



# Prescription Drug Impact in the Workplace

**Tess Benham, Sr. Program Manager,  
National Safety Council**

**Dr. Denise Fields, PharmD, Sr. Clinical  
Consultant, Express Scripts**



# Setting the Stage

## Results from a Survey of Indiana Employers



**Tess Benham, Senior Program Manager, National Safety Council**



# Participant Demographics

**79% have HQ in Indiana**

**77% in their field 10+ years**

**71% have no emp. covered by union regs or contracts**

**68% senior-most for location or organization**

**65+ have employees at multiple locations**

- (n=201 - Total)
- 36. Where is your headquarter location located?
  - 30. If applicable, how many years have you worked in your field?
  - 34. Are any of your employees covered by union regulations or contracts?

- 31. Which statement best describes your personal level of responsibility within your organization for health and safety issues?
- 35. Do most employees at your organization work...?

(n=201 - Total)

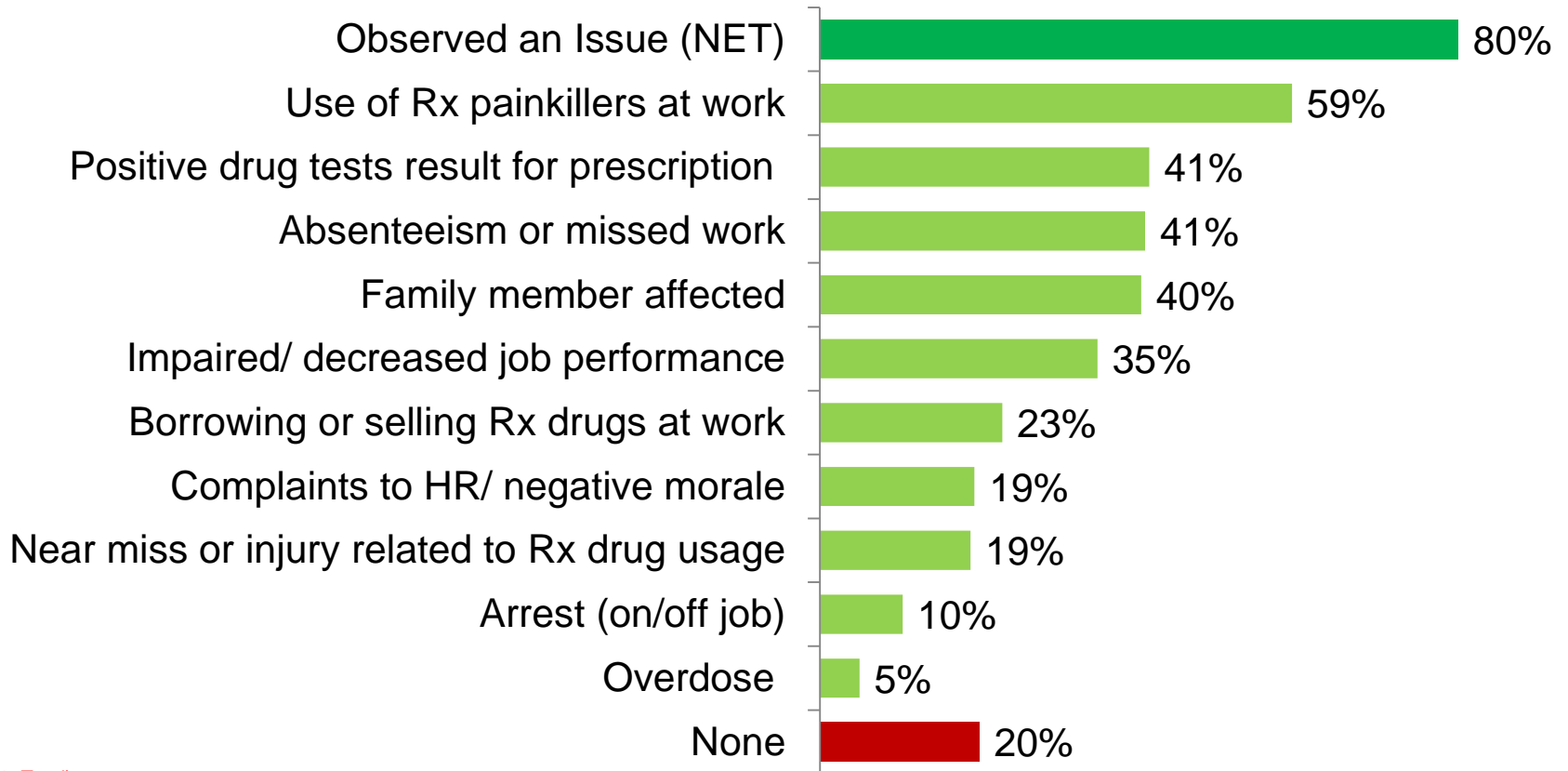


# Scope of the Problem



# Most Indiana companies impacted by RX abuse...

## Observed Workplace Issues



(n=201- Total)

