

supervisor tools

Signs and Symptoms of Impairment



Observing Symptoms and Changes

Impairment may come on slowly with declining job performance over a period of time or it may occur suddenly with acute symptoms and behavioral changes. In both cases, the observers must look at the total picture and not focus on just one of the listed behaviors. Here are lists of both acute symptoms and key behavioral changes that may be observed over time.

- Presence of alcoholic beverages, drugs or drug paraphernalia
- Stumbling
- Disorientation
- Odor of alcohol on breath
- Intoxicated behavior without odor of alcohol (drugs)
- Odor of marijuana
- Unsteady gait or balance
- Slurred speech
- Hyperactivity
- Inattentiveness
- Red or glassy eyes
- Drowsiness
- Euphoria
- Mood swings
- Excitement
- Confusion
- Irritability
- Aggressiveness
- On-the-job accidents or injuries
- Difficulty with short-term memory
- Difficulty handling complex assignments
- Job taking more time than usual
- Unpredictable mood swings
- Emotional overreaction to real or imagined criticism
- Increased withdrawal from peers
- Deterioration of personal grooming habits
- Attendance problems