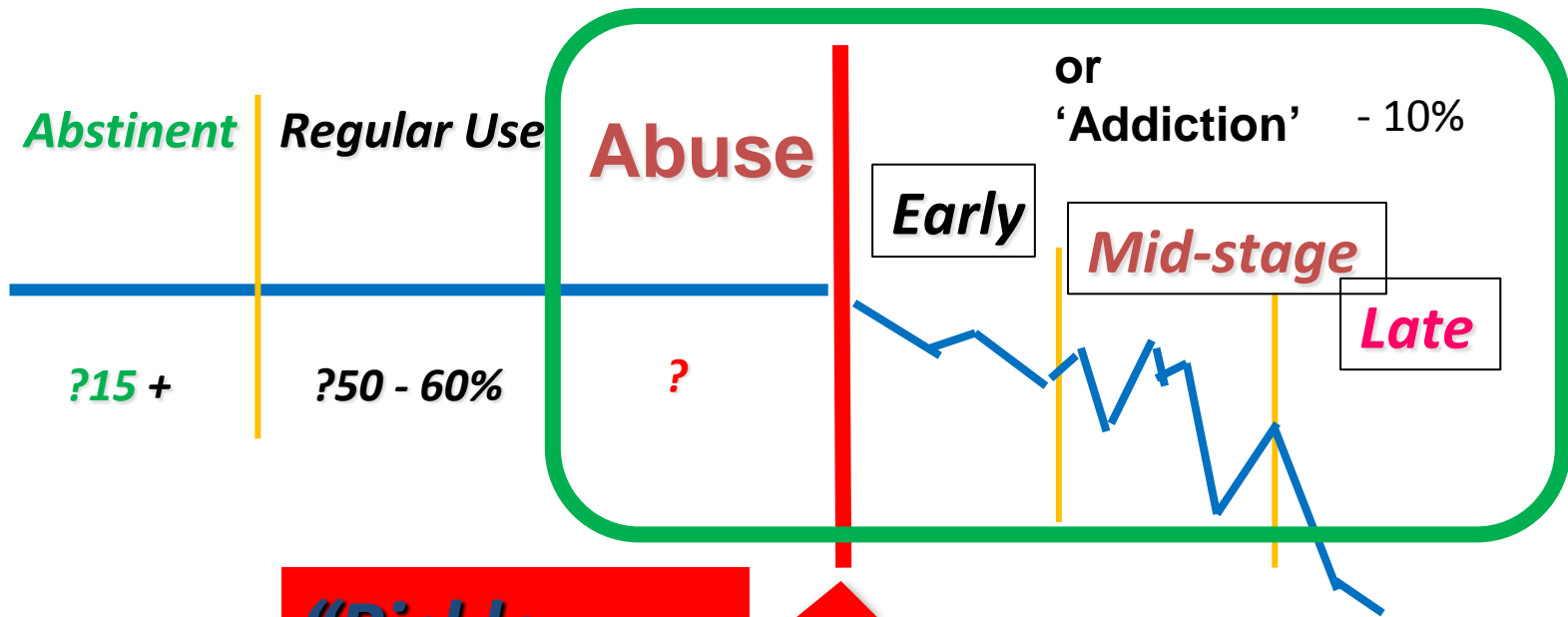
Project Set Up

- Create a Policy
- Establish Responsibilities
- Communicate the policy
- Develop a post incident response
- Follow up/ Aftercare
- Effective Administration of the program
 - See checklist on resource handout



