

Five Ways To Help a Loved One With An Addiction Problem

Family members and friends may unknowingly contribute to the problem

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(PHOENIX) – Do you suspect a loved one or friend has an addiction problem?

You may have seen signs to indicate a problem, such as mood swings or changes in behavior, friends, and activities.

But did you know that you may be contributing to the addict's problem?

According to Larry Solomon, clinical director of Phoenix-based Calvary Addiction Recovery Center and author of *Love Never Fails...But A Marriage Can*, as family members and friends try to adapt to the presence of an addiction, they themselves often undergo changes in communication styles, decision-making and behavior that can contribute to the addiction problem.

“An addicted person is *not healthy*. Addiction is an illness. Support offered from good intentions often won't help this individual...it helps the illness,” Solomon says. “Bailing the suffering person out of jail, or offering financial help can enable the addiction to continue. This is frustrating because a loving act designed to help can actually backfire and enable the suffering person to continue his or her addiction.”

Solomon says a different approach needs to be applied when dealing with an addicted family member or friend:

1) Don't ignore the problem.

Your silence or lack of action might be interpreted as condoning the behavior.

2) Don't be overly confrontational.

Direct confrontation might escalate into a dangerous situation, especially if the individual is under the influence at the time.

“*When you confront is as important as how you confront*,” Solomon explains. “Direct confrontations such as, “You're drunk,” or “Where did all of the money go?” may drive the addict away even further. Active addicts are very protective of their addiction. The most effective confrontation may be an indirect style.”

3) Make the addiction as uncomfortable as possible.

“This is the most difficult step in helping a suffering person. It requires consistent “tough love” and can last several weeks or months. But this is *required* in order to make recovery possible,” Solomon says.

It may seem harsh, but Solomon says you need to let the addict suffer the consequences of his or her addiction. “Cut off all support. Stop giving financial help. Cancel credit cards. Exclude the addict from family functions. Kick them out of the house and change the locks. Do not bail them out of jail. Spending time in jail has helped many addicted individuals get started on the right path,” he says.

He also emphasizes that this approach can be done in a loving manner, such as stating: “You are welcome here, but your addiction is not.”

4) Make recovery as attractive as possible.

Offer the suffering person hope. Repeatedly tell your loved one or friend how much things will improve if he or she starts a recovery program.

“You will have to be consistent and patient,” Solomon says. “The suffering individual may need to suffer more consequences before finally deciding on getting help. Continue to make recovery attractive and addiction uncomfortable.”

5) Have a plan and take care of yourself.

Be prepared for the moment that the suffering person sincerely asks for help. “Have a treatment program already picked out. Stay in contact with that facility occasionally to verify availability, costs and admission procedures. When the addict asks for help, you want to take advantage of the window of opportunity,” Solomon says. “In the meantime, take good care of yourself so you can offer healthy assistance when your loved one or friend asks for help.”

Where to Seek Help:

Calvary Addiction Recovery Center is a Phoenix-based, nationally-recognized residential recovery service facility that was founded in 1964. In addition to treating clients with drug and alcohol addictions, Calvary recently launched a new 30-day residential treatment program for problem gamblers. This is the only treatment program of its kind in the Valley and one of just a few in the nation for problem gamblers. Call **1-866-76-SOBER** or visit WW.CalvaryCenter.com.

Help can also be sought at Pal-Group, Al-Anon, and Nar-Anon for families or friends of chemically dependent addicts, Gam-Anon for family members or friends of problem gamblers, and the Community Resource Hotline for other support groups and services.