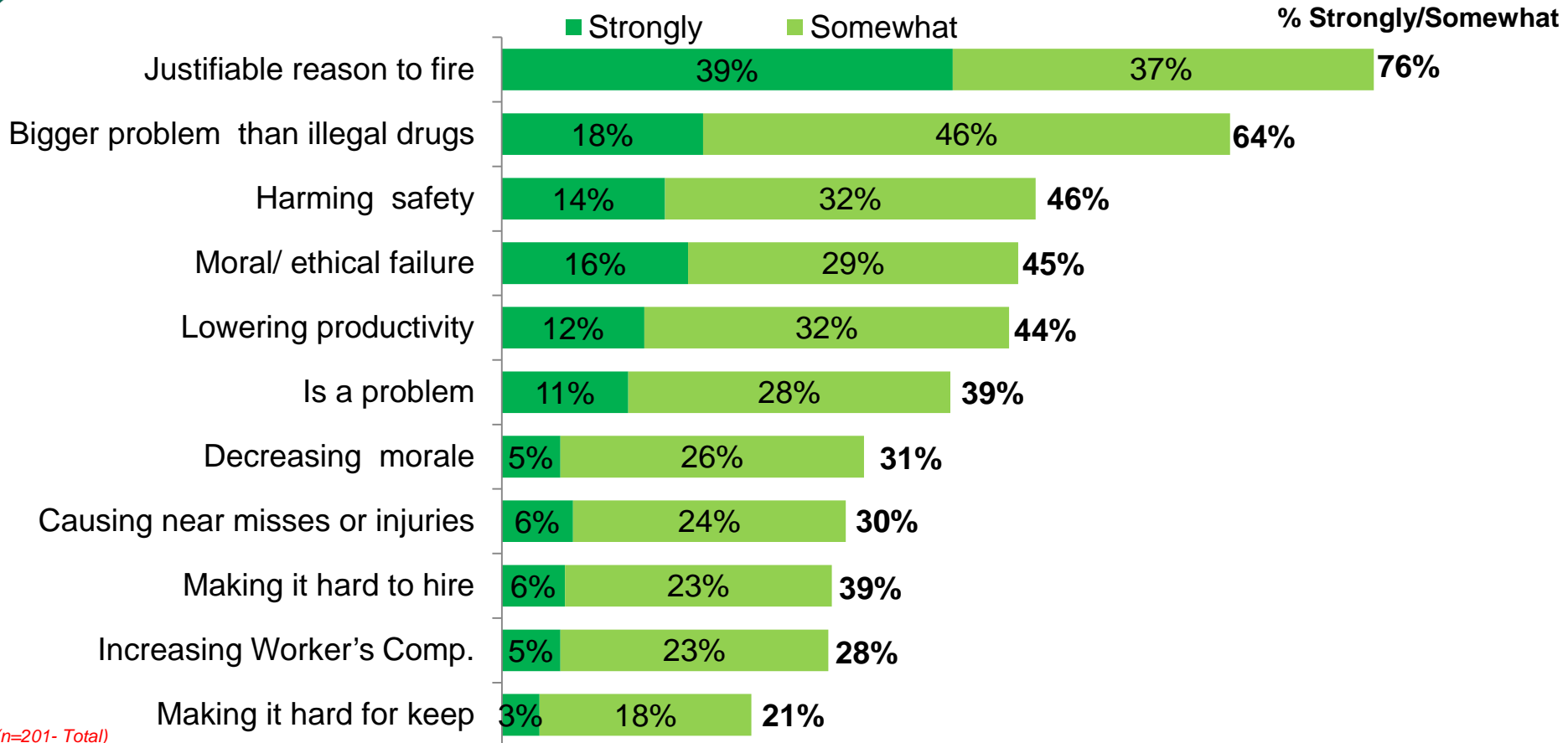
6. Keeping in mind that all information will be kept strictly confidential, which of the following are you aware of having occurred in your workforce?

Please include any occurrence, even if it is few in number.



# ... and feel it is a problem...

## Agreement with Statements



(n=201- Total)

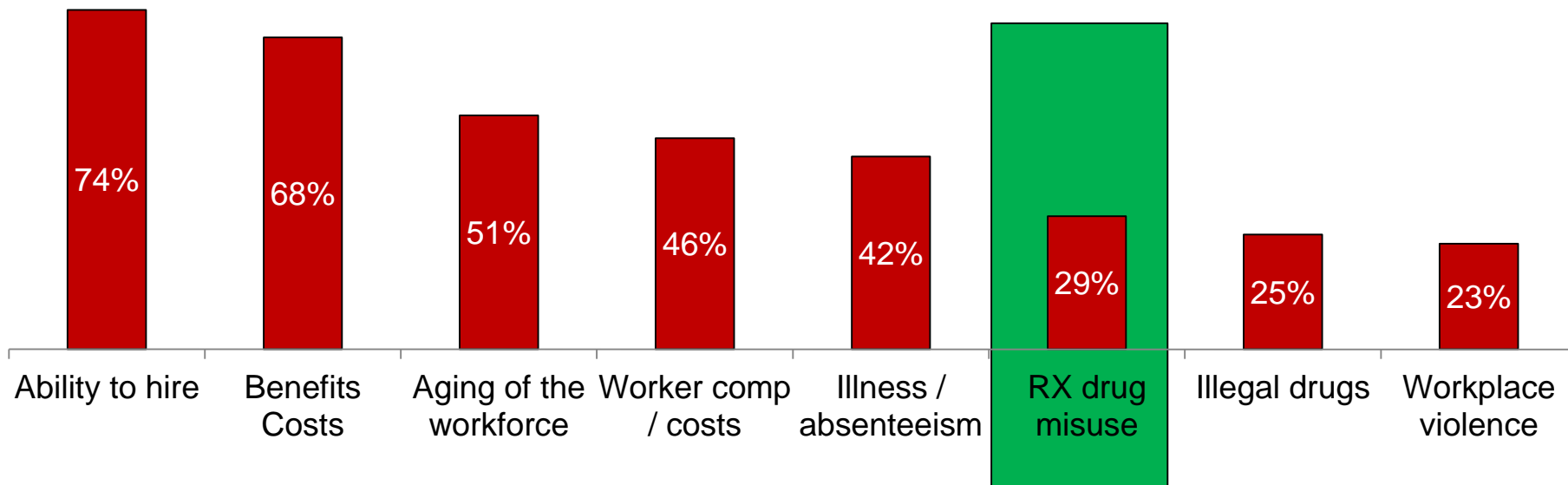
5. Please rate your agreement with each of the following statements about the impact of prescription drugs on your organization. Misuse or abuse of prescription drugs is...?



