The Training Issues of

Organizational Substance Abuse

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Overall, more than two-thirds of all organizations say they have formal policies regarding substance abuse, but only about one-quarter conduct or sponsor training programs on identifying or dealing with substance abusers in their work forces.

Dale Feuer, "Workplace Issues," Training

The best tool for recognizing drug problems remains the eyeballs of concerned and in-touch supervisors and peers. Use these, and then provide counseling and help as needed...

Tom Peters, "Drug Testing Kills Productivity,"
On Achieving Excellence

The topic of "training and substance abuse" has received very little attention. New training materials are necessary to prepare supervisors and managers for dealing effectively with substance abuse problems.

Jim Schreier, "Substance Abuse in Organizations,
1971 - 1986, Realities, Trends, Reactions"

Training is not the only element in an organization's effort to confront substance abuse. But its absence seriously hampers efforts for successful implementation of a policy or employee assistance programming. Organizations must increase training efforts. And there is a corresponding need for new training materials for substance abuse programs.

Organizations are not going to effectively combat the problem of substance abuse unless they take a broad, integrated approach. Organizations that have avoided (or successfully decreased) problems of substance abuse have done so with policy, organizational culture, qualified supervisory and management personnel, and training on both substance abuse and management issues.

Dealing with substance abuse is not solely a policy/testing issue. It involves values, motivation, stress, communication, change, conflict management -- all basic management skills.

These are the conclusions based on the first research project looking specifically at the actions, policies, and responses of organizations concerning training issues and substance abuse.

Key Survey Findings

65% of the responding organizations have formal employee assistance programs. Only 26.7% provide training related to employee use of alcohol or other substances.

The majority of training conducted focuses on policy and procedures with the least training focused on confronting/counseling and legal issues.

Training programs on substance abuse are not integrated well with other management training efforts. Nor are examples of substance abuse problems common in regular management training activities. Program information is sometimes shared or there is some coordination.

Survey respondents believe that their training efforts should be increased in the area of prevention. And efforts should be decreased in the area of company policy and procedures.

The primary techniques for substance abuse training are the more traditional: lecture and case studies. The least used techniques are those considered more participant involving. These include experiential exercises, simulations, self-assessment, and self-study materials.

Attitudes toward an issue as complicated as substance abuse and training are difficult to measure. But survey respondents clearly believe that training can have a greater impact in combatting the problem than policy, rules, or testing. They also believe that the substance abuse issue is closely related to basic management effectiveness.

Organizations with more than 500 employees are more likely to be conducting training on substance abuse issues. Organizations with more than 5000 employees are even more likely to be conducting training.

Survey Procedure

In February 1988, Human Resources Research mailed 500 surveys to a sample of training professionals randomly selected from a special interest group of management trainers. 60 usable surveys were received, a 12% response rate. The very nature of the topic made it difficult to identify a survey population. The letter was written asking the receiver to forward it to the most appropriate person. The response compares very favorably to other surveys on substance abuse. Appendix 1 contains a detailed profile of the survey respondents.

Background

While the problem of substance abuse in organizations is not new, the last two years have seen an increase in concern. Public incidents of on-the-job substance abuse, new surveys, and the rising interest in drug testing sparked increased attention.

Training Magazine has surveyed the training industry for several years. In 1987, questions about substance abuse were included for the first time. Six questions were reported in their results.

Organizations with	
Drug Testing (with probable cause)	24.8%
Drug Testing (without probable cause)	8.5%
Drug Testing of Applicants	14.2%
Formal Policy on Substance Abuse	67.1%
Employee Assistance Program	37.9%
Conduct or Sponsor Training for Substance Abusers	25.4%

Human Resources Research conducted its fourth national survey on substance abuse in 1987. Its research showed continued increase in substance abuse incidents on-the-job and increased concerns about specific substances, testing, and policy issues.

- 95% of organizations have had direct experience with employee substance abuse on the job.

- 98% of organizations feel that the alcohol and drug abuse problem within their own organizations is the same or more serious than it was five years ago.

- President Reagan's "war on drugs" directly targeted the work place. But only 10% of the survey respondents feel that this movement has better than a 50% chance of succeeding.

- There is some movement toward tougher penalties, stricter policies, and an increased emphasis on testing. But survey respondents still rank **education as the alternative with the most potential for eliminating drugs from the work place.**

- A majority of respondents feel that cocaine is different from other drugs in the work place. 24% of the organizations have changed their policies because of cocaine. **44% increased training.**

- Job performance has been the number one motivating factor for policy development in each of the four studies. Absenteeism and the rise in cases among employees have had the next largest impact in the most recent study.

