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CONNECTICUT'S 5 PRINCIPLES

The Department of Health has identified 5 Key Principles to guide the development of a new approach to dealing with substance use disorder (SUD) in the workplace. Here's a summary of the 5 Key Principles and what they mean.

1. EARLY IDENTIFICATION

What it means:

- SUD in general does not go away without treatment, so it's essential to be alert to the issues, identify employees who may be struggling with SUD, and intervene early so that the problem can be addressed and contained.
- Employees who appear to be impaired in the workplace should be assessed according to employer policies and made to feel that they are receiving compassionate attention that's intended to help.

2. INSTANT SUPPORT

What it means:

- Employers who are willing to take fast action on this issue are more likely to retain their employees, increase productivity, and be recognized for having a positive company culture.
- The key is to establish your Recovery Friendly Workplace first so there's a framework for helping the employees who need it.

3. EMPLOYER FLEXIBILITY

What it means:

- Some employees with SUD may need to take a leave of absence for treatment. It's critical to see the advantages of keeping an employee who can be a long-term contributor to the company.
- Other employees in recovery may benefit from the structure and order of their jobs. They also may get a sense of purpose and identity, stability, and social support. So it's important to be flexible in your thinking about SUD in the workplace. For some employees, their job is an important part of recovery.
- The employer's flexibility may even be the catalyst for the employee to get help in the first place. So be prepared to be open-minded in your approach to implementing an RFW.

4. REGULAR REVIEW

What it means:

- SUD is a disability that requires simple, but consistent communications.



- Due to the chronic nature of addiction, and the necessity of external motivation during the early stages of recovery, regular review of an employee's job performance by his or her supervisor(s) should be conducted in an atmosphere of positive reinforcement.

5. ENLISTING SUCCESS

What it means:

- Large issues that impact the workplace (like SUD) can be solved more effectively when organizations mobilize together.
- For example, look at workplace safety. It takes employers, employees, union officials, contractors, suppliers, distributors, and others in the supply chain to collectively make safety a priority. When this is achieved, safety improves and accidents are reduced.
- Addressing substance use as a workplace issue is no different. It's up to the companies that are advanced enough to create a Recovery Friendly Workplace to involve others in the effort.

