

Scenario #1:

Helen is a 45 year old nurse with three children. She is a well respected clinical nurse who had been employed in the ED for the past 15 years. Helen developed back problems several years ago and was prescribed Lortab by her physician. She underwent back surgery and was again prescribed this medication to relieve post-operative pain. Helen was continuously in pain and when exhausting her prescription started diverting the opiate pain medication while administering PRN medications on the unit. It was routine practice of the facility to conduct random audits and it was noted during these audits that Helen was removing a significant amount of pain medication. When confronted, Helen freely admitted that she was taking the pain medication and agreed to receive treatment for this problem.

1. Helen went on disability and needed to take action to obtain treatment, guidance in preserving her license, and ongoing support during the recovery period. Who should Helen contact immediately?
 - a) The Detox program at the hospital where she was employed
 - b) The Statewide Peer Assistance for Nurses program
 - c) Her physician to advise of her addiction to pain medications
 - d) The HR department to resign her position as RN in the ED

2. What regulatory agency should be notified that allows for professionals to voluntarily and confidentially surrender their license which allows treatment to be sought without being subject to disciplinary charges?
 - a) The Office of Professional Discipline (OPD)
 - b) The NY State Police
 - c) The Professional Assistance Program (PAP)
 - d) Volunteer Nurse Advocates

3. What advantages would Helen incur if she agreed to temporarily surrender her license?
 1. The offense would not be reflected on her permanent record
 2. Guarantee that her position would be held for her while on treatment

3. Provided with monitoring for a minimum of 2 years after returning to work
4. Guarantee license would be restored after signing the re-entry to work agreement
 - a) Both 1 and 2
 - b) Both 2 and 3
 - c) Both 1 and 3
 - d) Both 3 and 4

Scenario #2

Jeff is a 38 year old Registered Nurse who has been employed in the ICU for 12 years. He has been experiencing some family issues recently. His wife left him four months ago. His father is a recovering alcoholic and has begun drinking again. His coworkers have noticed that he has become withdrawn and often very irritable at work. He confided in a colleague that he is feels lonely, has found himself drinking more and more, and is having difficulty keeping up with his responsibilities. His coworker suggested he contact SPAN and Jeff agreed.

After meeting with the regional Coordinator at SPAN, Jeff was enthusiastic about the peer support meetings but was unsure if he wanted to get involved with Professional Assistance Program (PAP).

4. Would Jeff be an appropriate candidate for PAP?
 - a) Yes, Jeff needs to surrender his license as he is in danger of harming patients.
 - b) No, as there is no evidence of misconduct.
 - c) No, because Jeff is motivated to attend the peer support groups.
 - d) Yes, Jeff might benefit from being monitored.
5. Jeff has disclosed his increased drinking to his peers in the support group. Does the Regional Coordinator (RC) have a responsibility to inform Jeff's employer of his problems with alcohol?

- a) Yes, the RC is obligated to share this information with Jeff's employer.
- b) No, information shared in all aspects of SPAN is confidential.
- c) Yes because Jeff may pose a threat to the patients he cares for.
- d) No, but Jeff should be strongly encouraged to share this information to his employer on his own.

6. Responsibilities of the SPAN RC include all of the following except:

- a) Providing educational presentations about addiction to nursing students and hospital staff.
- b) Supervising peer support groups.
- c) Accompanying nurses to meetings with the Office of the Professions.
- d) Providing legal advice to nurses when making decisions that impact their nursing license.

7. Approximately how many peer support groups are there in NYS?

- 1. 12
- 2. 25
- 3. 50
- 4. 100

8. What kind of behavior should be reported to the supervisor if there is a suspicion that a co-worker is impaired by alcohol or drugs?

- a) The suspected nurse's work has declined and is not as high-quality as it used to be.
- b) A pattern is evident that the patients of this suspected nurse continually state their pain medications are ineffective.
- c) The suspected nurse is not concerned about the amount of time missed, such as increased sick days.
- d) All of the above.

9. What are the requirements to be a volunteer advocate for the SPAN program?

1. Experience with group facilitation
2. A valid NYS nursing license
3. Membership in NYSNA
4. Knowledge of addiction treatment
 - a) Both 1 and 4
 - b) Both 2 and 4
 - c) Both 2 and 3
 - d) Both 3 and 4

10. How is the SPAN Program funded?

- a. Each nurse is required to pay for individual services.
- b. There is not cost for the SPAN program.
- c. A surcharge is assessed during license registration.
- d. The State Education Department pays for the program.