This report made several recommendations concerning the increased need for training in the area of substance abuse policy and management practices.

But the topic of "training and substance abuse" has received very little attention. Organizations must develop creative strategies for preventing substance abuse in the work force. This means new policies for intervention and treatment, new training programs, new programs for employee productivity and morale, and new programs for job and individual enrichment. An integrated approach that includes management style, organization culture, and employee assistance efforts must be considered.

Greater emphasis must be given to education. The substance abuse problem in organizations will be solved by increased educational efforts, better management techniques, and improved treatment models.

Organizations must recognize the importance of training in the area of substance abuse programming. Training must go beyond efforts to teach the facts of substance abuse and the procedures of testing and employee assistance referrals. Training must include the critical links between all areas of management responsibility and substance abuse. This means that issues related to substance abuse must be integrated into training programs on management skills, supervisory development, leadership and motivation, communication skills, interviewing and performance appraisal, stress management, and executive development. **There must be an integrated approach to eliminating substance abuse that involves organization culture, management practices, and employee assistance programming.**

Survey Results

The first questions in the survey asked respondents to identify their program activities. This includes Employee Assistance Programs (EAP's), Wellness or Health Programs, and whether or not they provided training related to employee use of alcohol or other substances. Table 1 shows the responses to these questions. While a majority of organizations have EAP's, significantly fewer have wellness or broader health programs. And only 26.7% provide training related to substance abuse.

Table 1
Substance Abuse Training Conducted by Only 26.7% of Organizations

Program/Training	Yes	No
Employee Assistance Program	65.0%	35.0%
Wellness (Health) Program	33.3%	67.7%
Training Related to Substance Abuse	26.7%	73.3%

Organizations with more than 500 employees were more likely to have Employee Assistance Programs than those with less than 500 employees. Wellness (Health) Programs were more common in organizations with more than 5000 employees. Training related to substance abuse was non-existent in organizations with less than 500 employees. It was more common in organizations with more than 5000 employees.

Health care, transportation, and utilities were industries more likely to be conducting training related to substance abuse. Financial organizations were the least likely to be conducting training on substance abuse.

Survey respondents that did not conduct training related to substance abuse were directed to questions concerning attitudes about the role training might play in dealing with substance abuse. The respondents who do provide training related to employee use of alcohol or other substances were provided with several additional questions. These questions asked about the specific types of training being conducted, the integration of substance abuse training with other management training, and the training techniques and materials used.

Types of Training -- For Whom

For organizations which conducted training on alcohol or other substances, a matrix of target audiences and specific topics was provided. Respondents were asked to identify the specific topics covered for five different groups of employees and families. The groups were employees, families, supervisors, middle managers, professionals, and executives. Table 2 shows the responses to these questions.

Table 2
Types of Substance Abuse Training and Who Receives It

	Facts	Policy Procedures	Identifying Users	Confronting Counseling	Legal Issues
Employees	76.5%	100.0%	35.3%	35.3%	23.5%
Families	41.2%	11.8%	17.6%	23.5%	5.9%
Supervisors	76.5%	94.1%	76.5%	64.7%	58.8%
Middle Managers	70.6%	94.1%	70.6%	64.7%	58.8%
Professionals	58.8%	76.5%	52.9%	52.9%	52.9%
Executives	76.5%	94.1%	52.9%	58.8%	70.6%

The most training is now being conducted on organization policy and procedures, followed by facts about alcohol and other substances. The remaining topics, identifying users, confronting and counseling, and legal issues receive less attention. But in there are some important differences in topics for different audiences.

The emphasis on topics is not what many experts in the field of substance abuse might recommend and not what the survey respondents themselves think is appropriate. The number of organizations conducting training on confronting/counseling skills and legal issues is higher than expected. If the percentage of organizations training supervisors and middle managers in identifying users is focusing on identifying performance problems, it is a good response, although lower than desired. However, if this percentage represents programs teaching supervisors and middle managers to spot "drug use," then it represents an over-concern for drug identification.

Integration with Other Management Training

A key issue for substance abuse training is the relationship to other organizational training efforts. Some organizations have structured employee educational programs on alcohol and other substances as part of employee assistance programs or wellness efforts. Some have structured them as part of industrial health or safety. Still others have conducted them through training and development departments.

