

Journal Prompts: Loved One With Substance Abuse

Navigating Relationships with Loved Ones Impacted by Substance Use Disorder

These prompts are meant to support individuals who are dealing with the emotional, relational, and practical challenges of having a loved one (partner, family member, or close friend) struggling with substance use disorder. The goal is to help process the complex feelings, set healthy boundaries, and find ways to manage the situation while maintaining self-care.

1. Recognizing the Impact

1. How has the substance use of your loved one impacted your emotional well-being and day-to-day life?
2. What emotions do you experience most when thinking about your loved one's substance use? (e.g., anger, frustration, sadness, helplessness)
3. How do you feel about the behaviors of your loved one when they are under the influence versus when they are sober?
4. In what ways has your loved one's substance use affected your sense of trust, safety, or security in the relationship?
5. What part of your relationship feels most challenging due to their substance use?

2. Setting Boundaries and Self-Care

6. What boundaries do you feel are necessary to protect your emotional and physical health while supporting your loved one?
7. How can you maintain your own well-being while dealing with the stress of your loved one's substance use?
8. What signs or behaviors do you recognize in yourself that suggest you might be neglecting your own needs because of the relationship dynamic?
9. How can you support your loved one's recovery without losing sight of your own health and boundaries?
10. When was the last time you made time for self-care, and how did it help you recharge?

3. Addressing Feelings of Guilt and Responsibility

11. Do you ever feel responsible for your loved one's substance use or their recovery? What are your thoughts on this guilt?
12. How can you separate your own needs and emotional health from the responsibility of managing your loved one's behavior?
13. When you try to help, do you feel you're enabling your loved one's substance use? How can you determine when your actions are helping or hurting?

14. What does supporting your loved one look like in a healthy, sustainable way, without sacrificing your own mental and emotional health?
15. What do you need to forgive yourself for in the context of your relationship with your loved one and their substance use?

4. Coping with Uncertainty and Hope

16. How do you feel about the possibility of your loved one continuing their substance use without change? How does that uncertainty affect you?
17. What role does hope play in your relationship with your loved one, and how do you maintain it despite challenges?
18. What would recovery look like for you in the context of this relationship, and what does a healthy dynamic look like for you both?
19. How do you cope with the fear of relapse or the cyclical nature of substance use recovery?
20. What positive changes have you seen in your loved one's behavior, and how can you acknowledge and celebrate those moments?

5. Seeking Support and Guidance

21. What support systems do you have in place to help you through this challenging time? How can you rely on them?
22. Are there resources, such as therapy, support groups, or community organizations, that you could benefit from in this situation?
23. How can you talk to your loved one about their substance use in a way that is non-judgmental and supportive of their recovery process?
24. How do you communicate your needs and concerns to your loved one, and how can you improve these conversations?
25. What role does empathy play in how you approach your loved one's recovery, and how can you balance empathy with maintaining healthy boundaries?

6. Finding Empowerment and Strength

26. What strengths have you developed or rediscovered in yourself while dealing with your loved one's substance use?
27. How can you focus on your own personal growth and emotional resilience during this challenging time?
28. What part of your relationship with your loved one do you feel most proud of, even amid the difficulties of their substance use?
29. How can you reclaim your sense of self and identity outside of the role of being a caretaker for your loved one?
30. What positive steps can you take today to ensure that your own needs and health are being prioritized?