# ...but everyday concerns eclipse the problem.

Level of Concern - Issues

■ Major Concern



(n=201- Total)

1. How concerned are you about the impact each of the following issues may have on your organization?

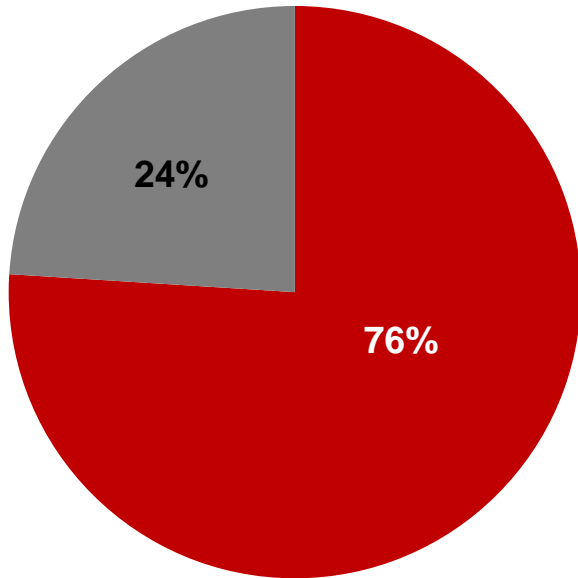
© 2014 National Safety Council



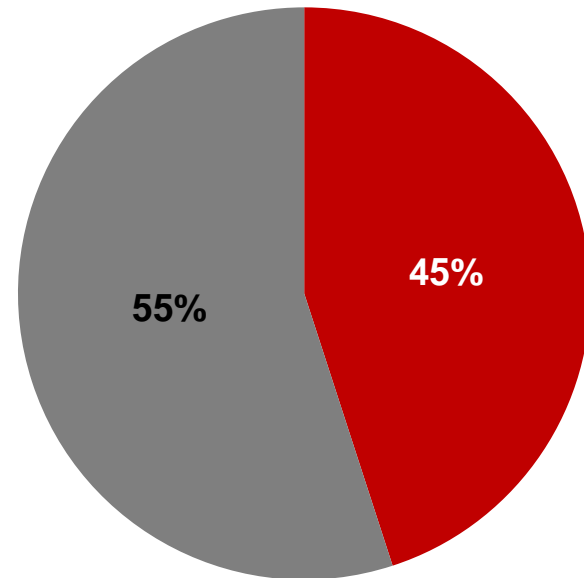
# Underlying beliefs a barrier to organizational change.

## Agreement with Statements

*... a justifiable reason to fire an employee.*



*...a moral or ethical failure.*



■ Agree ■ Do not agree

(n=201- Total)

5. Please rate your agreement with each of the following statements about the impact of prescription drugs on your organization. Misuse or abuse of prescription drugs is...?

© 2014 National Safety Council



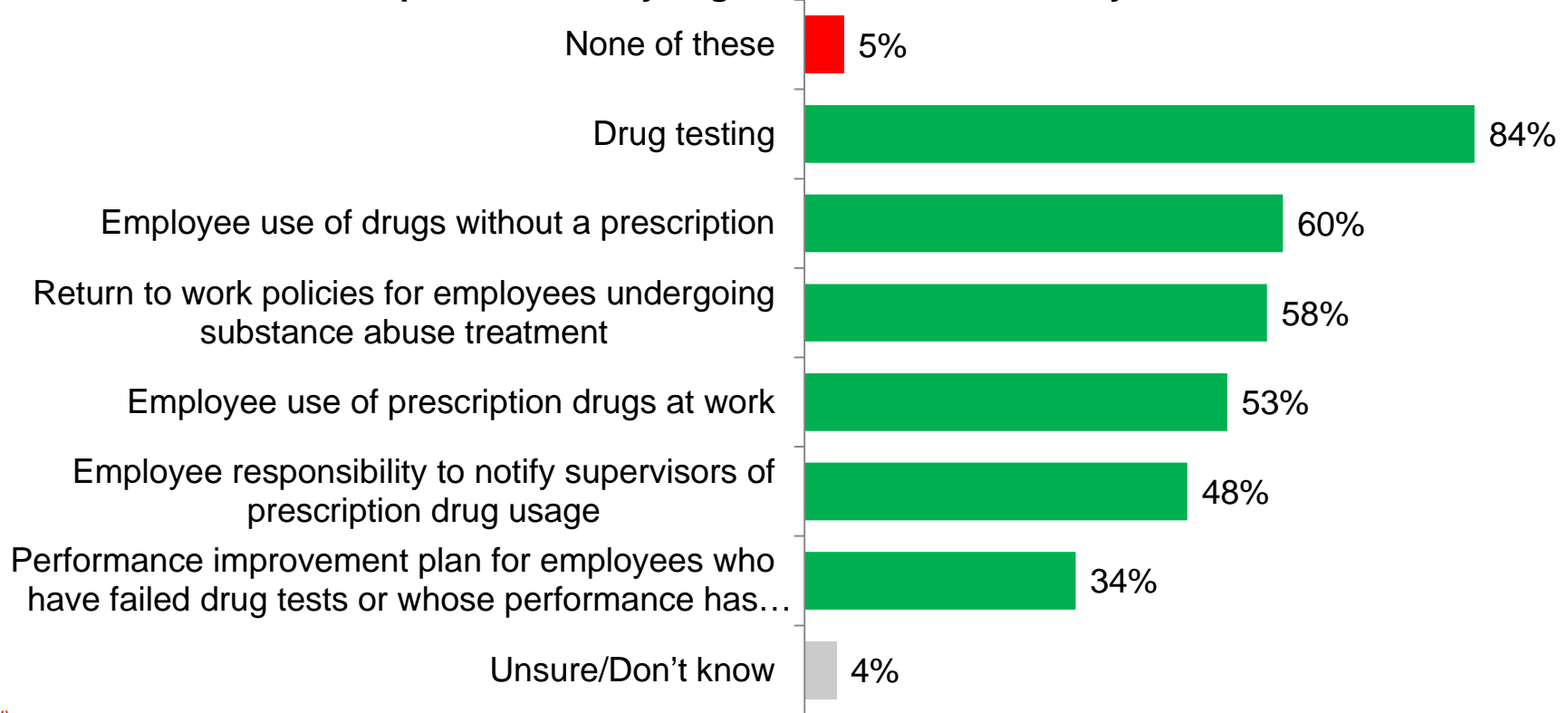


# Behaviors of Indiana Employers



# Most cover drug tests, but few address abuse.

## Topics Covered by Organizations Written Policy



(n=201- Total)

