Preventing Workplace Substance Abuse: Beyond Drug Testing to Wellness

Joel E. Bennett, PhD and Wayne E. K. Lehman, PhD. 272 pp, 2003. American Psychological Association, Washington, DC, $39.95.

In *Preventing Workplace Substance Abuse: Beyond Drug Testing to Wellness*, Drs. Bennett and Lehman aim to identify some of the limitations of drug testing as an effective method to address substance abuse problems in the workplace without a more comprehensive approach to the problem of alcohol and other drug abuse. They point out that relying on a drug-testing program ignores alcohol use and abuse and the underlying causes of alcohol and other types of drug abuse. The book also explores methods for intervention that recognize substance abusers as a heterogeneous group; some substance abusers will respond well to programs directed at individuals, others to those that target workgroups, and others will respond to programs focused on the entire workplace.

The book is divided into 10 chapters. Each of these chapters discusses interventions that are linked to other areas of wellness and how they can more effectively address the substance abuse issues found in the workplace. The chapters include: 1) Understanding Employee Alcohol and Other Drug Use: Toward a Multilevel Approach; 2) A Workplace Coping-Skills Intervention to Prevent Alcohol Abuse; 3) Integrating Substance Abuse Prevention into Health Promotion Programs in the Workplace: A Social Cognitive Intervention Targeting the Mainstream User; 4) Helping At-Risk Drinkers Reduce Their Drinking: Cardiovascular Wellness Outreach at Work; 5) Team and Informational Trainings for Workplace Substance Abuse Prevention; 6) Lay and Scientific Perspectives on Harm Prevention: Enabling Theory and Programs Innovation; 7) Symbolic Crusades and Organizational Adoption of Substance Abuse Prevention Programs; and 8) Cautious Optimism and Recommendations: A Call for More Research From Applied Psychology.

Chapters on alcohol abuse provide extensive statistical reviews demonstrating that alcohol use varies significantly with respect to work site, management styles, and workplace cultures. Different risk and protective factors related to alcohol use, including work stressors, work-family stressors, social support, and coping strategies, are reviewed. Potential interventions and their effectiveness are presented.

The authors point out that prevention programs for alcohol and other drug abuse are not part of most workplace wellness programs. They present results of studies demonstrating the ability and effectiveness of integrating this focus into workplace wellness programs. These data contend that this can be successfully integrated without diluting the impact of other components of an overall wellness program.

*Preventing Workplace Substance Abuse* begins with a premise that many occupational health professionals already recognize, which is “that drug testing alone is insufficient to adequately address the problems of alcohol and substance abuse in the workplace.” The authors then proceed to demonstrate through a series of meta-analysis and descriptions of sample programs how substance abuse prevention programs should be part of a comprehensive preventive health programs. The chapters read as a series of meta-analysis and case studies. This book will be useful for the occupational health professional looking for examples to support integrating a program for the prevention of alcohol and other drug abuse into an existing wellness program or for one who is developing a comprehensive program to address substance abuse in the workplace.

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