How the program is structured raises questions about the possible impact of the programs. Effective programs for supervisors and managers must be based on a recognition of the need for basic management skills. An outstanding company policy for identification and referral could fail because managers lacked the communication skills to be effective. Some well-publicized programs have been ineffective because of these specific factors.

The questionnaire collected information showing the degree of coordination and/or integration of the substance abuse training efforts with other management training. The results showed, as anticipated, that coordination is not very extensive. Coordination and integration of programs will have to be increased for better implementation of employee substance abuse programs.

The organizations providing substance abuse training also provide regular management training opportunities for their management and professional employees. But the integration and sharing of information are relatively low. The use of examples of substance abuse problems in regular management training is also low. Tables 3 and 4 summarize the responses to these questions.

Table 3
Regular Management Training Opportunities

	Outside	In-House	Both
Supervisors	5.9%	64.%	29.4%
Middle Managers	5.9%	58.8%	35.3%
Professionals	11.8%	52.9%	35.3%
Executives	20.0%	46.7%	33.3%

Table 4 Integration/Sharing of Information between Management Training and Substance Abuse Training								
To what extent are the two programs fully integrated?							***x = 2.5***	
Not Integrated	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Highly Integrated
	25%	6%	25%	12%	6%	19%	6%	
To what extent was information from both programs shared?							***x = 3.2***	
Not Shared	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Highly Shared
	20%	7%	7%	20%	13%	13%	20%	
To what extent are examples of substance abuse used in basic management programs, programs not specifically designed toward substance abuse?							***x = 2.0***	
Not at All	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	In Many Programs
	19%	19%	38%	0%	12%	12%	0%	
To what extent is the situation two separate areas of responsibility doing two separate things?					***x = 2.8***			
Not at All	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Definitely Separate
	13%	13%	20%	20%	7%	20%	7%	

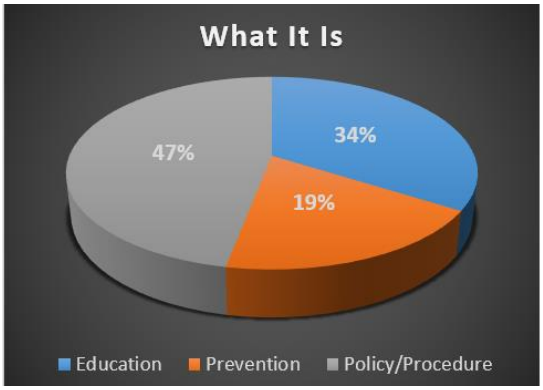
The Focus of Substance Abuse Training

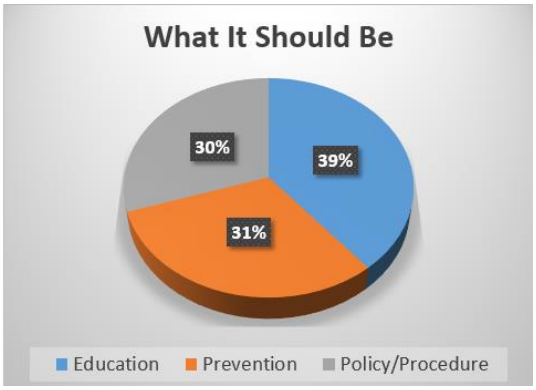
The survey sought the opinion of respondents on what the focus of their programs was versus what they thought it should be. This was related to the earlier question about program content for different audiences. Specifically the survey asked what role training is taking on the topic of substance abuse. And it asked what the role should be.

Respondents identified company policy/procedure as the number one role of current training efforts, followed by education/information and prevention. However, they identified education/information as the number one role that substance abuse training should take. This was followed by a much greater role for prevention and a significantly smaller role for company policy/procedure. Table 5 summarizes the responses to this question.

Table 5
Role of Training for Substance Abuse

What It Is		What It Should Be
34%	Education/information	39%
19%	Prevention	31%
47%	Company Policy/Procedures	30%





Training Techniques and Methods

While the low number of organizations conducting substance abuse training was anticipated, a question was asked about specific training techniques being used. This was done to help program developers spot opportunities for creating new materials. In many ways, training for substance abuse is on the early part of the life cycle. Little is being done, many people are concerned about it, and programs reflect this stage in how they are being conducted. There is a heavy use of lecture and case studies. Correspondingly there is little use of simulations, experiential exercises, self-study materials, and role plays. Table 6 summarizes the responses to this question.

