



Official Newsletter of Drug Free Workplaces
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Staying Safe in a Changing World

Drug and alcohol issues continue to plague workplaces across the country. Even though many companies work hard to keep employees safe, new challenges keep appearing. Today, many employers are still dealing with problems related to opioids. Opioids are strong pain medicines that can be extremely dangerous when misused. Many employers are asking if they should keep Narcan on hand. Narcan is a medicine that can help stop an opioid overdose and save a life.

In recent years, new drugs have become a bigger concern. Two of the most serious are **fenntanyl** and **ketamine**. Fentanyl is a very powerful opioid—much stronger than most prescription pain medicines. Even a tiny amount can be deadly. Ketamine is a drug sometimes used in hospitals, but it can be misused outside of medical care. When people use these drugs illegally, it can lead to accidents, health problems, and unsafe situations at work.

These issues remind us that drug and alcohol problems do not simply “go away.” They change over time, and workplaces must stay alert to protect everyone's safety.

Understanding Drug Testing Standards

Most workplaces use a standard drug test. This test looks for several common drugs, including:

- Amphetamines
- Cocaine
- Marijuana
- Opioids
- PCP

These tests help employers make sure the workplace stays safe, especially in jobs where alertness and quick thinking are important.

Recently, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) updated its rules for

federal employee drug testing. As of **July 7, 2025**, federal workers in safety-sensitive, security-sensitive, and national security jobs began being tested for **fenntanyl** and **norfenntanyl** (a substance the body makes after fenntanyl is used). This change was made because fenntanyl has become such a serious national problem.

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) is also working on similar updates. DOT has proposed adding fenntanyl and norfenntanyl to the drug testing panel for private transportation workers. This includes people who work in trucking, aviation, rail, transit, pipelines, and maritime jobs. A final rule is expected in 2026.

Why This Matters

A safe workplace protects everyone. When employees understand the dangers of drugs—and when employers use strong safety rules—accidents and injuries can be prevented. Staying informed helps us all make better choices and look out for one another.

If you ever have questions about workplace safety or drug testing policies, talk with your supervisor or HR team. Staying aware is one of the best ways to stay safe.

The following suicide prevention information, while provided by the Georgia Dept. of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, will also be helpful to those in states other than Georgia. All online resources listed are available to users nationwide.

World Bipolar Day is observed annually on March 30th, coinciding with Vincent van Gogh's birthday. This day provides an important opportunity to raise awareness about bipolar disorder, reduce stigma, and promote a deeper understanding of this complex mental health condition. While it is encouraging to see increased visibility surrounding bipolar disorder, it is also crucial to address the serious suicide risks that can be associated with it.

Understanding the Risks

Research indicates that 15%-20% of individuals with bipolar disorder may die by suicide, and 25%-60% may attempt it at some point in their lives. Several factors contribute to the heightened suicide risk for those with bipolar disorder:

- **Mood Shifts:** Quick transitions between manic highs and depressive lows can lead to emotional turmoil and possible impulsive actions.
- **Co-occurring Mental Health Disorders:** Conditions such as PTSD and substance use disorders significantly increase the risk of suicide.
- **Severe Depression:** During depressive episodes, individuals may experience profound feelings of hopelessness and worthlessness.
- **Impulsivity:** In manic phases, individuals may engage in risky behaviors that can lead to suicidal thoughts or actions.
- **Childhood Trauma:** Traumatic experiences in childhood can raise the risk of developing suicidal thoughts and behaviors later in life.

Protective Factors

While awareness of these risks is crucial, many protective factors can significantly reduce suicide risk. Here are some constructive ways to take action:

- **Encourage Effective Treatment:** If you or someone you know is showing signs of bipolar disorder, gently encourage them to seek professional help. Access to suitable medications and therapy can greatly enhance mood stability and lower suicide risk.
- **Cultivate Support Networks:** Building strong connections with family, friends, or community groups can foster emotional stability and a sense of belonging. Sharing feelings and experiences can inspire others to open up, creating a supportive atmosphere.
- **Develop Coping Strategies:** Participating in therapy or workshops focused on stress management and emotional regulation can provide valuable tools for managing emotional ups and downs effectively.
- **Promote Healthy Living:** Engaging in regular exercise, eating a balanced diet, and practicing mindfulness or relaxation techniques can significantly boost mental well-being and resilience.

Addressing Misinformation Constructively

It's essential to correct misconceptions about bipolar disorder to reduce stigma and promote help-seeking behavior. Consider these constructive steps:

- **Share Your Story:** If you have personal experience with bipolar disorder, whether through your own journey or supporting someone else, sharing your story can illuminate the condition and motivate others to seek help.
- **Challenge Myths:** When you encounter misinformation or stereotypes about bipolar disorder, speak up respectfully. Sharing accurate information and highlighting the strengths of those affected can make a difference.
- **Encourage Open Dialogue:** Foster supportive conversations about mental health with friends and family. Attending workshops, watching documentaries, or reading books together to deepen understanding of bipolar disorder and mental health can help with this.

Moving Forward Together

By acknowledging both the risks and protective factors related to bipolar disorder, and by actively working to dispel misinformation, we can create a more supportive and compassionate community for those affected by this condition. Every positive action matters—whether it's initiating a conversation, sharing knowledge, or offering a listening ear. Together, let's build a society where individuals feel safe and empowered to seek help, leading to better outcomes for everyone living with bipolar disorder. Your voice in this dialogue is invaluable—let's make it a constructive one!

If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, please consider reaching out to 988, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. Remember, seeking help is a courageous step. If you or someone you care about is in distress, calling 988 for support can provide essential assistance. You are not alone.

To learn more about suicide prevention, visit the DBHDD website at:
<https://dbhdd.georgia.gov/suicide-prevention>.

Or contact the Suicide Prevention Director, Rachael Holloman, at:
rachael.holloman@dbhdd.ga.gov.



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