

Reset My Future: Addiction Family Guide



**How to support your loved one before,
during, and after treatment**

Family Matters

Addiction tears families apart, but most individuals dependent on alcohol or substances seek treatment because of positive family intervention, involvement, and support. So whatever your situation, **family matters**.

It's Not Your Fault

No one ever forgets the day they learn that their family member is dependent on alcohol or substances. It's natural to feel guilt, especially for parents, but do not despair and do not see the addiction as your fault.

If you are loving enough to support them, you are, in fact, doing the best you can.



Addiction Explained

Addiction is a deceptive illness. Individuals often falsely believe they can quit unassisted, experiencing periods of sobriety interspersed with heavy use, which gives them the impression that quitting is just a matter of making up their minds. However, these clean periods are just as much a part of the cycle of addiction as the times of heavy drug use.

Understanding this **cycle** can be the first step towards committing to treatment. Broken down into its most basic components, the cycle repeats the following sequence indefinitely:

Relief

Using drugs or alcohol provides tremendous, immediate relief from stress or unhappiness. However, the person is unable to stop after the first hit or drink. As tolerance increases, use skyrockets, and the substance becomes necessary to function.



Consequences

Addiction affects all areas of life, leading to strained relationships, financial issues, poor work performance, mental health issues (like depression, anxiety, or psychotic episodes), and legal problems (like stealing, violence, or driving under the influence).

Pain

As consequences become impossible to ignore, the initial relief turns into emotional pain. The typical response is to escalate substance use as an escape, **increasing both the pain and the consequences until they reach a crisis.**



Crisis

A crisis can manifest as relationship breakdown, loss of employment, eviction, bankruptcy, or arrest. This is followed by a moment of clarity and a sincere, heartfelt decision that **things have to change drastically.**

Relief (Sobriety)

The promises made during the crisis are often followed by a prolonged period of abstinence, during which the person experiences profound relief.

The Cycle Continues

Consequences (Sobriety)


For an untreated individual, remaining sober often becomes more challenging over time, not easier. They tend to become bored, depressed, restless, and anxious, finding themselves unable to cope.

Pain (Sobriety)

Not using drugs can be just as painful as substance abuse itself. The emotional, spiritual, and physical effects of unmonitored withdrawal take their toll until the pain becomes too much, and the cravings for relief are unmanageable.

Crisis (Relapse)

The cycle comes full circle at the moment of relapse, where immediate relief is experienced through using again. While the relapse may not be full-blown initially, the use will soon spiral out of control.

 **Important:** Within the cycle of addiction, there is no 'rock bottom'. If the pain comes, the person either experiences a delusion of clarity leading to abstinence or the urge to use becomes uncontrollable, resulting in a relapse. The cycle can continue forever if left untreated.

Understanding Enabling

When a loved one is in trouble, it's natural to want to help them. However, when your loved one is in active addiction and unwilling to seek treatment, these actions can enable them to stay sick. Enabling can also create co-dependence by making the enabler feel needed and more in control.

The fine line: Does what you are doing support recovery or addiction?

Examples of Enabling

- Ignoring bad behavior or dismissing it as a phase.
- Paying their share of bills (rent, electricity, car payments).
- Bailing them out of jail or hiring a lawyer.
- Giving them cash or buying groceries.
- Letting them take out their anger on you.
- Paying for services before they commit to recovery.
- Taking out loans on their behalf.
- Doing their housework or driving them around.
- Taking care of their children.
- Paying for their drugs or alcohol.
- Putting your loved one's needs ahead of your own.

A key part of active addiction is manipulating others to get what they want. They may try to make you feel bad for not helping. Remember, the individual must make the decision to participate in treatment themselves; enabling allows them to avoid making that decision.

Sometimes, losing a job or facing eviction may be the catalyst for change they need. While difficult to watch, this may be in their best long-term interest. **You cannot change someone else's behavior, but you can choose to change your own.** By attending group therapy or counseling yourself, you can start to break the cycle of enabling.

Addiction: A Family Disease

Addiction affects not only the sufferers but also their families and friends. Seeing a loved one struggle is devastating, and family members commonly experience feelings of anxiety, anger, helplessness, and despair.

Addiction has the power to tear families apart, but with love, courage, and professional support, families can reclaim their power and be instrumental in guiding their loved one on the road to recovery.

Why Family Involvement is Important

The support of family and friends is **invaluable during treatment**, even if your loved one can't communicate their appreciation immediately. Family involvement makes a **real and often crucial contribution to recovery**.

Providing Emotional Support

Breaking free from addiction is hard, and recovery is an emotional roller coaster. Knowing that someone is [rooting for them](#) can be a [powerful source of light](#) during dark moments. Family is crucial to be the [voice of reason](#) when treatment gets difficult and their conditioned response is to "run". [Holding the line](#) and reminding them of their commitment can be the difference between them [completing the program](#) or giving up.

