

Ten Ways to Support Your Loved One in Recovery

Take care of yourself and focus on self-care. You have probably been focusing on the addicted person and what they need. Now is the time to focus on you.

Encourage your loved one to participate in ongoing counseling and recovery support – for example, work a Twelve Step program (AA or NA) and to rely on the support of a sponsor, attend outpatient sessions and individual therapy. Get involved in a support program for family members. Your loved one will see you recovering and is likely to want to be part of that.

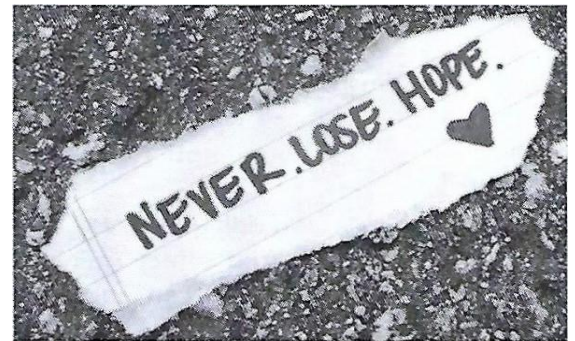
Disable the enabling. Don't allow your loved one to exploit you or lie to you. Don't cover up or hide the consequences of his alcohol or other drug use.

Stay out of the way of your loved one's recovery. Allow him to take responsibility for getting to meetings, finding a job, and reaching out to others. Learn to let go and to detach with love.

Have reasonable expectations. The problems created by addiction won't be solved in a week, or a month, or even a year. Learn to live one day at a time, and address issues one day at a time.

Don't barrage your loved one with a list of everything they have done to harm you, or expect that she will instantly become a different person in early recovery.

Help your loved one plan for sticky situations. Together, make a list of the potential situations most likely to cause relapse: perhaps work parties, celebrations, or going out with certain friends. Pair each problem with a solution, creating a coping strategy for that high-risk situation. Suggest that your loved one discuss this plan with a sponsor, counselor or support group members.



Suggest your loved one maintain a consistent, healthy meal schedule. Discuss establishing a sleep routine to prevent tiredness. Support him or her in a healthy exercise program.

Encourage any activities that lead to healthy new learning, contacts with recovering people and spiritual growth. Encourage new friendships with sober individuals. Notice and praise progress and remember that each day of recovery is a big accomplishment.

To handle anger, encourage your loved one to state feelings rather than acting out frustrations. Encourage them to seek counseling for emotional problems. Model this by stating your own feelings without anger and avoid acting out in frustration.