

Indiana State University
College of Nursing, Health, and Human Services
Chemically Impaired Nursing Student

Purpose: To identify any chemically impaired student nurse who is in need of treatment for chemical dependency or problems with substance abuse. If the student is licensed as a registered nurse or a practical nurse, in addition to this policy, a report will be filed after the first incident to the state nursing authorities.

Philosophy: Chemical dependency is a disease that is preventable and treatable. Student nurses are as vulnerable as any other human being to this problem. The need for public safety and treatment is also recognized. The nursing faculty requires that students provide competent care. To fulfill this obligation, nursing students must be free of chemical impairment during participation in all parts of the nursing program including classroom, campus laboratory, and clinical settings.

The nursing faculty defines the chemically impaired student as a person who, while in the academic or clinical setting, is under the influence of, or has abused, either separately or in combination: alcohol, over-the-counter medications, illegal drugs, prescribed medications, inhalants, or synthetic designer drugs. Abuse of the substance includes episodic misuse or chronic use that has produced psychological and/or physical symptomology.

Procedure:

1. The instructor should remove a student suspected of being chemically impaired to a private area. State the sign(s) and behavior(s) observed and allow the student to provide a brief verbal explanation. Question the student regarding the use of any substance and, if used, what, when, and how much was used and by what route it was taken. The clinical instructor must also act in accordance with the agency policies and procedures related to employee substance abuse.
2. Inform the student that he or she must be evaluated by a state certified substance abuse counselor before returning to the nursing program. A written verification from the health care provider that the student is safe to return to student nursing practice is required before the student may resume his or her program of study. The student will be required to sign and complete a "Student Wellness Contract". (Refer to next page).
3. If inpatient or residential treatment is chosen by the student, the student and his or her academic adviser will determine the best action to be taken in regards to dropping or withdrawing from the nursing course(s). This decision will also be influenced on the time remaining in the semester and current academic achievement.
4. If an additional incident occurs related to the student's chemical impairment, the chairperson of the program will initiate an immediate program dismissal. The student has a right to due process through the University student judicial system.

STUDENT CONTRACT

I, _____, will receive a comprehensive substance abuse evaluation conducted by a health care professional that is certified by the state as a drug and alcohol counselor. I understand that the payment for the evaluation, treatment, and follow-up care will be my responsibility. If no treatment is recommended, evidence of such will be provided to the appropriate Nursing Department Chairperson before I return to classroom, laboratory or clinical sessions. If treatment is recommended, I must complete the therapy determined in conjunction with the evaluator. I understand that further evidence of chemical impairment in the classroom, laboratory or clinical agency will result in a recommendation by the nursing faculty for an administrative dismissal.

Date: _____

Student signature:

Agree _____

Disagree _____

Witness signatures:

1) _____

2) _____

Print names:
