Recovery-Friendly Worksheet

Offering a lunch and learn (aka brown bag lunch session) is also an effective way to educate and communicate with employees. Employers can offer employees pizza or sandwiches to welcome their participation or employees can bring their own lunch and eat it during the presentation. Your company may wish to develop a relationship with a local recovery community organization and invite one of the leaders to lead a lunch and learn session or you may wish to have senior leaders in the company lead the session. If you do invite a community leader to present, be mindful of their time and effort by offering a donation for their participation.

**A POSSIBLE LESSON PLAN FOR A 45-MINUTE LUNCH AND LEARN SESSION IS AS FOLLOWS:**

**LUNCH AND LEARN OUTLINE**

Title: One in Three: Addiction, What Is It, And How Can We Help A Neighbor, Friend, Coworker Or Family Member? At the end of this session, participants will:

* Understand that addiction is a complex medical condition.
* Consider the prevalence and impact of addiction in our state.
* Identify treatment and recovery support options.
* Consider several practical steps they can take to help a neighbor, coworker, family member or friend.
* Understand the actions our company is taking to promote a recovery friendly workplace.

**Step One:** Thank everyone for coming. Indicate that providing a recovery friendly workplace is important to your company.

This lunch and learn is one of many things we are doing to support employees their family, friends, and neighbors. One in three families in the US are impacted by addiction. It may not be your family, but it may be a neighbor, a coworker, or someone in your faith community. During this brief time together, we’ll explore this issue and talk about what each of us can do.

**Step Two:** Watch this short Tim McGraw video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t3qW8Wre7SA>

* Individuals living with substance use disorders come from all walks of life. It is not just celebrities dealing with substance use.
* According to the Surgeon General of the United States, one in seven Americans deal with a substance use disorder.
* Treatment works, but only 10% of individuals living with an addiction received treatment.
* An American dies every 19 minutes from opioid or heroin overdose, surely that’s not the case here in Nevada, right? Well it turns out that...
* Misuse of substances costs an estimated 6.8 billion dollars in the state of Nevada each year.
* In fact, from 2010 to 2017 there was an 80% increase in Nevada ER visits and hospitalizations directly related to opioid use.
* According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Nevada’s overdose rate in 2010 was 20.7 per 100,000 population — well above the national rate of 12.4 per 100,000.
* And it’s not just the homeless person on the corner dealing with substance use disorders. According to the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, 70 percent of Americans who abuse drugs are employed

**Step Three:** The great news is that treatment works, and recovery is possible for everyone.

* You might wonder “Why do some people become addicted and others do not. It’s a moral failure, right? I mean can’t they “just say no”?
* There is a tremendous amount of scientific research and agreement among the physical community that addiction is a disease – a medical condition.
* There is significant research that shows a “just say no approach” based on punishment instead of recovery is not effective.
* This quote is from an interview on NPR. Terry Gross says “Addiction as a brain disease is one of the main points of your book, but what do you mean by that? And author David Sheff responds “Well, first, Nic (his son) became a different person. The only explanation I ultimately came to is that he was ill. At first, I didn’t believe that. I thought, you know, he was just this selfish, crazy teenager. But then the more I learned - I mean, 10 kids will go out after, you know, school and they’ll all smoke pot. Or at a party on a Friday night, they’ll all drink. And one of those, possibly two of those, will become addicted. So, there’s something different about that person. There’s something different about the brain. And I’ve seen brain scans. There’s so much research now that shows that people with addiction process drugs differently. Their neurological system is different.”
  + I was curious about why people become addicted, what causes addition. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) there are three main influences on whether someone becomes addicted: Biology Environment and Development.
  + Biology. The genes that people are born with account for about half of a person’s risk for addiction. Gender, ethnicity, and the presence of other mental disorders may also influence risk for drug use and addiction.

* + Environment. A person’s environment includes many different influences, from family and friends to economic status and overall quality of life. Factors such as peer pressure, physical and sexual abuse, early exposure to drugs, stress, and parental guidance can greatly affect a person’s likelihood of drug use and addiction.
  + Development. Genetic and environmental factors interact with critical developmental stages in a person’s life to affect addiction risk. Although taking drugs at any age can lead to addiction, the earlier that drug use begins, the more likely it will progress to addiction. This is particularly problematic for teens. Because areas in their brains that control decision-making, judgment, and self-control are still developing, teens may be especially prone to risky behaviors, including trying drugs.

**Step Four:** Treatment for substance use disorders is effective “Well-supported scientific evidence shows that substance use disorders can be effectively treated, with recurrence rates no higher than those for other chronic illnesses such as diabetes, asthma, and hypertension. With comprehensive continuing care, recovery is now an achievable outcome.”

* Treatment varies for each person but may be including any or all the following:
  + Eliminating or even detoxing from the substance,
  + Engaging in individual group and or family therapy,
  + Using supportive medications as prescribed,
  + Building a system of recovery supports through groups and recovery communities.
  + Some of this treatment can happen in a hospital or treatment center, other treatment can occur in the community.
  + Advise employees to become knowledgeable about what your healthcare insurance will cover for treatment by going to the insurance website – put the website address on a white board or flip chart.

**Step Five:** Let’s take another look at addiction through the eyes of Steve Gill at a recent TEDX event

(“Step Five Alternative” shown below features a female video in case you want a different perspective.)

