

Frequently Asked Questions about Addiction Recovery



How are families impacted by a loved one's drug or alcohol dependence?

Chemical Dependency is an ailment that affects those who live “near” a chemically dependent person. The “nearness” is psychological, if not always geographical, it also affects those who live with the memory of a deceased chemically-dependent person.

My loved one is now in recovery, but I am still struggling to deal with their problem.

The family illness is a separate condition from the disease of the chemically dependent. Recovery can occur whether or not the chemically dependent recovers. Without treatment, the family illness continues and progresses, even if the chemically dependent person moves into recovery.

How can I support my loved one in the recovery process?

Statistics show that the recovery rate for an individual with family involvement improves to a higher level than without. It is important that the communication with your loved one remains open, as the individual in treatment will experience many highs and lows.

What should I expect now that my loved one is in recovery?

Your loved one will go through many changes in the first year, beginning from the moment that they have been discharged from Inpatient and/or while they're attending Outpatient care. Some of these changes that will

occur will be decision-making, emotional overreaction, sleep difficulties, memory difficulties, prone to accidents, and/or start to experience a serious sensitivity to stress.

It's been six months and my loved one relapsed. How should I react?

Relapse is a part of the Recovery process, which is why it is so important that the communication between all in the family begin to mend so that your loved one will feel safe in coming to you with their concerns, difficulties and feelings. A relapse doesn't necessarily mean having to "start from scratch", rather it could be a bump in the road to their long-term recovery.

I heard on the news about "naloxone" or "Narcan". What is that?

It is a prescription medicine that reverses an opioid overdose and is a safe and effective intervention used by emergency medical professionals. For more information about Opioid Overdose Preventions, visit the NYS Dept. of Health website at the following link: <http://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/aids/consumers/prevention/opioidprevention/index.htm>

How will I know if my loved one is struggling to stay in recovery?

During the first year, they may start to feel like they do not have a problem with alcohol or drugs. Some symptoms to watch for include:

- Trying to convince everyone that "everything is all right" when it's not.
- Avoiding people who give them honest feedback
- Become irritable and angry, or see everything as a crisis
- Feeling overwhelmed or being "stuck" (there is nowhere to turn, no way to solve their problems)
- They can easily feel trapped
- Thinking that they can use safely or that things were better when they were using

My loved one is in recovery, but I think they may be suffering from something else.

According to SAMHSA, approximately 8.9 million adults have co-occurring disorders; that is they have both a mental and substance use disorder. It is imperative that they be able to communicate to you these feelings so that they can be assessed for possible mental health concerns. Compulsive and/or Impulsive behaviors may also develop as a way of substituting for the lack of alcohol or drug use. This could be observed as an "out of control" use of food, sex, caffeine, nicotine, work, or gambling.

If any mental health concerns are left untreated, individuals may begin to think that alcohol/drug use is the only way to feel better. They begin to justify why they need to drink or use and convince themselves that this is a logical thing to do.