

Conference Bridging the Gap 16.06. – 19.06. 2004.

AKAN- The Tripartite Committee for the Prevention of Alcohol and Drug Problems in the Workplace.

History

The Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions and the Confederation of Norwegian Business and Industry founded AKAN in 1963. Shortly after its founding, AKAN also received its first funding by the Ministry of Social Affairs.

Today AKAN is funded and works through the collaboration of the three parties mentioned on a solid tripartite basis. AKAN committees and programs, based on co-operation locally between employers and employees, have been set up in numerous public and private workplaces all over the country.

AKAN primarily works to prevent the occurrence of alcohol and drug problems in the workplace, by means of primary, secondary and tertiary prevention. Help and assistance will be provided by the company for employees who have drug problem.

The AKAN-agreement has two main purposes:

- * to prevent alcohol and drug abuse in the workplace,
- * to provide early intervention - and give assistance - when needed.

AKAN`s ORGANISATION

The Board of AKAN consists of two members from each of the main organizations and one member representing Norwegian authorities. There are five substitutes with the same kind of representation.

The central administration of AKAN is located in Oslo, consisting of the Managing Director, eight counsellors with a background from social or pedagogic work, two of which is responsible for the programme directed at the young employees. There are four clerical workers and one public relations employee.

Over the years since the foundation of AKAN, a change in attitude has taken place; from focusing mainly on individual assistance in the nineteen sixties, towards a more comprehensive model today. Still the important basic idea is the same, the joint effort and work by employer and employees. The work of AKAN is aiming at making enterprises able to take care of all the problems related to alcohol and drugs within their organizations.

The AKAN-counsellors from the secretariat, in Oslo, contributes to the organizing of AKAN within the company, by means of making an alcohol and drug policy with rules and regulations. Further, information and education of all employees and those responsible for the internal AKAN-work is an important task for the AKAN-counsellors. Thus, many employees will deal with alcohol and drug matters without being educated in the profession. The practice of peer support is vital in the handling of these questions in the workplace.

The AKAN-model/levels

According to the Act Relating to Workers' Protection and Working Environment, all companies with more than 50 employees have to establish a working environment committee where employer, employees and the occupational health service are all represented.

The main task of this committee is to observe that work environment matters are taken care of according to the regulations of the law. These committees or, in smaller companies, similar committees with representation from employers and employees, initiate the companies' work on an alcohol and drug policy.

The working environment committee decides if the enterprise wants to establish the AKAN-model. When the enterprise establish the AKAN-model, which is a mutual agreement, the workplace says that no employee should be dismissed on the ground of alcohol- and drug abuse as long as the employee has signed an individual AKAN-contract and sticks to it.

A sub - committee will be elected with the same kind of representation; employer and employees and health service. This local "AKAN – committee" will be responsible for working out the

Company's policy on the alcohol and drugs issue and for proposing and executing activities to fulfil the policy of the enterprise.

A set of regulations on how to act, when to act, who is responsible for doing what, and so forth will be worked out by the committee for approval in the environment committee. The AKAN – committee members shall also supervise all employers and employees in question about alcohol and drug problems and the AKAN-model.

An important person in this work will be the appointed AKAN key person (employees) who should be a person coming from the union in the workforce or another person among the employees who is respected and well known by most people in the enterprise.

When an employee enter to an individual agreement a team will be set up. The team comprising the employee him/her , immediate supervisor, AKAN-key person and the health service.

Annual reports from enterprises: Se attachment.

Primary Prevention in a company

Having a drug policy known to everybody, information about alcohol and drugs

Secondary Prevention

Training for supervisors in recognizing early signs of problems, "The inevitable conversation", focus on behaviour at work.

Tertiary Prevention

Intervention, assistance programs, cooperation with professional treatment, a binding contract

Reactions to abuse

An employee who shows up at the workplace intoxicated has violated company regulations and will be sent home. His or her immediate supervisor has the responsibility for taking action.

1. Verbal warning – violation of work regulations
2. Written warning – recurring violation - an individual AKAN agreement.
3. Further violations - additional written warning - the situation is evaluated.

YOUNG EMPLOYEES

AKAN provides a special programme directed at young employees. The programme has been developed since 1998. It has been very well received and is much requested.

Development of preventive strategies

A special educational programme has been worked out based on the findings in the survey and on pedagogical principles, which we hope trigger the interest of a young population. During the programme, we focus on three objectives:

- 1. Trigger the interest of the young employees in the workforce.**
- 2. Give the young employees more knowledge about alcohol and drugs as a tool for reflection to influence their attitudes and behaviour.**
- 3. Motivate the young employees to realise the necessity of having an alcohol and drug policy at the workplace.**

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