

### **Dangers of Drug Abuse**

Drug abuse occurs when a person begins a consistent pattern of use of a substance beyond what is recommended if the substance is prescribed. If the substance is not prescribed, abuse occurs when the quantity of the substance used is increased to achieve a high that was once achieved at a lower quantity. There are many dangers to abuse of drugs including physical and psychological addiction, change in brain chemistry and functioning, and death.

### **Danger of Addiction**

When a drug is abused, the potential for addiction is increased due to the physical need that the body develops once the drug's effects are achieved. Abuse turns into addiction through chemical changes that the drug supplies to the body when used regularly. Additionally, an emotional and mental attachment develops, causing preoccupation with gaining the pleasurable effects that the drug brings. The body misses the drug when it is not present, causing the person to seek that feeling through ongoing drug use. Addiction has the unfortunate side effects of mental and physical withdrawal, depending on the drug abused. This can lead to need for medical and psychological intervention to break free from the addiction that develops.

### **Danger of Brain Change**

The brain is a natural messenger system with chemicals being created to provide the rest of the body with the tools needed to feel, think, function, and thrive. Drugs provide additional or an overload of chemicals to the brain causing interference with the natural process. This occurs due to the drug imitating an already-occurring chemical provided by the brain and through over-stimulation of the pleasure circuits of the brain. A process called flooding the circuits happens during drug abuse, which creates an imbalance in the normal body process. Initially the overstimulation feels good, causing euphoria during early drug abuse. With time the body and the brain come to rely on the drug for feeling pleasure and stop creating the natural flow of chemicals that were once present. The danger of brain changes leads to depression, anxiety, disrupted communication patterns, memory impairment, poor appetite, reduced or increased sleeping, and isolation from once pleasurable people and activities.

### **Danger of Death**

According to the National Center for Health Statistics, over 19,000 people died of accidental poisoning or drug overdose in the United States in 2004 and by 2005, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported over 22,000 people losing their lives to death by overdose. It is unknown how many of those deaths were suicide and how many were accidental, but this is an attestation to the severe danger of abusing drugs no matter if prescribed or illegal. (John, 2014)

### **Drug or Alcohol Abuse Counseling, Rehab, Assistance**

Port Human Services –252-752-2431

Alcoholics Anonymous- 252-975-6113

Walter B. Jones Alcohol and Drug Abuse Treatment Center – 252-830-3426

### **Government Policy**

The Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988 ("Act") is a U.S. federal legislation that tries to reduce drug use within organizations that have contracts with the federal government. The Workplace Act directly affects federal contractors as well as organizations that receive grants from the federal government. The Act requires organizations and companies to agree to run a drug-free workplace before entering into a contract or grant program with the U.S. government.

The Act established formal guidelines for federal contractors and those who receive federal grants. The Act requires organizations to post antidrug-use policies within the workplace and provide employee awareness training on drug use policies.

All covered contractors and grantees must maintain a drug-free workplace. However, the specific components necessary to meet the requirements of the Act vary based on the type of organization. (Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, n.d.)

### **MCC Penalties for Violating Drug Alcohol Policies**

Any College employee or student violating these policies will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination or expulsion and referral for prosecution.

Alternatively, the College may require the MCC employee or student to satisfactorily participate in a drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation program or alcohol rehabilitation program approved for such purposes by a federal, State, or local health, law enforcement, or other appropriate agency.

### **Works Cited**

*Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988*. (n.d.). Retrieved from USLegal: <https://definitions.uslegal.com/d/drug-free-workplace-act-of-1988/>

John, A. (2014, August 14). *Dangers of Drug Abuse*. Retrieved from Livestrong: <https://www.livestrong.com/article/93006-dangers-drug-abuse/>