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7 Support Groups for Families of an Addicted Loved One

Written by [Stephanie Torres](#), June 3rd, 2015

Over the course of active addiction, individuals become accustomed to living an unstable, unhealthy life in which the passage of time is marked by a perpetual cycle of seeking drugs, consuming drugs, and then seeking drugs again. Addicts become a shell of their former selves, physically and even psychologically compelled to consume alcohol and administer dangerous drugs to excess. Before they know it, addicts have lost years or even decades of their lives to addiction, often losing their money, homes, families, or even their lives in the process.

Addiction is a chronic relapsing brain disease that has resulted in many good people losing their lives. However, despite the profoundly devastating effects that the disease of addiction has on those who suffer from it, addiction ripples through the lives of all those an addict loves, leaving a trail of devastation in its wake. Since addicts often turn to lying and stealing to sustain their addictions to alcohol and drugs, loved ones are often victimized and used to an alarming degree; addicts will quickly resort to stealing from family members, continuing to “borrow” money that is never paid back, and lying to loved ones if that’s what they need to do to obtain more of their substance of choice. Then there are those loved ones who don’t understand what it means to be an enabler, inadvertently making an addict’s disease worse than it already is.

With addiction being so widespread, there are countless family members, friends, colleagues, spouses and partners, and other loved ones of addicts who not only have no idea how to help the addict or addicts in their lives, but feel alone in their suffering and are unsure how to alleviate the side effects of addiction that affect everyone an addict loves. The good news is that there are a variety of services and support groups that are intended specifically for the loved ones of individuals suffering from alcohol and drug addiction. These groups offer the loved ones of addicts an invaluable resource for a variety of reasons and are highly beneficial for those experiencing the secondhand effects of the disease of addiction. Here are seven support groups from which the loved ones of addicts would benefit the most.

Al-Anon Family Groups



Often seen as the quintessential support group for loved ones of addicts, Al-Anon is an effective group for loved ones of addicts or, more specifically, alcoholics. Members of [Al-Anon](#) don't necessarily provide direction to one another, but rather share stories individually and find strength in being able to relate to others who are going through or have been through similar experiences. The philosophy of the group is to "take what you like and leave the rest." This is a great support group for [spouses or partners](#), [adult children](#), [teens](#), [parents](#), [grandparents](#), and [siblings](#) of alcoholics or who have been, in some way, negatively affected by a loved one's alcoholism.

Nar-Anon Family Groups



Like Al-Anon for loved ones of alcoholics, Nar-Anon is the counterpart, a twelve-step support program for the families, friends, and other loved ones of those addicted to drugs. As a spiritual program, [Nar-Anon](#) offers spiritual recovery and helps the loved ones of addicts to understand addiction as a disease, accept that loved ones cannot cure an addict's disease, and to cope with the profound effects that an individual's addiction can have on others. Nar-Anon also offers nationwide meetings, support specifically for [teens](#), an active [online community](#), and tons of helpful literature.

Co-Dependents Anonymous



It's common for the loved ones of addicts to inadvertently enable the addict's addiction due to codependency. When an addict and a loved one are codependent, this means the addict often needs the loved one in order to obtain alcohol or drugs while the loved one provides assistance—money, transportation, a place to live, etc.—despite awareness of the individual's substance abuse for fear that the addict will abandon the loved one. This codependency is dangerous for both individuals. However, [Co-Dependents Anonymous](#) is a derivative of the original twelve-step program, Alcoholics Anonymous, and is intended for those individuals who have found themselves

codependent on others, helping those individuals to have healthier relationships free of codependency.

Dual Recovery Anonymous

DUAL RECOVERY ANONYMOUS

In the same vein as Al-Anon and Nar-Anon, [Dual Recovery Anonymous](#) (DRA) is an important support group for both dual-diagnosis addicts as well as their family members, spouses, friends, and other loved ones. Built upon the same Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions as the other essential twelve-step programs, [Dual Recovery Anonymous](#) recognizes that dual-diagnosis patients need support not only for addiction, but for the other co-occurring, or comorbid, disorder from which they suffer. For loved ones of dual-diagnosis patients, this provides a support network in which they can receive the encouragement and education needed to facilitate understanding and to recovery from the secondhand effects experienced as a result of a loved one's dual diagnosis.

Adult Children of Alcoholics



Although this support group is specifically for a subgroup of loved ones of addicts, Adult Children of Alcoholics has a proven track record of being an incredible resource for those individuals who have ground up with one or both parents suffering from addiction. Rooted in the same Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions and most twelve-step programs, [Adult Children of Alcoholics](#) (ACA) offers meetings nationwide as well as phone meetings and even internet meetings so that any adult child of an addict or alcoholic can receive the support that he or she needs. This group operates on the belief that parental addiction causes dysfunction in the family unit that will likely affect the children of those addicted parents even in adulthood. As such, this is an ideal group for those individuals with parents who were previously or are currently addicted to alcohol and/or drugs.

Learn to Cope

Founded in 2004, Learn to Cope is an extensive peer support network that's designed to offer moral and emotional support, encouragement, even education and valuable [resources](#) to the family members and loved ones of addicts. Although it's

slightly oriented toward addiction to opiates like heroin and prescription painkillers, loved ones of individuals addicted to any substance, whether alcohol or another type of drug, will find this support group to be a beneficial resource. Learn to Cope meetings typically feature an industry professional as a guest speaker, offering insight into recovery from the secondhand effects that addiction can have on a family.

Although [Learn to Cope](#) is currently based mostly in Massachusetts, it offers an active online community that's available for free and allows loved ones of addicts to receive the support they need regardless of where they live.

Parents of Addicted Loved Ones (PAL) Group

This group is specifically for parents of individuals suffering from addiction and was formed by Mike Speakman, a licensed substance abuse counselor who has been working in rehabs with addicts since 1988. Originally based in Arizona, [PAL Group](#) has grown and spread to three other states since it began in 2006, offering parents trying to save a son or daughter from addiction with much-needed moral, emotional, and educational support. In addition to having a number of existing chapters where individuals living locally can attend meetings, PAL Group also has an online [resource](#) for those parents who live elsewhere in the country, could benefit from PAL Group, and want to start a new PAL chapter in their area.

If you or someone you love is currently suffering from addiction to alcohol or drugs, the Palm Beach Institute can help. Our team of recovery specialists can find the right treatment program for addicts who want and need to recover. Call us today.

<https://www.pbinstitute.com/support-groups-for-families-of-an-addicted-loved-one/>