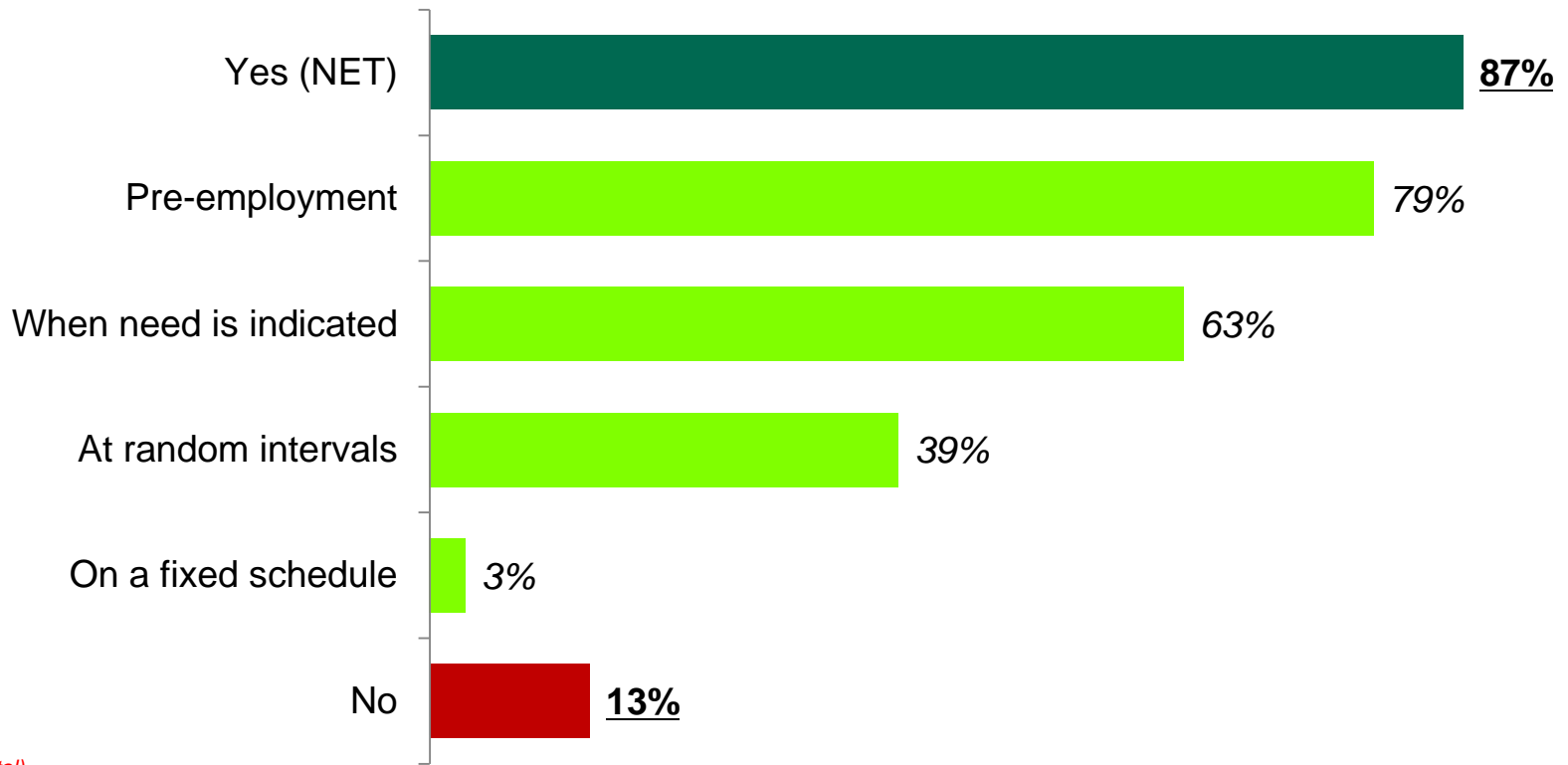
10. Which of the following topics are specifically covered in your organization's written policies?

© 2014 National Safety Council



# Most conduct drug testing...

## Conduct Drug Testing



(n=201- Total)