* Show the TED talk “Addiction – don’t let the bear catch you by Steve Gill” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LW4Ca-3pHfo>
* Steve gives us three ideas for ways we can help a family friend coworker or loved one, we have a few more ideas of ways each of us can help:
* Reduce stigma by using words that are less blaming. For example, instead of substance abuse, most clinicians use the phrase “substance use disorder” or “substance misuse”. Instead of saying Mary is an addict, say Mary is a person living with an addiction recovery issue. Mary is not her illness. You would not say Mary is a cancer, she lives with an illness, she is not an illness. Hand out the one-page flyer about language located here: <https://www.naabt.org/documents/NAABT_Language.pdf>
* Get rid of medications as soon as you finish with them. Many of us keep “left over” medications around just in case we need them again. These left overs are tempting targets for individuals struggling with addiction. An increasing common phenomenon across the country has seen teens taking easily available or hoarded pills for a “skittles party.” These pill parties are so named because a bowl of random pills may look like a bowl of skittles. Needless to say, taking random pills as a part of a peer pressure intensive social event is deeply dangerous. Safely disposed of all medications and keep current medications under lock and key to discourage theft and misuse. Many communities offer medication take back days.
* If you suspect someone has a substance misuse issue, professionals recommend the following steps:
  + Do not wait until the person has hit “rock bottom” The earlier treatment can begin, the better.
  + There are reasons the individual you want to help may not be willing to receive help. According to various surveys people may not know or think they have a problem, people may fear the consequences of getting help, for example, they may be afraid of the impact it might have on their employment or on a relationship or their relationships with their children. They may feel embarrassed or ashamed. The issues the substance use is covering may be even more devastating to the individual. Your job is to stay compassionate and supportive while be clear and consistent in your communication.
* Maintain a trusting relationship. Avoid nagging, criticizing and lecturing, yelling, name calling and exaggerating (even when you are stressed out yourself).
* Ensure you are not engaging in addictive behaviors yourself, even in moderation (they will think you are a hypocrite).
* Don’t try too hard to protect the person with a substance use disorders from the consequences of their own actions (unless it is harmful to themselves or others, for example, drinking and driving).

* Take care of yourself. This is stressful, and you may need to get your own help going through this process.
* Although you may feel tempted to let your loved one know that their addiction is a problem and that they need to change, the decision to change is theirs. They are much more likely to be open to thinking about it if you communicate honestly but in a way that does not threaten your loved one.
* Help them find treatment and offer support before doing and after treatment
* Supports after a detox can be the most critical time to offer social and emotional support. Engaging in favorite activities, and ensuring social environments are substance free can be especially helpful.

**Alternative Step Five:**

Let’s take another look at addiction through the eyes of former Miss USA Tara Conner at a recent Nevada TedX event\*

* Show ted talk Recovery Out loud by Tara Conner <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iAO5cBDvLlco>
* Tara talks about her journey to recovery. She had to face a national scandal to move to treatment. How can we help loved one get help before they face a tragedy or scandal? Reaching “rock bottom” is not necessary and not advisable. Like any other illness, early treatment is better.
* So how can each of us help?
  + Reduce stigma by using words that are less blaming. For example, instead of substance abuse, most clinicians use the phrase “substance use disorder” or “substance misuse”. Instead of saying Mary is an addict, say Mary is a person living with an addiction recovery issue. Mary is not her illness. You would not say Mary is a cancer, she lives with an illness, she is not an illness. Hand out the one-page flyer about language available here: <https://www.naabt.org/documents/NAABT_Language.pdf>
  + Get rid of medication as soon as you finish with them. Many of us keep “left over” medication around just in case we need them again. These left overs are tempting targets for individuals struggling with addiction. An increasing common phenomenon across the country has seen individuals taking easily available pills. Needless to say, taking random pills as a part of a peer pressure or intensive social event is deeply dangerous. Safely disposed of all medications and keep current medications under lock and key to discourage theft and misuse. Many communities offer medication take back days.
  + If you suspect someone has a substance misuse issue, professionals recommend the following steps:
  + Do not wait until the person has hit “rock bottom” The earlier treatment can begin, the better.
  + There are reasons the individual you want to help may not be willing to receive help. According to various surveys people may not know or think they have a problem, people may fear the consequences of getting help, for example, they may be afraid of the impact it might have on their employment or on a relationship or their relationships with their children, they may feel embarrassed or ashamed. These issues the substance use is covering may be even more devasting to the individual. You job is to stay compassionate and supportive while be clear and consistent in your communication.
  + Maintain a trusting relationship. Avoid nagging, criticizing and lecturing, yelling, name calling and exaggerating (even when you are stressed out yourself).
  + Ensure you are not engaging in addictive behaviors yourself, even in moderation (they will think you are a hypocrite).
  + Don’t try too hard to protect the addicted person from the consequences of their own actions (unless it is harmful to themselves or others, for example, drinking and driving).
  + Take care of yourself. This is stressful, and you may need to get your own help going through this process.
  + Although you may feel tempted to let employees know that their addiction is a problem and that they need to change, the decision to change is theirs. They are much more likely to be open to thinking about it if you communicate honestly but in a way that does not threaten them.
  + Help them find treatment and offer support before doing and after treatment
* Support after a detox can be the most critical time to offer social and emotional support. Engaging in favorite activities, and ensuring social environments are substance free can be especially helpful.

**Step Six:** Our company is committed to creating a recovery friendly workplace. If one in three families in the US are affected by this illness, we know employees, their friends and neighbors are all affected. We are taking these steps to support recovery from addiction.

(insert your comments here, example might include:

* Increasing education available through lunch and learns like this one
* Placing recovery focused posters around our workplace
* Listing Community Resources on our intranet
* Discussing coverage for addiction recovery support services with our health insurance providers
* Adjusting our policies to be more recovery focused
* Supporting National Recovery Month
* Exploring partnerships with local recovery community organizations and other community supports

**Step Seven:** Thank you for coming today. Let me know if you have questions or ideas about how we can support recovery here in our company.