Table 6
Training Techniques/Methods for Substance Abuse

		0	1	2	3	4	5
	$\bar{x}$	Not Used		Percentage Responding		Used Extensively	
Lectures	**3.0**	5.9%	5.9%	11.8%	35.3%	35.3%	5.9%
Video Tapes/Films	**1.9**	37.5%	6.3%	18.8%	12.5%	18.8%	6.3%
Role Plays	**1.9**	37.5%	6.3%	18.8%	12.5%	18.8%	6.3%
Case Studies	**2.2**	12.5%	18.8%	25.0%	18.8%	25.0%	0.0%
Self-Assessments	**1.4**	43.8%	25.0%	12.5%	0.0%	6.3%	12.5%
Experiential Exercises	**1.2**	43.8%	31.3%	0.0%	12.5%	6.3%	6.3%
Simulations	**1.3**	43.8%	18.8%	18.8%	0.0%	18.8%	0.0%
Self-Study Materials	**1.4**	18.8%	37.5%	31.3%	6.3%	6.3%	0.0%

Programs Used

While several packaged programs are now available, usage rates were relatively low according to survey respondents. The survey asked respondents to identify materials in the same categories as the training methods and techniques. And they were asked to provide their evaluation of these materials.

Over half of the responding organizations that conduct substance abuse training either developed their own materials or did not identify specific programs. Consequently the following materials are identified only as comments from respondents. They do not represent a formal evaluation of program materials.

Table 7
Program Materials Used - Evaluation

Video Programs	1= Poor/6=Excellent
Everything Looks So Normal	5.5
DuPont Substance Abuse Program	4
America Hurts: The Drug Epidemic	6
What You See Isn't Necessarily What You Think It Is	5

Attitudes Toward Substance Abuse Training

Is substance abuse as a training topic going to be the saving factor in the "war against substance abuse?" Is substance abuse training a poor substitute for tougher policies and testing programs? Or is substance abuse training really dealing with issues of employee development and change? These are tough questions and even tougher for training professionals to answer. But these questions, and others, were asked in the final section of the survey which all respondents completed.

The feelings are clear. Yet differences of opinion are obvious in the distribution of responses. The vast majority of respondents feel that:

Substance abuse training <u>can</u> make a valuable contribution to effective management.

Very often the people who need training aren't taking part.

Training is the preferred solution to policy, rules, and/or testing.

Substance abuse training is not about methods; it is about changing and learning to cope with change.

Table 8 presents the questions asked about attitudes and philosophies about the role of training in dealing with substance abuse. It is important to first note the trends, clearly shown by the key attitudes expressed above. It is equally important to note the range of responses to all items. The field of substance abuse training is, despite decades of information, still in its infancy. Part of this is the changing nature of the problem. There have been increases in cases of employee substance abuse and constantly changing "substances of popularity." But the fact remains that substance abuse and training are issues that will develop as both attitudes and techniques/materials are changing.

Table 8
Attitudes Toward Substance Abuse Training

Substance abuse training makes a valuable contribution to effective management, and this contribution can be clearly demonstrated. ***x=4.9***

Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly Agree
	2%	5%	8%	22%	22%	29%	12%	

Substance abuse training could really put some people right, but those who could benefit most do not risk-taking part.
x=4.3

Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly Agree
	2%	8%	18%	18%	37%	14%	4%	

Substance abuse training has little contribution to make to management, the real impact is through policy, rules, and/or testing.
x=2.3

