

## **Recovery Supportive Workplaces**

***As an employer, hiring people in recovery can be a significant benefit to your business. In addition to opening a pipeline of candidates, people in recovery make excellent employees. They bring unique strengths to the workplace—they are loyal, reliable, hard-working and ready to learn. Their lived experience and recovery journey are personal and professional assets that can help your bottom line in today's labor market.***

### ***What you should consider if you want to be identified as a Recovery Supportive Workplace***

An employer that is interested in becoming a recovery-supportive workplace for employees who are in recovery from drug and alcohol misuse have a number of things to consider as they make the changes to support all employees who may be impacted by substance use.

### **Executive Leadership/Owners**

If your business is considering changes to become recovery supportive, decision makers should commit to a full review of policies and practices and make changes, based on best practices and recommended policies. The goal is to create a workplace environment for employee in recovery to be successful both as an employee and in their ongoing recovery.

### **Management and Human Resources**

Training for supervisors, HR staff and other management staff in your business can help maximize the effectiveness of a recovery-supportive workplace and is a key factor to successful implementation.

Training for leaders in your business should include:

- Recognizing the signs of SUD in the workplace, family recovery, workplace language
- Recovery friendly activities
- Legally sensitive areas such as the Americans with Disabilities Act related to substance use and recovery
- Documenting potential problems in a fair, confidential and systematic manner
- Tools and resources to find employees appropriate help, as well as promoting and supporting ongoing recovery.

### **All Employees**

Recovery supportive workplaces develop a culture that is understood by everyone. Whether an employee is on their own recovery journey, are a family member or of friend someone in recovery, or a supportive co-worker, everyone in the business is aware of their employer's commitment to be recovery supportive and understands the policies and practices of the company. Companies should consider the following:

- Employment readiness onboarding programs for new employees in recovery to help train and prepare for the adjustment to employment through reintegration/transition programming implemented once someone is hired but before they start full-time.
- Use of person first language throughout the organization.
- Alternatives to after-work activities, as opposed to "happy hours", and the consideration of not serving alcohol at work-related functions.
- Health insurance plans (if provided) that offer affordable and accessible coverage to comprehensive, quality treatment and recovery services (for individuals and their family members) – including Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT).

- If the workplace has a drug screening policy, ensure that it takes into account how it will address MAT.
- Paid time-off or flexible scheduling for employees to attend meetings, therapy appointments, court hearings, probation or other medical, support services, and treatments related to recovery. Also consider policies that provide flexibility to an individual who is supporting a family member recovery from alcohol or drug misuse.
- Business Policies that ensure employees can return to their job if long-term, in-patient treatment is needed.

**Partnering with the Recovery Community:** Employers can engage in partnerships with community organizations and public and private agencies to support and enhance both worksite and community efforts to reduce substance use-related problems.

Employers enhance the capacity of these partnerships to affect community change through the human, fiscal, and organizational resources they bring to the table. Community agencies and organizations enhance an employer's capacity to provide effective substance use prevention, treatment, and recovery programs and services to their employees. Potential benefits for employers and community partners in getting involved with their communities are:

- Pooling talent, expertise, and resources
- Generating broad based support—including other stakeholders from both private and public sectors
- Enhancing visibility and messaging with employers, employees, vendors, local government, etc.
- Increasing credibility beyond the scope of the individual organization
- Being more appealing to other potential resources including funding sources
- Co-branding opportunities
- Realizing that no one stakeholder can solve the problem, but positioning the business to be identified as a community leader and resource

Central Wisconsin Partnership for Recovery (CWPR) can support your business to hire and support people in recovery through the evaluation of current policies and support implementation of recovery supportive policies and work practices. An employee's recovery from substance misuse is a process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live a self-directed life, and strive to reach their full potential. For more information, contact Wayne Sorenson, Project Manager, Family Health Center of Marshfield, Inc., by email at [Sorenson.wayne@marshfieldclinic.org](mailto:Sorenson.wayne@marshfieldclinic.org) or 715-389-4587.

**Source:**

***Substance Misuse and the Wisconsin Workforce: Analysis and Recommendations for Addressing and Reducing Substance Misuse in the Wisconsin Workforce***  
***Wisconsin State Council on Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Prevention Committee***  
***Employee-Workforce Substance Misuse Prevention Ad-hoc Committee, 2019***