



## PATTERNS OF SUBSTANCE USE:

The pattern of psychoactive substance use can be described as **hazardous** when it poses a high risk for future physical or mental damage or it could be classified as **harmful** when it has already caused the person to experience various physiological, cognitive or behavioural effects due to them finding it difficult to control the strong desire to keep on using the substance.

### FOLLOWING ARE BROAD PATTERNS OF SUBSTANCE USE:

**EXPERIMENTAL USE** - Normally an individual especially in their teenage years will try a substance for the first time. They do this for a host of reasons of which **curiosity regarding the effects and to fit in with the substance using peer group** is the most common.

Often individuals will lack knowledge regarding the substance in terms of its likely effects and how long it will last, how much of the substance they can safely consume and any potential side effects that might be experienced as a result of taking the substance.

**RECREATIONAL USE** - This type of use is primarily undertaken for pleasure e.g. when socializing at weekends. Depending on the substance it might make an individual feel more sociable and less inhibited or alternatively it might help someone to feel more relaxed and able to let go of personal pressures.

**Control is exercised around the type of substance, the amount, where and when it is used.**

**"BINGE" USE/DRINKING** refers to the consumption of five or more drinks of alcohol for males and four or more drinks for females on the same occasion within two hours, once or twice a month, resulting in a blood alcohol concentration of 0.08g or above. This behaviour typified the consumption of at least one half of a recommended weekly intake of a substance in a single session contributing to serious health problems

According to the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (2013:483-484) substance-related disorders are divided into two groups, namely **substance use disorders and substance-induced disorders.**

To diagnose a **SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER**, pathological patterns of behaviour related to the use of the substance must be determined according to specific criteria which includes: impaired control, social impairment, risky use and pharmacological criteria. These disorders occur in a range from mild to severe and often result in **building** a higher **resistance** towards the substance, reacting with **physical withdrawal** symptoms and an overwhelming **desire** for the substance.



The substance use disorder may include the failure to fulfil major role commitments (e.g. at work or at home), it contributes to situations that are **physically hazardous** (e.g. while driving a vehicle or carrying a firearm) leading to **legal** problems (e.g. domestic violence or assault) and includes problems in **interpersonal** and social areas (e.g. arguments with a significant other or failure to get along with colleagues).

**SUBSTANCE INDUCED DISORDERS** can be defined as a substance related mental disorders as all or most of the occurring psychiatric symptoms like mild depression, anxiety and psychosis to the less, full-blown manic and other psychotic symptoms, are the direct result of substance use or abuse (American Psychiatric Association 2013:485). **These symptoms often improve once the substance use/abuse is stopped.**

### WHEN SHOULD THE EMPLOYER INTERVENE?

**WORKFORCE SUBSTANCE ABUSE** refers to substance abuse **after work hours and removed from the work environment**, and that these employees normally do not return to the workplace until the adverse effects of the substances, e.g. a hangover, have subsided and they do NOT pose a direct safety and/or productivity risk.

**WORKPLACE SUBSTANCE ABUSE** is defined as "alcohol and other drug use that occurs **during work hours**, just prior to commencing work or just after work, but before going home" and it poses a direct safety and productivity risk to the employer.

**Hazardous drinking patterns are of public health significance despite the absence of any current disorder in the individual user as it does NOT only increase the risk of harmful consequences for the user, but also for others.**

