

# *Help For Families:*

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When Loved Ones Struggle  
with Addiction

# *What is Addiction*

Addiction is a treatable, chronic medical disease involving complex interactions among brain circuits, genetics, the environment, and an individual's life experiences. People with addiction use substances or engage in behaviors that become compulsive and often continue despite harmful consequences.

American Society of Addiction Medicine, 2019

# *Merriam-Webster Definition of Addiction*

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**A compulsive, chronic, physiological or psychological need for a habit-forming substance, behavior, or activity having harmful physical, psychological, or social effects and typically causing well-defined symptoms (such as anxiety, irritability, tremors, or nausea) upon withdrawal or abstinence : the state of being addicted**

**A strong inclination to do, use, or indulge in something repeatedly even when there are negative consequences**

*What are the  
Symptoms of  
Addiction?*

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Loss of control

Progression

Withdrawal Symptoms

Personality Change

Blackouts

## *What Happens in the Family?*

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Obsession with the addict

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Attempts to control

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Hope/Wishful thinking for recovery

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Enabling and care taking

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Feeling guilty

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Unhealthy boundaries

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Not following thru on consequences set

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Giving money , time and energy

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Can't say "no"

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Lack of self-care

# *Addiction is a family disease*

## *What does this mean?*

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Emotional, financial, spiritual and mental side effects impact all members of the family

Our role in the family changes as we are impacted by addiction

# *What role do you play in your family?*

## **The Addict**

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- Outside we see: selfish, blaming, dishonesty and egocentric
- Inside there is: guilt, self-hatred, hurt anger, inadequacy, fear

## **The Hero**

- Outside we see: Independent, leader, perfect, all together
- Inside there is: anger, inadequacy, hurt, guilt, low self-worth, fear

## **The Scapegoat**

- Outside we see: defiant, blame, self destructive, chemical use
- Inside there is: low self-worth, guilt, anger, pain, feeling rejected

# *Family Roles Continued:*

## **The Mascot**

- Outside we see: cute, clown, hyper, seeking attention
- Inside we see: confused, fear, insecure

## **The Lost Child**

- Outside we see: loner, quiet, withdrawn, independent
- Inside we see: hurt, lonely, mad, rejected, scared, unlovable

## **The Caretaker/Enabler**

- Outside we see: self-pity, responsible, martyr, passive
- Inside we see: guilt, angry, hurt, pain, fear



# *Enabling*



Enabling is simply defined as doing something for someone else that could and should be doing for themselves

# *How do I know if I am enabling my loved one?*

Do you find yourself worrying or obsessing about a person in a way that consumes your time?

Do you find yourself trying to solve this person's problems even when they should be doing it for themselves?

Do you excuse your loved one's behavior as a result of stress, misunderstanding, difficulty coping or someone else's behavior?

Do you give them things as a way of reducing their pain or stress?

Do you feel angry if your loved one does not follow through with something you suggested – do you worry you are not doing enough?

Do you ever feel like you have a unique relationship with your loved one and that you are the only one who can really understand them?

Do you feel protective of them, even though they are an adult?

Do you wish other people would change to make it easier on your loved one?

## *Enabling - continued*

Do you feel responsible for getting this person help?

Do you feel reluctant to refer them for help or assistance, uncertain if someone else can understand them?

Do you ever feel manipulated by them but ignore your feelings?

Do you feel like no one understands them like you do?

Do you feel alone in your attempts to help them?

Have you ever seen yourself in this person

Has anyone ever suggested to you that you are “too close” to the situation or your loved one?

Have you given money, time or things that you could not afford to give?

Have you lied to others, including other family members about this person situation?

Do you have a list of “if only” s” that you are sure would work to sober up your loved one?

# *Why is Enabling Harmful?*

Enabling shields people from experiencing the full impact and consequences of their behavior.

Enabling is different from helping and supporting because it allows the person to continue to be irresponsible and not make changes.

Someone who is addicted cannot learn from their mistakes if they are being protected from the natural consequences.

For change to occur your addicted loved one must begin to feel the pain of some of the natural consequences of their addiction.