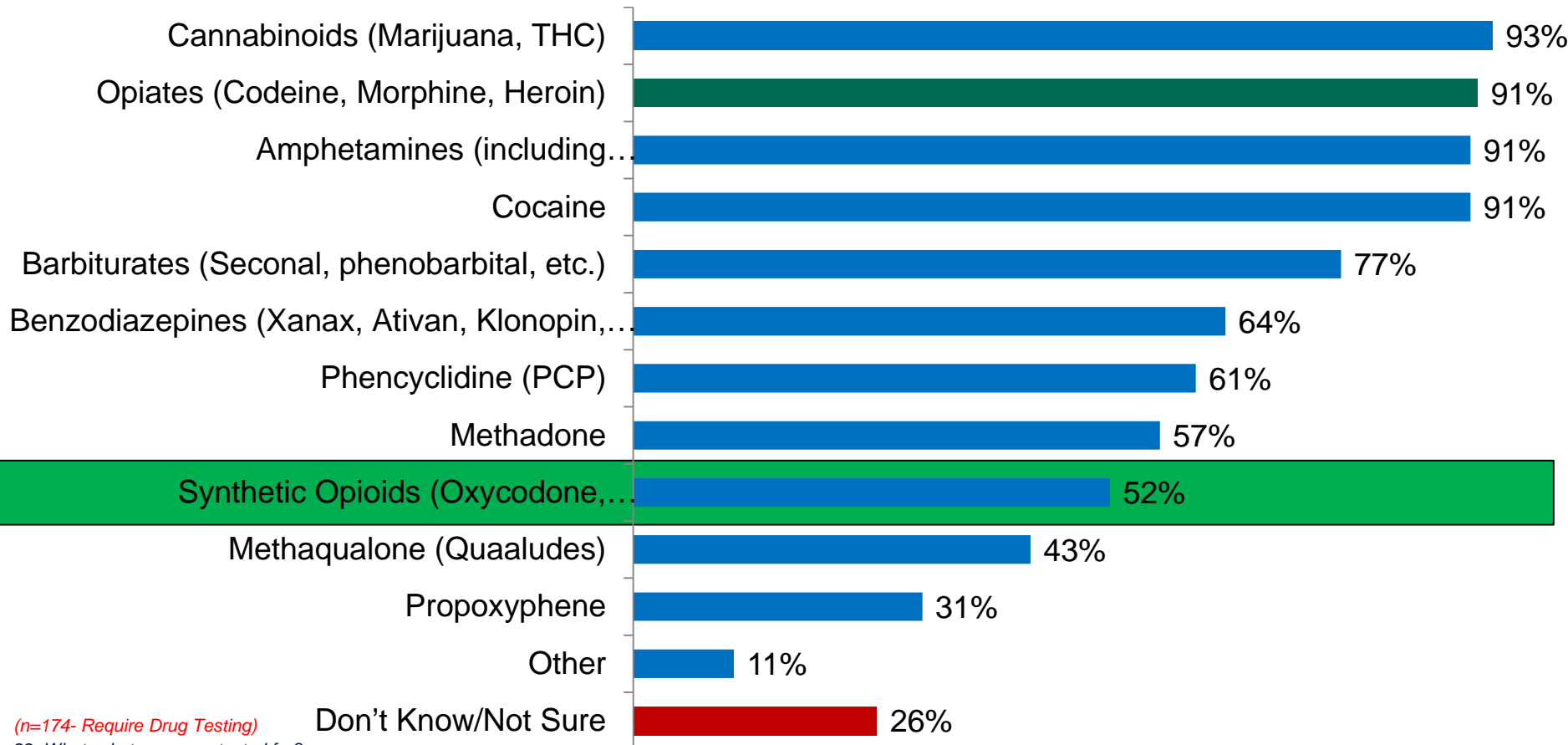
20. Does your organization require drug testing for your employees?

© 2014 National Safety Council



# ...but few test for opioids...

## Substances Tested For



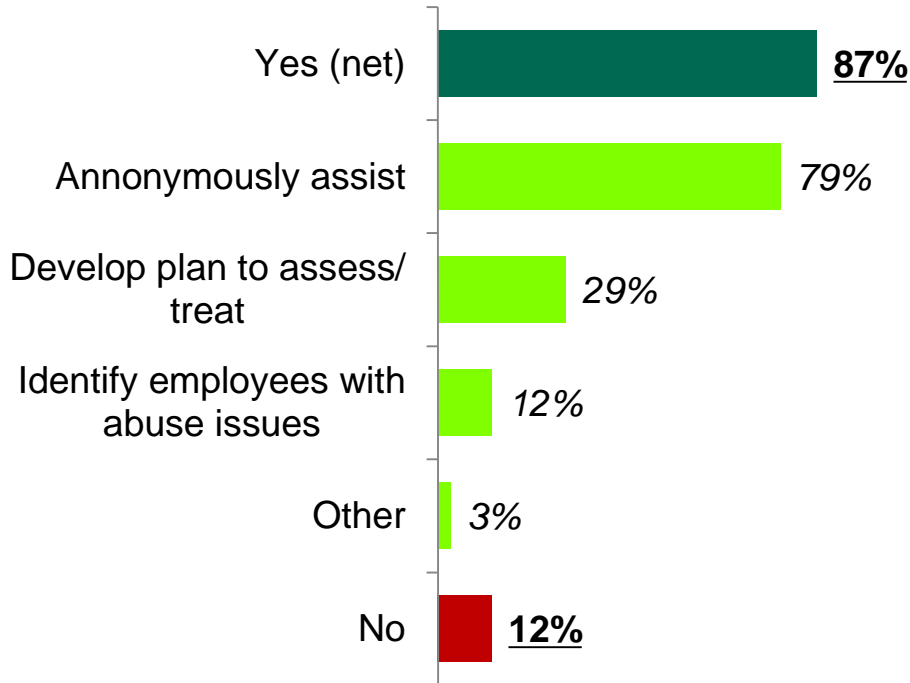
(n=174- Require Drug Testing)

