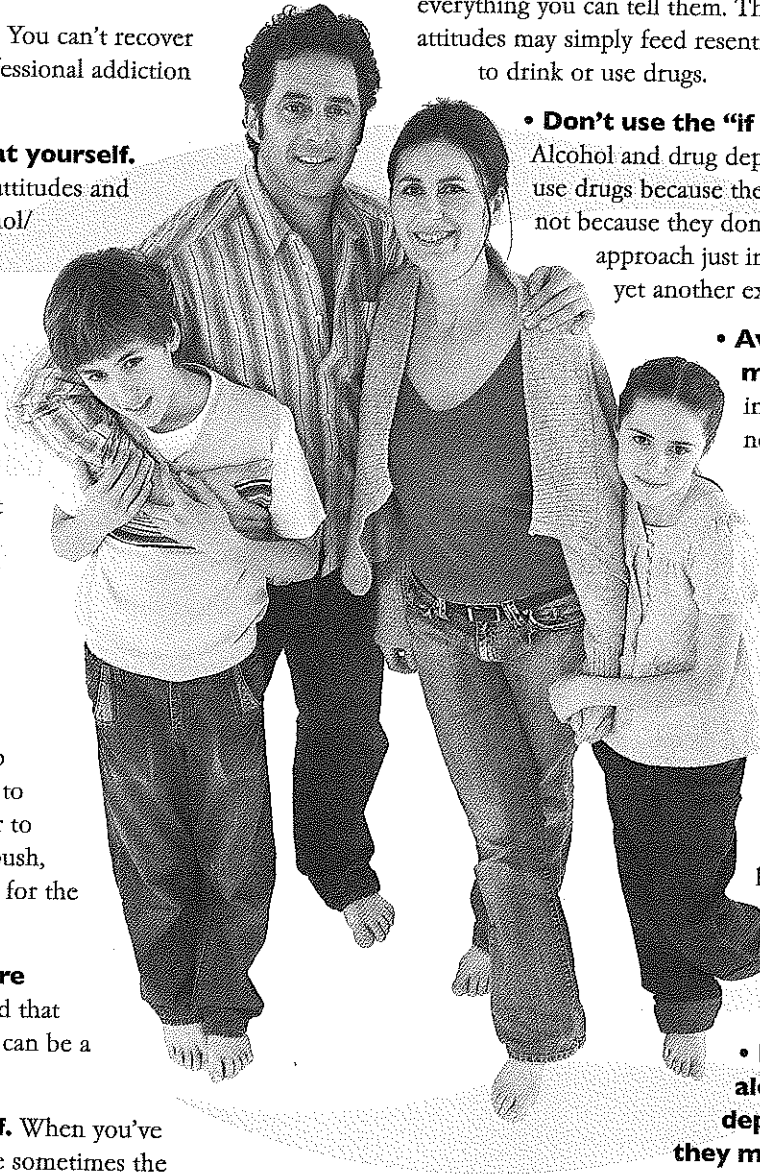


Do You Love Someone With an Alcohol or Drug Problem?

Tips for Families and Friends

What to Do:

- **Begin with yourself.** The only person who you can really change is YOU.
- **Seek outside help.** You can't recover alone. Contact a professional addiction treatment program.
- **Take a close look at yourself.** How have your own attitudes and responses to the alcohol/drug dependent person contributed to your misery?
- **Change in yourself whatever is necessary** for you to feel okay about yourself again.
- **Take action** such as going to outpatient counseling or asking a counselor about intervention services. There are ways to help those who don't seem to want help. Remember to encourage, but don't push, professional treatment for the addicted individual.
- **Remember there are no easy answers** and that change takes time and can be a painful process.
- **Be good to yourself.** When you've felt bad for a long time sometimes the hardest thing to do is treat yourself with the love and respect you wish the alcohol or drug dependent person would show for you.



- **Don't nag, preach, lecture, or adopt a "holier than thou martyr-like attitude."** Most alcohol and drug dependent individuals have already told themselves everything you can tell them. Therefore, your actions or attitudes may simply feed resentments and provide excuses to drink or use drugs.
- **Don't use the "if you loved me" appeal.** Alcohol and drug dependent people drink and use drugs because they have a compulsive illness not because they don't care about you. This approach just increases guilt and provides yet another excuse to drink or use.
- **Avoid threats unless you mean it.** Empty threats increase aggravation not motivation.
- **Don't hide or dispose of liquor and drugs.** It is a waste of time and money and impossible to keep away from an addicted individual.
- **Don't allow yourself to be lied to or accept promises.** Accepting lies and promises helps the alcohol/drug dependent person avoid the painful truth of his or her illness and postpones recovery.
- **Don't do for the alcohol or drug dependent person what they must do for themselves.** You can't take their "medicine" for them.

What to Avoid:

- **Don't regard this as a family disgrace.** Addiction is a disease.
- **Don't protect the alcohol/drug dependent person from the natural consequences of his or her illness.** Crisis is the best climate for beginning recovery. If you prevent crisis, you may prevent an opportunity for change.

- **Don't be jealous of the method for recovery the alcohol or drug dependent person chooses.** Remember AA, NA and professional help are "necessary medicine" that may need to be taken in large doses especially in early recovery.
- **Don't expect immediate 100% recovery.** As with any chronic illness, recovery from alcohol and drug dependency may be slow and there may be relapses.

*Written by Jerry Carter, NKRC executive director
(Adapted from various national alcohol and drug treatment sources)*