Keeping Them Accountable

The real work often begins when your loved one returns home after treatment. While you can't control their actions, you can help [keep them accountable](#) by [checking in frequently](#) and being blunt when you notice warning signs of impending relapse (like self-imposed isolation, depressive episodes, or restlessness).

Providing Context and Insights

Families and friends are an [invaluable resource of background information](#) for treatment professionals. Your knowledge of the client's personal circumstances and family history can [substantially impact the development of their individualized treatment plan](#).

Five Ways to Support a Loved One with Addiction (Before Treatment)

1

Find Out About Addiction

Understanding addiction can help you better understand what your loved one is experiencing, why they act as they do, and the recovery journey. Everyone in the family needs to go through their own journey of recovery.

2

It's OK to Ask for Help

It's often a concerned family member who first reaches out. Asking for professional help or even advice from a friend is the first step in the recovery process. Family intervention is also an option.

3

Understand It Takes Time

There's no quick fix for addiction; recovery is a lifelong process and a commitment every day to staying sober. Being armed with knowledge and resources can help you understand the journey.

4

Think About Yourself

Talking with a support group or counselor is vital, as everyone in the family will be affected. Family therapy can begin the healing process, and groups like Al-Anon and Nar-Anon can bring perspective to your situation.

5

Make Family Time a Priority

Doing simple things together, like sitting down for dinner, can start to break down barriers and begin the journey back to normal family life after the trauma of active addiction.

Is Your Loved One in Denial or Refusing to Get Help?

It can be difficult to know what to do when your loved one is struggling. If your loved one reaches a crisis point and voices a need for help, it's [crucial for the family to act immediately](#) (in the 24-48 hours that follow) to arrange an appointment with a treatment centre.

If they are unwilling to enter treatment, an intervention is an option.

Interventions

An intervention is a confrontation by family and friends with the consequences of their substance use, in an effort to convince them to enter rehabilitation treatment. Well-planned and well-executed interventions can be very successful, and addicts are more likely to seek treatment when they undergo one, as it can be an [eye-opening moment](#).

When to Intervene

Interventions are a last resort. You should seriously consider an intervention when you feel your loved one's addiction is putting them at [risk of losing their work, home, or life](#), or if your family is at capacity in dealing with the fallout.

When an individual agrees to treatment, getting into recovery can be straightforward. However, when they are unwilling to accept they have a problem, it can be a much harder process.



Preparing Yourself (Before & During Treatment)

Addiction treatment is an emotional roller coaster for families. To best support your loved one, it's important to stay aware of your own needs and mental health.

Get Support

You will need both professional and personal support. It's a good idea to choose one person in your social circle (a close friend or relative not immediately involved) to be your emotional support, allowing you to vent without feeling like you're betraying your loved one.

Learn More About Addiction

Addiction is an illness. Education helps you gain a better perspective on how addiction works, which can alleviate many of the concerns and strong emotions you're likely to experience, such as blaming yourself or thinking your loved one only needs willpower.

Realistic Expectations

It's natural to want your loved one to get better immediately and start treating you with the love and respect you deserve. However, addiction treatment is emotionally draining, and they may not be able to express their gratitude straight away. Recovery is a long, difficult process with good days and bad days.

Family Treatment (During Outpatient Program)

While your loved one is in a treatment program, your involvement is key, and understanding what this may entail is important.

Helpful Behaviors

Be Present

Engage with your loved one completely—eye contact, physical contact—and don't be self-conscious if it feels weird. Focus on the present moment when you are with them.

Listen

Simply listening is one of the best things you can do. Sometimes your loved one just needs you to lend an ear, not give advice or your view. This is the easiest way to show you care.

Learn from Your Peers

Community support makes a huge difference. Attend family support and education sessions to exchange with other families going through similar situations, which can bring peace and valuable insights.

Keep Sane

Look after yourself. Recognize your limitations and give yourself a break; take this time to focus on your own recovery.

Unhelpful Behaviors (Avoid Common Mistakes)

Do Not Blame Yourself

Your loved one's addiction is not your fault. Guilt is a powerful emotion that can hinder your ability to engage constructively.

Do Not Deny Responsibility (Theirs)

Your loved one is responsible for getting better. Their addiction is not their fault. It's okay to let them experience the consequences of their actions, as this can increase their drive for long-term recovery.

No Emotional Blackmail

It's fine to let them know their addiction has affected you, but don't repeat it constantly. Never place extra pressure on them with statements like "I will be unable to cope if you don't recover".

Bribery

Offering rewards (money, cars, holidays) for recovery is not necessary and will only distract their focus. The reward of recovery is leading a life worth living.

