

# The Peer Report

## Family Substance Abuse Goes to Work

By Jill Bachman, MSN, RN, CEAP, Education/Outreach Manager

**It is no secret** that substance use disorders have a significant effect on family members. To shed more light on the problem, a new study by Hazelden documents the role that family substance abuse or addiction has on the American workplace. <sup>i</sup>

One quarter (26%) of employees surveyed reported actual drug/alcohol abuse or addiction within their family. Of these employees, 42% reported being distracted and less productive at work because of their family member's addiction.

Of those employees who reported being distracted or less productive

- 57% missed a deadline or work/attendance suffered
- 46% said they made errors in judgment they would not normally have made
- 14% said the family distractions made them forget the required safety or security procedures

Speaking at a December 4, 2004 panel discussion for business leaders, Ellen Breyer, president and CEO of Hazelden Foundation, made a strong case for "Making Recovery America's Business." <sup>ii</sup>

"We want to change the way American businesses view addiction," she said. "We want CEOs, human resource directors, union leaders, and rank-and-file employees to see addiction for what it really is—America's No. 1 health problem. We want to change public perception that will lead to changes in public policy. We want to make it easier for employees to access treatment through private health plans. We want to raise awareness of addiction in the workplace and the huge toll it is taking on American business.

And finally, we want to demonstrate that effective addiction care can return employees as productive employees."

A few facts help explain the human and economic toll of substance abuse in the workplace:

- About 23 million Americans suffer from alcohol and drug addiction; 75% of those people are employed, but only 20% get help for their problem.
- Of the nearly 44 million binge drinkers in the United States, 81% are employed.
- 76 % of illicit drug users are employed.
- More than 60% of adults know someone who has reported to work under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Alcohol and drug abuse costs US businesses more than \$100 billion in lost productivity each year.

Hazelden ([www.hazelden.org](http://www.hazelden.org)) offers these tips for EMPLOYERS, when their employees struggle with alcohol or drug abuse in the family.

1. Establish an Employee Assistance Program, or if you have one remind employees about it regularly.
2. Create a forum for learning about drug abuse.
3. Refer employees to your Human Resource Department. Maybe they are eligible to take a family medical leave.
4. Create an organizational environment that supports employees. Seek to de-stigmatize getting help through policies, public forums, discussions, and every appropriate opportunity.
5. Make sure your health insurance covers addiction treatment.

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Peer Assistance Services

Dedicated to quality and accessible prevention and intervention services in workplaces and communities, focusing on substance abuse and related issues.

# Krispy Kreme Sold its Corporate Jet

By Andy Siegle, MS, CRC, CAC II; Workplace Programs Specialist

This article is designed to help employees anticipate business changes that might affect them and to take action to minimize negative consequences. What does this have to do with you and Peer Assistance Services? Focusing on individuals in the workplace is part of our mission. We believe that helping employees plan for the future is important to help minimize stress in their lives. Escalating stress may precipitate automatic and impulsive behaviors in order to cope. Using drugs and alcohol to handle stress can easily lead to escalating patterns of use->stress->use->stress. This article helps to demonstrate prevention in the workplace and in communities.

Many Americans are familiar with stories of companies forced to become "leaner" after too rapid expansion, unexpected market downturns or poor performance. Krispy Kreme was one of the hottest stocks on the market when they went public in 2001. They expanded into other ventures like merchandise, fruit shakes, exotic coffee blends, and even corporate jets. They became distracted from their primary focus on making great tasting doughnuts. This past year alone Krispy Kreme's stock lost 80 percent of its value. Now the company is getting back to basics to be more competitive in the marketplace.

What are the lessons we can learn from Krispy Kreme?

## *Big Picture:*

- We need to do what we are good at and for which we have passion and conviction. Krispy Kreme's passion is great tasting doughnuts. What is yours? Do you have work that is meaningful and uses the best you have to offer?
- Keep learning in your chosen field and beyond.
- Follow your three A's: be Authentic, Autonomous and Action Oriented. Being authentic means that we are consistent with our values, and able to express our unique perspective. Being autonomous means that we recognize our responsibility for our own work and life circumstances rather than relying on others. Being action oriented means that we are working from a plan and moving forward.