Substance Use Disorders

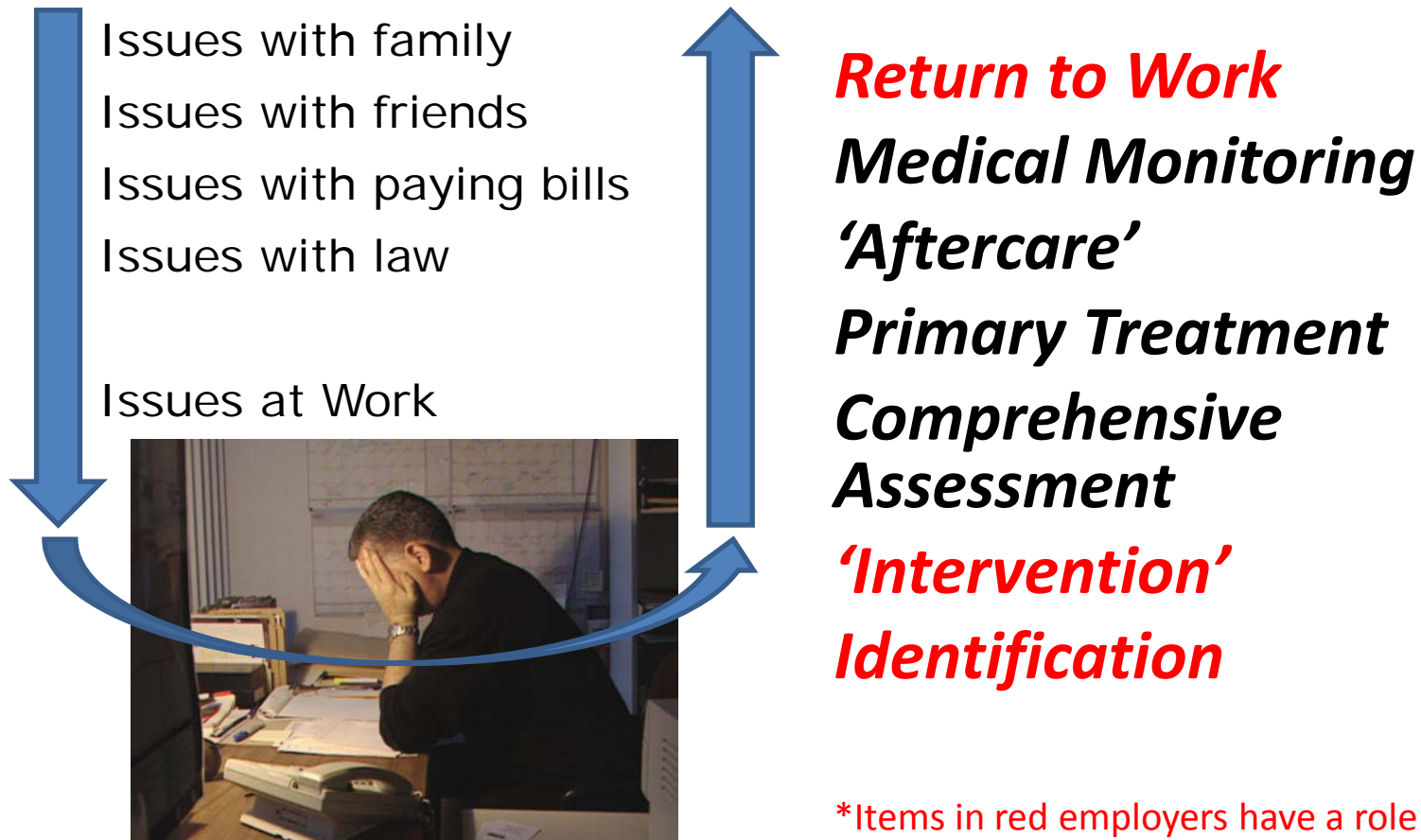
'Abuse' vs 'Dependency'



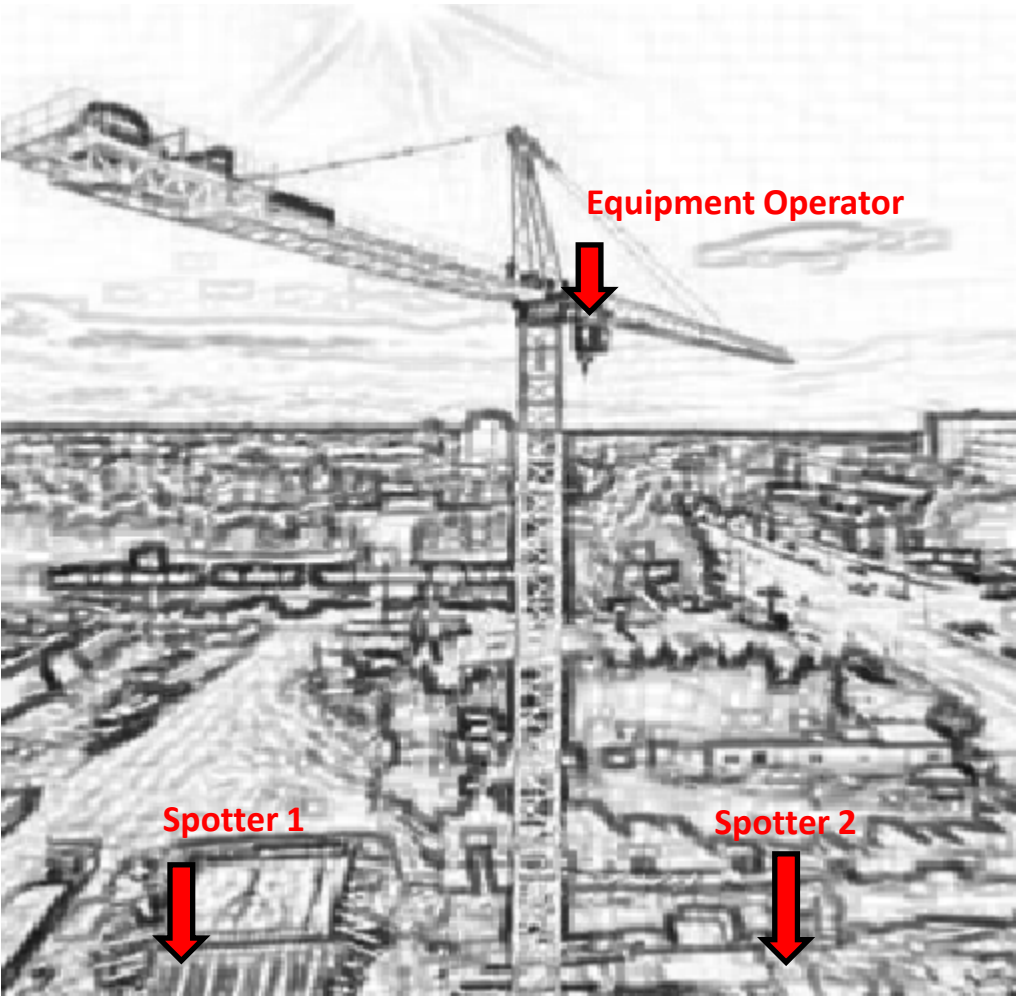
“Pickle Line” this is the line at which there is a permanent effect on the brain – attributed to mood changes etc.

