



# SAFETY OUTLOOK

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## Where does substance abuse begin?

We have been discussing the reasons someone might become dependent on illicit drugs and how to overcome those obstacles. In our previous newsletter, we discussed the reason of ILLNESS. Remember, we all face medical situations from time to time, and having access to a doctor and medications is so valuable. Just be sure to follow the prescription orders and discard any unused medications in an appropriate manner. Don't allow an illness to become your path of destruction with drugs.

Today, we will discuss another reason why someone might turn to drugs....STRESS!

Did you know that three out of every four Americans describe their work as stressful? According to Fairleigh Dickinson University, workplace stress costs US employers an estimated \$200 billion per year in absenteeism, lower productivity, staff turnover, workers' compensation, medical insurance, and other expenses. It's a real issue and one that we all have experienced.

While stress can be a good motivator at times, it usually leads to negative impacts on your physical and mental health. A lowered immune system, irritability, depression, and workplace violence are all symptoms of a stressed employee. If unchecked, stress has the potential to lead to drugs.

Certain drugs, while highly addicting and habit forming, can provide a temporary "high" or "rush" that allows the user to experience a short term pleasurable sensation. This sensation is soon lost to many physical and mental health issues. It's simply not worth dabbling in it.

So, here are three ways we can tackle stress in the workplace:

1. **COMMUNICATION.** Having a strong communication line with your management team is extremely helpful. Do you know what your responsibilities are and what is expected of you? Don't be guilty of assuming things. Take a moment and make sure you're working on the right task to ensure your productivity is maximized.
2. **BE PRO-ACTIVE.** Procrastination happens to everyone from time to time, but the consequences are usually unpleasant. If you have a project deadline coming up, be sure to pace yourself and check the progress frequently so there are no surprises at the end when it's crunch time, which leads to stress in the highest degree! Being pro-active also allows us to be in control of most situations.
3. **STAY ACTIVE.** Research has proven that daily exercise is an excellent stress buster. A daily walk is a great start. Only 20 minutes of intentional movement is needed to achieve measurable results. Also, when feeling stressed, practice taking 10 deep breaths with focused inhales and exhales.

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