*Here are some suggestions to help you stay competitive and vocationally desirable in a tight economy:*

- Keep your skills current in your chosen field.
- Learn about with your organization's current financial climate, and stay updated. Understand what market factors help or hinder your company's growth.
- Consider going through the interview process whether you are looking for a new job or not. This is a great way to network as well as to understand how your job in other businesses might be changing. If you are faced with 'real' interviews, you'll be cool, calm and collected. After the interview process, send the potential employer a thank you note.
- Keep your resume current. Review it often and revise it at least annually.
- Have two to three different resumes emphasizing different skill sets easily available. The same is true for cover letters.
- Keep your credentials and certifications up to date.
- Save regularly and methodically for a rainy day. Try to have enough in savings to support you for three to six months if your income is reduced or falls to nothing for awhile.
- Master at least one invaluable skill: being bilingual, possessing excellent computer/word processing skills, possessing excellent writing or presentation skills for example. This will increase your net worth and increase your value to any organization.
- Learn from the experience. Pick yourself up and carry on. Once you understand the lesson in the experience, don't look back, or for someone or something to blame. Looking backwards only keeps you stuck in the past.
- Keep all of your options open. Network and keep associate's business cards, stay in touch.

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- Remember to keep using healthy strategies. Maintain a proper diet, don't smoke, drink responsibly if at all, continue or start an exercise program, stay involved with friends and other support networks.
- Polish your people skills.
- Join various professional organizations and be active in them.



If one does get 'downsized', here are some possible next steps:

- Use your employee assistance program (EAP), if your company has one, to help you evaluate the transition period ahead of you.
- Apply for unemployment insurance.
- Schedule an appointment with the division of Vocational Rehabilitation, if there is a loss of licensure, or you need help in deciding a new career path. Identify your transferable skills and keep an open mind though out the job seeking process.
- Simplify, simplify, simplify. Now is the perfect time to cancel those magazines subscriptions you never had time for to begin with.
- Expand your job search in terms of occupation and geography.
- Consider taking only a part-time job. This could free up time for other development (like education) or entrepreneurial ventures you may have been wanting to try.
- Revisit the fundamental question, "If money wasn't a factor, what would I WANT to do?"
- Whatever you do, don't despair. A large number of people have been though a layoff insisting that this was the best thing that could have happened to them. While this may not be the case for everyone, there are many outcomes from losing a job. Finding a better one is a definite possibility.

## PAS Staff Members Honored

**Jill Bachman, MSN, RN, CEAP, Education/Outreach Manager**, was recently nominated to receive one of Colorado's Nightingale Awards, which recognize nursing excellence in human caring. The annual statewide program, which was begun in 1985, is sponsored by the Colorado Nurses Foundation and supported by the Colorado Area Health Education Centers.

**Elizabeth Pace, MSM, RN, CEAP, Chief Executive Officer**, was presented with a 2005 East High School Angel Award from the Parent Teachers Students Association in recognition of her work with the Social Norms project and establishment of the Substance Use Prevention Committee. "Elizabeth has tackled, head-on, the very real issue of substance abuse at East."



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And if you are an EMPLOYEE struggling with alcohol/drug abuse or addition in your family:

1. Get support. You are not the only person who has faced this and you do not need to suffer alone. Check out community groups, self-help groups such as Al-Anon, groups recommended by your EAP and others.
2. Take time off work. Find out in advance what absences might be excused or if leave policies apply.
3. Let your supervisor know that you are distracted by personal issues, and ask for help in keeping focused.
4. Access benefits, such as an employee assistance program, health insurance, and leave.
5. Work with your supervisor to determine if you can be given some flexibility during a difficult time. What is considered acceptable? Can you access drug treatment information on the internet at work? Can you have some privacy in an office for personal phone calls? Continue to demonstrate your commitment to your work responsibilities.

References:

<sup>i</sup> "Hazelden launches Making Recovery America's Business", accessed via web ([www.hazelden.org](http://www.hazelden.org)) 6/7/05.

<sup>ii</sup> "Employees report coworkers are less productive due to substance abuse or addition within families", accessed via web ([www.hazelden.org](http://www.hazelden.org)) 6/7/05.



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We're on the web!  
[www.peerassist.org](http://www.peerassist.org)  
[www.codrugfreeworkplace.org](http://www.codrugfreeworkplace.org)



Workplace prevention programs are funded by the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention through the Colorado Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division

# Recovery Rally this September National Recovery Month



Advocates for Recovery Celebrate Recovery  
*"Voices and Faces of Recovery"*

**Saturday, September 24, 2005**

Noon to 2 PM

### **Civic Center Park**

Denver, Colorado

### **Seal Pond**

Food, Fun and Music

Children's Activities

**Contact 303-639-9320 for more information**

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