

1.7 GLOSSARY



Below is a handful of terms that will enable you to have an informed discussion of SUD with other people affected by the condition in the workplace.

Addiction. The main aspect of this term's definition is that it is a chronic and deadly disease – a healthcare condition that affects the physical and mental health of a person. It is being replaced by Substance Use Disorder (see definition).

Affordable Care Act (ACA). Also called “Obamacare,” this healthcare legislation required Medicaid and all insurance plans sold on the Health Insurance Exchange to provide services for SUD treatment.

Behavioral Health. The area of health care that is concerned with substance use and other mental health disorders.

Benzodiazepines. Psychoactive drugs that act as tranquilizers and muscle relaxants, sometimes used in the treatment of alcohol withdrawal.

Buprenorphine. A synthetic opioid used for pain relief and also used to treat opioid use disorder.

Coping strategies. The behavioral and psychological work that people with SUD do to handle the effects of stressful events that trigger substance use.

Denial. The tendency of individuals with SUD to deny or distort the realities associated with their drinking or drug use.

Dependence. A term often used synonymously with “addiction.”

Fentanyl. A powerful synthetic opioid 50 to 100 times more potent than morphine, available in legal prescription and illegal forms. Fentanyl produces sensations of euphoria and provides pain relief.

Intervention. A meeting between a person with SUD and his or her family and/or others



to address the problems being caused by the individual's SUD-related behavior.

Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT). Medication-assisted treatment (MAT) combines behavioral therapy with medications to treat SUD.

Methadone. Used to reduce withdrawal symptoms from opioid use.

Methamphetamines. A synthetic stimulant, it creates euphoria, increased physical activity, decreased appetite, faster breathing, and rapid and/or irregular heartbeat, among other symptoms.

Naloxone. Used to help people in the midst of an opioid (or heroin or morphine) overdose, it blocks opioid receptors in the brain.

Opioids. A family of drugs used to treat pain that also produce a "high." Chronic use of opioids can lead to tolerance, physical dependence, and addiction.

Oxycodone. An opioid produced for pain relief, Oxycodone (as well as Oxycontin and Percocet) can result in dependency and addiction.

Peer Support Groups. A general term referring to relationships that support patients recovering from SUD. Examples: Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), Narcotics Anonymous (NA), and online forums.

Person-first language. A way of communicating about substance use and the people it affects. Example: Rather than describe someone as an "addict", he or she would be described as a "person with a substance use disorder." Person-first language helps people understand that the disease is subordinate to the individual's identity.

Recovery Friendly Workplace. This refers to a growing number of organizations that embrace pro-SUD recovery policies and practices as a way of simultaneously helping employees and creating a stronger economic foundation.



Sponsor. A volunteer within a 12-step program (Such as AA or NA) who is available to help newer members by providing support, encouragement, and guidance to promote recovery.

Relapse. A term used to describe a recurrence of substance use.

Suboxone. A medication treatment for opioid dependence.

Substance Use Disorder. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) offers this definition of SUD: “Substance use disorders occur when the recurrent use of alcohol and/or drugs causes clinically significant impairment, including health problems, disability, and failure to meet major responsibilities at work, school, or home.”

Taper. A recovery method of lowering a dose of medication in smaller increments over time to help wean a person with SUD off the use of the substance.

Trigger. A stimulus that produces a reaction in a person with SUD that may increase his or her vulnerability to a relapse of substance use disorder.

Withdrawal. Symptoms that arise when use of a drug is fully stopped after dependence has been developed.