22. What substances are tested for?



# Most take advantage of an EAP.

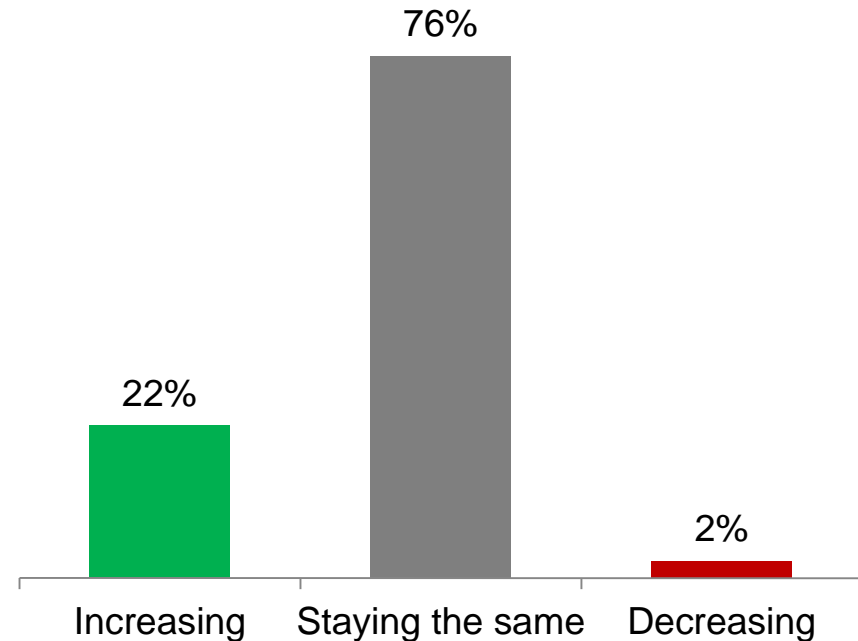
## Use Employee Assistance Program (EAP)



(n=201- Total)

18. How confident are you in your EAP providers' ability to handle substance use, misuse or abuse issues?

## Level of Usage of EAP



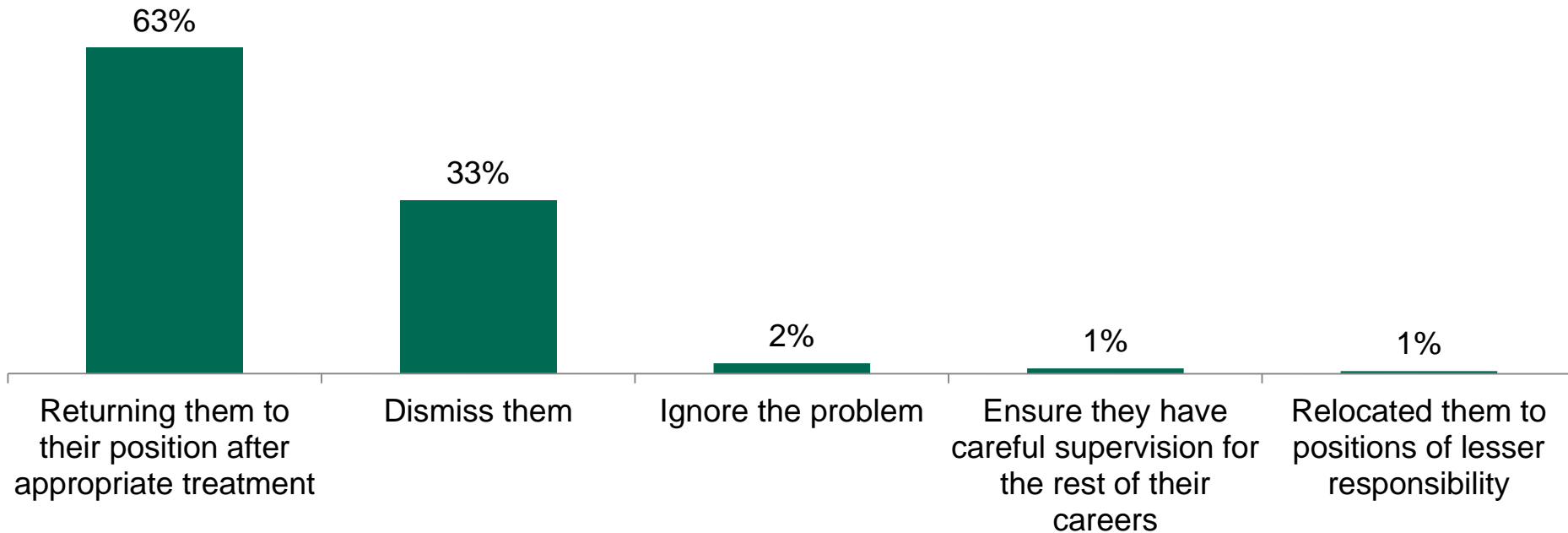
(n=176- Have EAP)

19. s that rating based upon...?



# Most want to return employees to work...

## Organizational Approach to Employee Misuse/Abuse of Drugs or Alcohol



(n=201- Total)

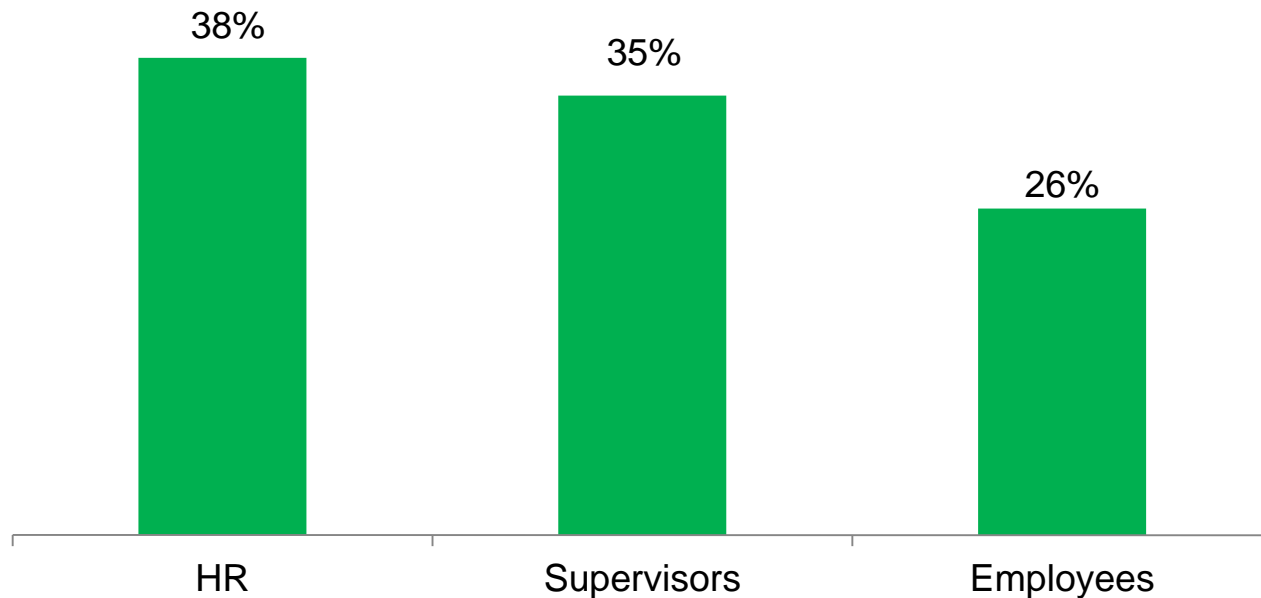
9. Which of the following, would you say, best reflects your organization's approach to an employee who is found to be misusing or abusing drugs or alcohol?

