

# Case study: Workplace Referral Program and Substance Abuse Program



**Brock, an experienced heavy-equipment operator**, had experienced issues with alcohol addiction for many years including an in-patient treatment for alcoholism 10 years ago. More recently, after separating from his wife, Brock's behaviour began to change; he was distracted, forgetful, irritable and sometimes hostile. He'd also had several accidents needing first aid and was increasingly late and calling in sick. Brock's supervisor was hopeful that things would sort themselves out in time, despite the fact that he'd smelled alcohol on Brock one afternoon. Several weeks later, however, Brock was involved in a worksite accident that resulted in injuries and extensive mechanical repairs costs.

## Program entry

Following this incident, Brock's manager initiated a referral to the Workplace Referral Program (WRP). For Brock, this referral mandated him to participate in a series of professional counselling sessions. Brock's manager completed the referral form that included information about: Brock's behaviour/functioning in the workplace, any actions taken by the manager to resolve the issues and what information the manager wished to receive regarding the employee's involvement in counselling.

## Assessment

During Brock's first session with his WRP counsellor, a clinical assessment was conducted to address the following:

- Brock's understanding of the extent of the workplace issues involving him
- Personal, social, emotional, and/or medical issues which may be affecting Brock and his ability to respond appropriately and safely in the workplace
- Extent of prior and current use of alcohol and drugs
- Social support and/or external resources available at work, home and/or in the community
- Brock's level of motivation to implement positive behaviour change and his goals for counselling

Given Brock's history with alcohol, the counsellor also employed a substance abuse diagnostic tool to assess levels of substance abuse and consequent treatment recommendations. An assessment report including treatment recommendations was prepared by Brock's counsellor and delivered to his manager.

## Treatment recommendation

Brock's recommended treatment and care plan was as follows:

- **Abstinence from alcohol use, effective immediately**
- **Referral to a substance abuse program for treatment of alcohol abuse**
- **Encouragement to resume attendance at self-help programs in the community for alcohol abuse**
- **Exploration of Brock's triggers for alcohol use**
- **Addressing anger management issues**

The treatment recommendation was reviewed and approved by Brock's manager. In accordance with the organization's substance abuse policy and Brock's consent, he entered into treatment for alcohol abuse via Morneau Shepell's Substance Abuse Program. The program provides professional assessment and treatment recommendations for employees experiencing performance issues at work that may be related to drug and alcohol abuse.

## Care and case management

Brock participated in an outpatient local program so that he could remain at home and in the community. While in treatment, Brock's WRP counsellor liaised with the treatment provider to confirm Brock's attendance and successful completion of the substance abuse program. Upon completion, Brock and his WRP counsellor focused on a return to work plan that would assist Brock to transition back to work after ensuring that he was ready to resume his responsibilities in a professional and responsible manner.

In the event that an employee does not successfully complete the Substance Abuse Program, the WRP counsellor would attempt to re-engage the employee immediately in counselling sessions to address the challenges encountered and next steps.

## Case closure

At the final WRP counselling session, Brock and his counsellor reviewed his progress, goals and recommendations that would assist Brock to continue to function optimally and safely in the workplace and at home and avoid future relapses. A closure report was delivered to Brock's manager outlining the above.

For employees that receive in-patient treatment, Morneau Shepell's Structured Relapse Prevention Program is available post treatment to assist with re-entry into the workplace, including monitored abstinence via alcohol/drug testing.

## Outcomes

Through a check-in with Brock's manager, the WRP counsellor was pleased to learn that Brock's functioning in the workplace had indeed improved.

## Workplace Support Programs

The Workplace Referral Program and Substance Abuse Program are part of our Workplace Support Programs - specialized mental health and addiction prevention/intervention programs designed to reduce costs for organizations with faster diagnosis, sustainable recovery and incidence of short and long-term disability.

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