

8 Ways to Help You Keep Loving Someone with an Addiction



Educate Yourself

Not only empowering yourself to make good decisions, but educating yourself will prepare you to be ready with information if and when your partner is ready to seek help.

- Enroll in a Narcan course
- Learn about the nature and risk factors for addiction
- Stay up to date on the latest research on recovery

Be Patient



Expect recovery, but be prepared for relapse. Some individuals achieve long-term recovery on their first attempt, for others, it may take multiple attempts over multiple years. Keep your hope up, as substance use disorder is known as a '*good prognosis disorder*' in that the majority of people can and do recover.

Practice Self Care



You will not be able to help your family member or friend, if you cannot help yourself. Work to maintain a healthy routine that includes nutritious meals, daily exercise, and a good nights sleep.



Try Immediate Rewards

Alcohol and drugs affects the brain's reward system. Try incorporating immediate and consistent rewards for healthy decisions. This method is shown to shape positive behavior.

Set Boundaries



Create firm limits about what you will and will not tolerate from your loved one, limiting feelings of frustration or being taken advantage of.

Some examples include:

- No communication when intoxicated (e.g. phone calls or text messages)
- No alcohol or drugs allowed in the house

Get Outside Input



The stigma of addiction often leads to secrecy, isolation, and shame. It is therefore important to seek outside input early and often.

- Peer Support (e.g. Al-Anon)
- Professional Help (e.g. Therapist)

Consider Comorbidity



The likelihood of a mental illness diagnosis doubles for individuals suffering from substance use disorder. Look for common symptoms and seek professional guidance. Some individuals will be more receptive to dialog and treatment of mental illness than addiction.



Stay Safe

If you feel like you may be in danger, or that your relationship is not healthy, you may need to end the relationship