© 2014 National Safety Council



# ...but can't identify who needs help...

## Very Confident can Identify Warning Signs



(n=201- Total)

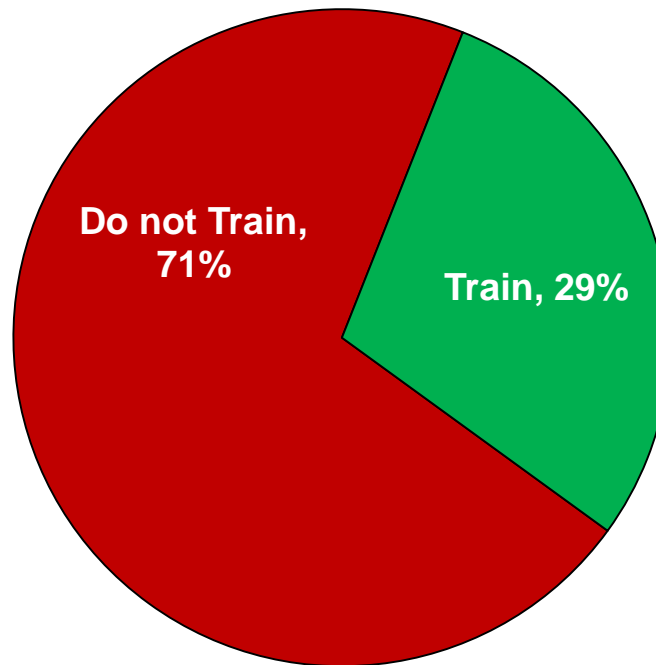
8. How confident are you that your Human Resources department, supervisors and employees can correctly identify behavior that is a warning sign of misuse or abuse of prescription medication?

© 2014 National Safety Council



# ...because very few offer any training.

## Offer Training



- 29% train supervisors
- 13% also train employees

(n=201- Total)

11. Does your organization currently offer training around workplace usage of prescription drugs?

© 2014 National Safety Council





# Strategies for Training your Workforce



**Dr. Denise Fields, PharmD,  
Senior Clinical Consultant,  
Express Scripts**



# Where to Start

**Forming your team**

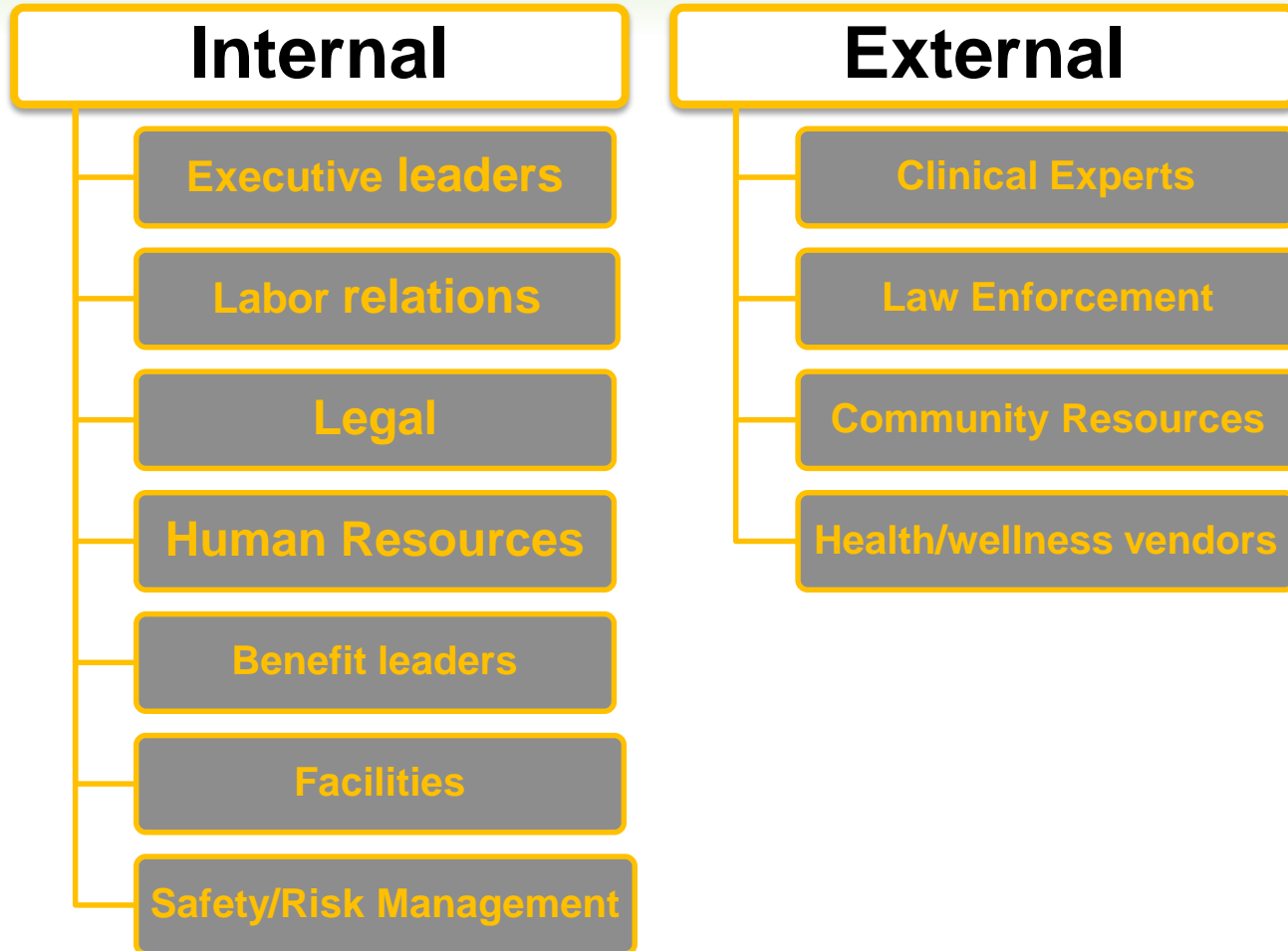
**Identifying your resources**

**Developing policies and procedures**

**Engaging employees in awareness and education**



# Forming Your Team





# Identifying Your Resources

**Do you know or have clinical experts, community leaders, vendors or law enforcement contacts that would be willing to volunteer/assist**

**Can you get approval to pay employees for an hour of non-productive time?**

**How is your benefit plan for employees designed?**



# Developing Policies and Procedures

**Company  
Stance**

**Drug Testing**

**Disciplinary  
Action**

**Law  
Enforcement  
Relationship**

**Benefit  
Design**

**Medication  
Security**

**Safety &  
Risks**

**Education &  
Training**



# Engaging Employees

- General awareness education can be an early/initial activity, even as policies are still being developed.
- Consider when and how often general awareness education should be done:
  - Onboarding
  - Annually or semi-annually
  - When an event occurs



# Awareness Effort Considerations

**Who will be educating your workforce?**

**Who should your audience be?**

**What content should be included?**

**What presentation style will work best?**



# Who should educate your population?

## Clinical

- Physician
- Pharmacist
- Paramedic/First Responders

## Community

- Law Enforcement
- Local Coordinating Council

## Vendors

- Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- Health and Wellness Partners





# Consider Your Audience

- Create different education programs for your management/supervisory level employees from your general pool of employees
- Consider not having management present at your general employee meetings
- Educate your audience not only as employees in a work setting, but also touch on effects of Rx Drug Abuse on their community and family



# Presentation Delivery

- Make it interactive
  - Use audience polling questions/system
  - Incorporate games or competitions
- Remain non-judgmental
- Ensure it is relatable
  - Use real life examples
  - Tie it in to community or workplace



# What to Include

**Why are prescription drugs an addiction issue?**

**What are the signs and symptoms?**

**What are some issues specific to the workplace?**

**What resources are available?**

**What are the potential legal ramifications?**



# Why Prescription Drugs?

- Provide statistics on Prescription Drug Abuse
  - Compare US vs state vs county/local statistics
  - Review statistics available for specific job types
- Describe some of the cultural/social drivers
- Explain the supply chain
- Describe the business plan



# Recognizing the Signs and Symptoms

- Describe the physical and emotional signs/symptoms employees could exhibit
- Explain the focus for disciplinary action(s) should be on job performance
  - Reinforce that supervisors, managers and co-workers should not attempt to diagnose
- Gives examples of physical evidence left behind
- Review slang words or terms related to Rx drug abuse
- Educate supervisors/managers regarding drug testing limitations
  - Qualitative vs quantitative testing
  - What does a preliminary “non-negative” result mean?



# Supervisor Guidelines

- Know your employer policies and procedures
- Be aware of legally sensitive areas
- Recognize potential problems
- Document in a systematic and fair manner
- Act in a confidential manner
- Refer to appropriate resources
- Reintegration into the workplace



# Workplace Specific Issues

- Company policy and procedures
  - Drug testing
  - Disciplinary action
- Dangers in the workplace
  - Safety risks
  - Financial risks
  - Corporate brand/image risks
- Security of medications at work



# Legal Ramifications

- Relationship with law enforcement
- Perpetrator and victim can be same person
- Legal vs not legal activities
- Felonies vs. misdemeanors
- Felony Impact





# Challenges and Opportunities

- Awareness and Education
- Outdated/insufficient data in the workplace
- Outdated DOT testing panels
- Access to Care – Local resources
- Changing your benefit plan (make physical therapy more convenient and just as cheap as a \$4 Rx)
- Lifestyle education to equip and motivate employees to make better lifestyle choices (so that they don't need medications)



# Resources available

## National Experts

- SAMHSA
- National Safety Council
- Centers for Disease Control (CDC)
- National Institute on Drug Abuse

## Community

- Law Enforcement
- Church programs
- Social workers/Support groups
- Healthcare facilities/providers

## Vendors

- Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- Pharmacy Benefit Manager (PBM)



# Prescription for Employers

- 1. Recognize prescription drugs have big impact on your workplace**
- 2. Put strong policies in place**
- 3. Expand drug testing panels to include opioids**
- 4. Train supervisors and employees how to spot signs**
- 5. Treat substance use problems as a disease**
- 6. Leverage EAP to assist employees to return to work**



# Questions

For more information:  
Tess Benham  
Email: [rxsafety@nsc.org](mailto:rxsafety@nsc.org)