Substance Abuse Essay, Research Paper

BACKGROUND PAPER

ON

LEADERSHIP AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

1. What is substance abuse? Although you may never have to deal with issues such as substance abuse, you must be prepared and knowledgeable should this type of problem present itself to you. The information in this paper will familiarize you with the definition, identification, leadership and family involvement concerning substance abuse. Let?s start with the definition.

2. According to Air Force Pamphlet 36-2241, The Professional Fitness Study Guide, drug abuse is defined as the wrongful, illegal, or illicit use of a controlled substance, prescription, and over-the counter medication. It also includes the possession, distribution, or introduction of any controlled substance onto a military installation. Members of the Air Force are also prohibited from possessing, selling, or using drug paraphernalia. Air Force policy is to prevent drug abuse among its personnel. (AFPAM 36-2241: 182). The Air Force has zero tolerance on drug abuse.

3. The Air Force defines alcoholism as a preventable, progressive, treatable, and

noncompensable disease that affects the entire family. Alcohol abuse has negative affects on public behavior, duty performance, and or physical and mental health. Air Force policy is to prevent alcohol abuse and alcoholism among its members and their families. (AFPAM 36-2241: 183). Air Force members must always maintain standards of behavior, performance, and discipline. This leads us to identifying substance abusers.

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4. We must have a means of identifying service members experiencing problems with their substance use. One method is the arrest, apprehension, or investigation of a member driving under the influence (DUI) of drugs or alcohol. Another method is through drug testing. The Drug Abuse Testing Program is most effective as a deterrent, when used properly. All military personnel are subject to testing regardless of grade, status, or position. Military members are ordered or voluntarily consent to provide urine samples at any time. (AFPAM 36-2241: 184). Being in the Air Force for fifteen years, I have been randomly selected for drug testing more than my fair share. Now that I am a leader it?s clearer to me why this program is so important.

5. As a parent, boss, or supervisor, there are signs and symptoms of substance abuse to look for. These signs and symptoms, according to the book, Drugs and Alcohol in America can consist of violent behavior, memory loss, deteriorating duty performance, dramatic mood swings, and unexpected or frequent absences just to name a few. (Drugs and Alcohol in America: Crisis or Hysteria?: 62). The Air Force encourages personnel with substance abuse problems to seek assistance. Under self-identification, a member?s

voluntary submission to an Air Force treatment program and self disclosed evidence of prior drug use may not be used against the member in disciplinary action under the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ). Whether self disclosed or not, it?s up to us as parents and supervisors to get people the care and treatment they so desperately need.

6. The Air Force?s Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention and Treatment (ADAPT) program is designed to promote readiness and health and wellness. It provides education

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and treatment to individuals who experience problems attributed to substance abuse and return them to unrestricted duty status or assist them in their transition to civilian life. As leaders, it is our role to identify subordinates with problems early and to motivate them to seek and accept help.

7. As a supervisor, you are not tasked to be a diagnostician, yet you are charged with confronting unacceptable performance and behavior. Leadership has a very important part in the identification, treatment, and overall management of substance abusers. Showing genuine and personal concern for the welfare of your subordinates is one of the most important responsibilities you have as a supervisor. Commanders and supervisors should notify and make every effort to involve family members during the evaluation process and at the time of entry into a program.

8. In conclusion, we?ve discussed the definition and identification of substance abuse. We also talked about the importance of leadership and family member?s role. Remember handling substance issues is one of your responsibilities as a leader, supervisor, and NCO. Ignoring the problem in hopes it will go away will only make the problem worse for the individual involved, the organization, and ultimately for the Air Force. Getting help for people who need it is an important part of supervision and leadership.

1. Department of the Air Force. Air Force Pamphlet 36-2241, The Professional Fitness

Study Guide, 1 Jul 99.

2. Drugs and Alcohol in America: Crisis or Hysteria?

3. Alcoholism and Treatment