If you are protecting them then they will never feel the need or have a reason to change

Recovery for the family will require

*Detachment with Love*

## *Detachment with love vs detachment with anger or indifference:*

### *What is detachment with Love*

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- Detachment with love means loving someone enough to allow them to learn from their mistakes without enabling them. It also means being responsible for yourself and taking care of your emotional and mental health needs regardless of what your loved one is experiencing

*Detachment with  
Anger or  
Indifference*

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An unwillingness to have any involvement in the life of another

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Arguing, silent treatment, nagging or scolding when communicating

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Ignoring someone completely

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Not caring about the well being of another

# *How to Detach*

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1

Understand  
your loved  
one is  
irrational

2

Stop  
assuming  
responsibility

3

Put yourself  
first

4

Stop giving  
with receiving



*I can't detach  
because .....*

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If I stop being overly involved what will happen to them

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What if something horrible happens to them because I stop rescuing them

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I need them as much as they need me

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Being detached seems so cold and aloof. You can't be that way when you love and care for a person. It's either 100% all the way or no way at all.

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How can being detached from them help them? It seems like you should do more to help them.

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*If one hurts in the system, we all hurt.* You do not have a good relationship with others unless you share in their pain, hurt, suffering, problems, and troubles.

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You can never *give too much* when it comes to providing emotional support, comforting, and care of those whom you love and cherish.

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*Tough love* is a cruel, inhuman, and anti-loving philosophy of dealing with the troubled people in our lives and you should instead love them more when they are in trouble since *love is the answer to all problems*.

# Detachment is.....

- Ability to allow people, places, or things the freedom to be themselves.
- Holding back from the need to rescue, save, or fix another person from being sick, dysfunctional, or irrational.
- Giving another person *the space* to be him or herself.
- Willingness to accept that you cannot change or control a person, place, or thing.
- Developing and maintaining of a safe, emotional distance from someone whom you have previously given a lot of power to affect your emotional outlook on life.
- Establishing of emotional boundaries between you and those people you have become overly enmeshed or dependent with in order that all of you might be able to develop your own sense of autonomy and independence.
- Process by which you are free to feel your own feelings when you see another person falter and fail and not be led by guilt to feel responsible for their failure or faltering.
- Ability to maintain an emotional bond of love, concern, and caring without the negative results of *rescuing, enabling, fixing, or controlling*.
- Placing of all things in life into a healthy, rational perspective and recognizing that there is a need to back away from the uncontrollable and unchangeable realities of life.
- Ability to exercise emotional self-protection and prevention so as not to experience greater emotional devastation from having hung on beyond a reasonable and rational point.

# *Detachment is.....*

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The ability to let people you love and care for accept personal responsibility for their own actions and to practice *tough love* and not give in when they come to you to bail them out when their actions lead to failure or trouble for them.

The ability to allow people to be who they *really are* rather than who you *want them to be*. Ability to avoid being hurt, abused, taken advantage of by people who in the past have been overly dependent or enmeshed with you.

# *Boundaries*



**What are boundaries and why do I need them?**



**How does someone define their own boundaries?**



**How do I establish boundaries?**



**How do I enforce my boundaries?**

# *10 Helpful Boundaries*

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1. Let them know they cannot drink, use or act out around you
2. Do not allow drugs and drug paraphernalia in your home
3. Do not lend or give them money.
4. If they end up in jail for their alcohol or drug use do not bail them out.
5. Do not pay off their debts.

## *10 Helpful Boundaries*

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6. Do not lie or cover for them.
7. Do not put up with abusive behavior.
8. Let them know you will help them get better, but you will not enable them to stay the same.
9. Do not make idle threats.
10. Detach when necessary.

*How worry and fear  
stop us from setting  
healthy boundaries*

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**False Evidence Appearing Real**

The what if's.....

Recognize

- Triggers
- Rumination
- Distortions in thought

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*We are not a victim to our thoughts.  
We can change what we think and  
what we think about. Changing this  
can change everything.*



# Resources

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- Al-Anon <https://al-anon.org/>
- Parents of Addicted Loved one's support group <https://palgroup.org/>
- Nar-anon <https://naranonfl.org/>
- Consult your Evernorth directory for a therapist
- Alcoholics Anonymous <https://aa.org>
- Narcotics Anonymous <https://na.org>

## ***Behavioral Health Awareness Series***

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If you are an Evernorth or Cigna customer and have questions about Substance Use treatment or about your benefits and how to use them, please contact:

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