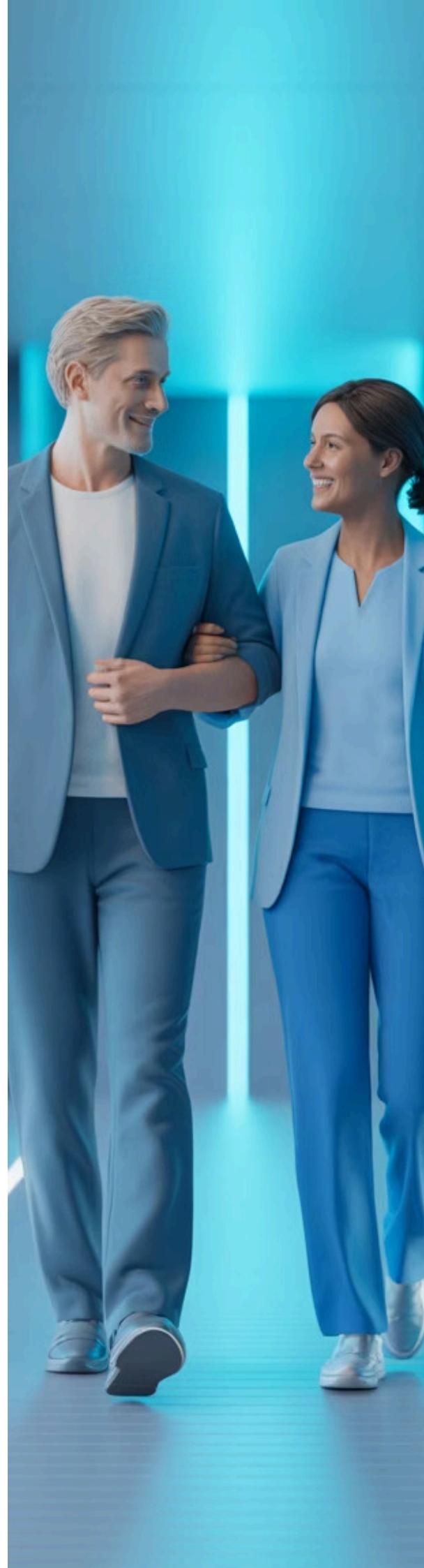
What to Do When Interacting During Treatment

- **Get Active and Play**

Physical recreation is encouraged. Kicking a ball around or going for a walk can avoid awkward silences and remind them that fun doesn't require drugs or alcohol.

- **Be Open**

You must be willing to believe they can change. Don't question their sincerity when they express their desire to get sober. Also, allow yourself to be open with your own feelings, as long as you remain rational; an open emotional exchange is long overdue.



After Treatment: Your Loved One is Coming Home

Returning to regular life after treatment can be a big challenge.



Listen

Listening without judgment is one of the best things you can do to [reconnect](#). Knowing that you will listen will make them confident they can come to you with their worries, which is important for their [ongoing recovery](#).



Setting Boundaries

It is essential to [set boundaries](#) to prevent yourself from sliding back into the role of an enabler. Being supportive does not mean tolerating abusive behavior, paying their bills, or being available around the clock. Setting boundaries aids their recovery by forcing them to be [accountable and take responsibility](#).



New Routines

Once your loved one returns home, it's important to immediately put [new routines in place](#) and stick to them. Anything that keeps them occupied in a constructive way is helpful. The focus on recovery must be maintained with a [structured plan](#).



Healthy Habits

[Forming healthy habits](#) is vital for [long-term recovery](#). This includes eating well, exercising regularly, and practicing new coping strategies to defuse triggers and work through cravings. Calling a family member, sponsor, or counselor is a great way to [deal with triggers early on](#).

Continued Support for Long-Term Recovery



Staying the Course

Individuals who continue therapy and attend groups like [AA or NA](#) after initial treatment have a [greater chance of staying clean](#). You can offer additional support by attending [Al-Anon or Nar-Anon meetings](#).



Back to Reality

Returning to work or university is a mix of excitement and fear. While you must make it clear that [not returning is not an option](#), it's also important to be empathetic. Going back to work/school ultimately gives them a [renewed sense of purpose](#) and helps [restore their faith in themselves](#).



Getting Back to Socializing

They may be experiencing [shame and embarrassment](#). It's best not to throw a massive welcome home party; they may prefer to relax at home for a while before meeting people in small groups. [Reviving contact with friends who are still using is not a good idea](#). New friends made during treatment can be invaluable.