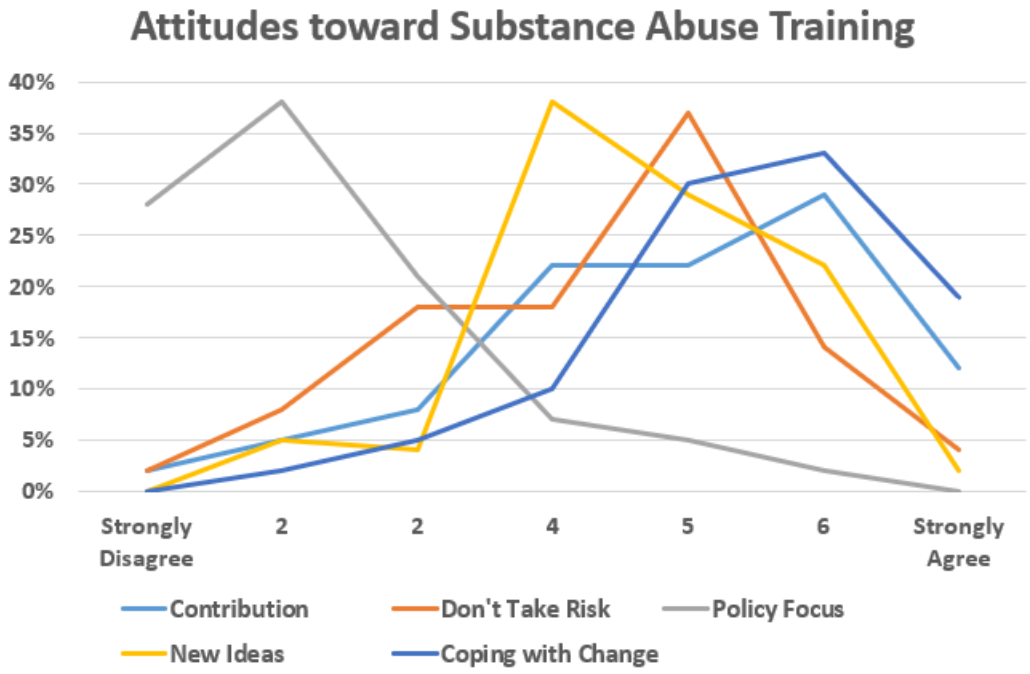
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly Agree
	28%	38%	21%	7%	5%	2%	0%	

Substance abuse training is not yet perfect, but substance abuse trainers come closer to the final answer with each new idea. ***x=4.6***

Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly Agree
	0%	5%	4%	38%	29%	22%	2%	

Substance abuse training is not about methods; it is about changing and learning to cope with change. ***x=5.4***

Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly Agree
	0%	2%	5%	10%	30%	33%	19%	


Attitudes toward Substance Abuse Training
40%
35%
30%
25%
20%
15%
10%
5%
0%
Strongly Disagree
2
2
4
5
6
Strongly Agree
Contribution
Don't Take Risk
Policy Focus
New Ideas
Coping with Change

Appendix 1

Survey Response/Population

Employees on Payroll

1-100	6.8%
101-250	3.4%
251-500	8.5%
501-2000	27.1%
2001-5000	32.2%
5001-10000	6.8%
Over 10000	10.2%

Organization's Principal Business/Industry

Health Care	20.3%
Financial	17.0%
Retailing	10.2%
Manufacturing	8.5%
Insurance	5.1%
Government	5.1%
Consulting	5.1%
Services	5.1%
Construction	5.1%
Transportation	3.4%
Communications	3.4%
Electronics	3.4%
Broadcasting	1.7%
Education	1.7%
Entertainment	1.7%
Utilities	1.7%
Research	1.7%

Survey Population

Management Trainers/Directors with a Special Interest in Management Development

Surveys Mailed:	500
Usable Responses:	60
Response Rate:	12%

The Study Author

James W. Schreier, Ph.D., SPHR, is a management consultant specializing in management development and professional skills programs. He is the founder and president of Far Cliffs Consulting, a human resources consulting organization dedicated to improving personal and professional achievement. In addition to the Ph.D. he holds accreditation in Personnel Planning, Recruitment, and Selection. Dr. Schreier has conducted numerous professional management seminars for financial institutions, production facilities, wholesale, retail, and government organizations. He specializes in human resources management, behavior and organization, and employee assistance programming.

As a management consultant, Dr. Schreier specializes in experiential training programs, human resources audits, and innovative computer applications in training and human resources systems. He is the author of **MANAGEMENT FOR PRODUCTIVITY: An Electronic In-Basket** (John Wiley & Sons, 1986), as well as numerous professional publications.

Dr. Schreier has been researching the problems of alcohol and drug abuse in organizations for 17 years. He has conducted major national surveys of company experiences, problems, and policies in 1971, 1976, 1981 and 1986. His 1986 survey, Substance Abuse in Organizations, 1971 - 1986, Realities, Trends, Reactions, has been summarized in major publications including Psychology Today, USA Today, Personnel, and John Naisbitt's Trend Report. Dr. Schreier has spoken throughout the United States and in Europe on various aspects of the substance abuse problem in organizations and education. Dr. Schreier has appeared on numerous radio and television talk shows to discuss the substance abuse problem in organizations. He has published extensively on the problem and has participated in national efforts, including the 1986 "Controlling Substance Abuse," report, published by The Conference Board.

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