Reference: Baker

Substance Abuse Continuum



Incident – case study



- 4 guys – 1 moving equipment, 2 spotters, and 1 guy off in the porta pottie
- Something goes wrong and equipment is damaged (incident)
- 3 involved go for testing; 2 test positive (*non-negative)
- 2 sent for assessment; 1 assessed to have an addiction, other does not

What now?

Post-Incident

- Who gets tested
 - Whole crew, or those involved?
 - What is significant ?
 - Where is the test facility?
 - What type of testing is used?
(urine vs. oral)
 - How do they get there and back home?
 - Timelines?
(Test results can take up to 72 hours)



- Results
 - 2 non-negative, referred to Medical Review Officer (MRO)
 - Substance Abuse Professional (SAP) / Substance Abuse Expert (SAE) assessment results

Discipline vs. Accommodation

- What is your management view? Do you see employees as expendable or as assets?
- Employee loyalty will derive out of supporting worker success
- An employer has an obligation to accommodate to the point of 'undue hardship'
- Some workers will self select out of the process (refuse treatment etc.)
- An employee who is treated with care and gets clean will often end up as one of your best employees



Discipline vs. Accommodation

- Discipline if
 - SAE / SAP concludes no addiction issue present
 - After investigations, appears to be an isolated incident, made in “poor judgment”
 - Proceed with normal company or collective agreement’s policy in discipline.
 - Involve your HR and management teams
 - Discuss with HR and management **prior** to prepare for such situations



Discipline vs. Accommodation

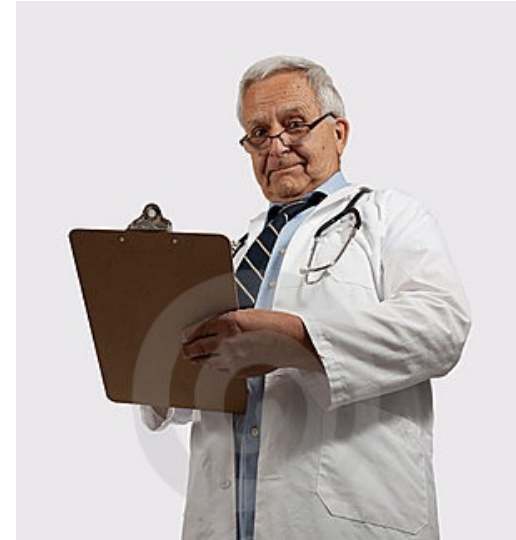
If it's something more....accommodation

- Accommodation for addiction can include
 - Full / partial funding of treatment (residential and / or outpatient)
 - Time off for treatment, meetings, appointments, etc.
 - Alternate work schedules, locations, duties



Physician Challenges

- Employers do not have to take a Doctor's note at face value
- Is the Doctor trained in Addiction Medicine?
- Is the Doctor trained in Occupational Medicine?
- 10 % of employees will experience a substance dependence
- Addictions mimic mental disorders: (depression, anxiety, panic, bipolar, psychosis)
- Only a small fraction of patients with Substance Use Disorders are detected by MDs
- Less than 20% of medical office visits detect this; only 30% of hospital admissions will detect this



Lessons Learned

- Testing is only good to determine if someone has used after they have used – it is not a preventative strategy
- Remember it isn't about the presence of a substance in the system, it is about impairment



Summary

- Set out a prevention strategy
- Promote a positive culture of physical and mental safety
- Get connected – focus on good supervisor skills with workers
- Have a substance abuse policy and plan
- Communicate this policy and plan to workers
- Invest in workers and they will invest in you

We are Here to Help!

Contact a Regional Safety Adviser

Visit us at www.bccsa.ca

Email us at info@bccsa.ca

Call us Toll-free at **1.877.860.3675**