Relapse Prevention (After Treatment)

Relapse prevention is a big concern once your loved one returns home. **Know the Early Warning Signs**

1. Changes in Behavior

- Lying about whereabouts, becoming secretive, hiding things
- Unusually severe symptoms of depression and/or anxiety
- Isolating themselves socially
- Behaving erratically, becoming overly agitated and aggressive

2. Changes of Circumstance

- Unexplained financial trouble
- Unreliable attendance at work, family, or social events
- Stopped attending counseling or group sessions

3. Physical Warning Signs

- Changes in appetite or sleep patterns
- Slurred speech
- Decreased attention span
- Lapses in personal hygiene

Triggers and Cravings

Cravings will occur, as it is impossible to avoid all triggers. **Common Triggers** include stress, loneliness, boredom, and associating with alcohol/drug users. Overconfidence and placing too high expectations on themselves can also lead to the need to use again.

When they come to you for help with cravings, you must remain non-judgmental and as calm as possible. Help them find a distraction until the craving passes. If cravings are extremely hard to resist and last for more than a few hours, assist them in contacting their recovery support system (sponsor, counselor, etc.).

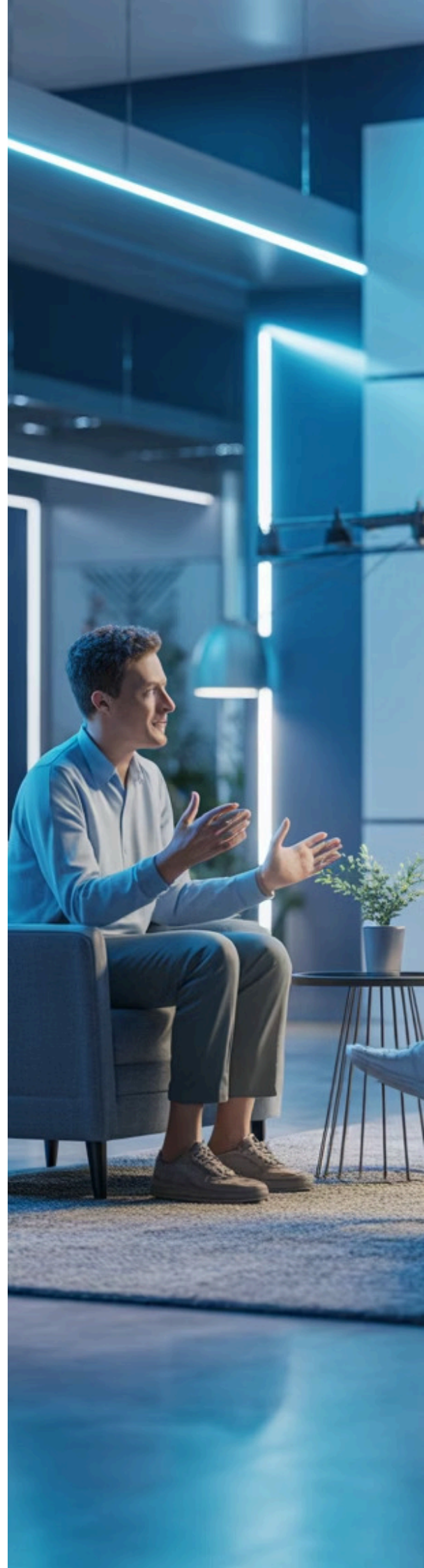
- ❏ The best thing you can do is make it clear that you will be there and willing to work it out with them when triggers and cravings occur.

Family Support

Healing the System When Someone You Love is Struggling, You Don't Have to Do It Alone. Addiction is a family disease. The pain, stress, confusion, and fear you are experiencing are valid, and we know how isolating this journey can be. At Reset My Future, we see family members not as victims, but as essential parts of the solution. Our clinical approach is designed to provide you with the structure, insight, and support needed to heal your relationship and find peace, regardless of where your loved one is in their recovery journey.

Immediate Support

Free, Confidential Consultation We understand that reaching out is the hardest step. If you are struggling with how to talk to a loved one, what boundaries to set, or simply need to understand the next steps, start here. This free, no-obligation consultation is a safe space for you to speak with one of our experienced family support specialists who have navigated this path personally and professionally. Discuss options for approaching your loved one about treatment. Gain immediate strategies for managing the current family crisis. Understand the dynamics of addiction and your role in the healing process.



Professional Healing

Ongoing Family Counselling Services

Our family counselling and support services move beyond crisis management to deliver sustained therapeutic change for the entire family unit. These services are delivered by qualified experts who understand the unique challenges faced by families dealing with substance use disorder (SUD). Our Counselling Focus Includes: Boundary Setting: Developing and maintaining healthy, clear boundaries to stop enabling behaviors and protect your own well-being. Healing



Communication

Learning new, effective communication tools to reduce conflict and rebuild trust. Co-Dependency Recovery: Identifying and addressing patterns of co-dependency, allowing you to regain focus on your own life and needs. Psychoeducation: Gaining a deeper, clinical understanding of addiction to replace confusion and shame with clarity and empowerment. We offer flexible, private online sessions designed to fit around your schedule, ensuring you receive consistent support when you need it most.

Reset My Future

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