4 Ways to Help an Addict

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How to Help an Addict

Addiction is a disease, much like cancer or diabetes, but the other two don't tear through the lives of loved ones in the same way as drugs do. When you are the parent of an active addict it may often feel that there is nothing you can do. You are at a loss for how to help an addict, the child you gave birth to. You have begged, pleaded, screamed, tried the silent treatment, gave the addict what they needed, or cut them off entirely. You have tried seemingly every possible thing imaginable yet it seems all for none. So, we will give you different options surrounding how to help an addict.

This is likely disheartening to hear, but nothing you do can stop an addict from using. They may have brief periods of clean time but are usually out with a vengeance not long after.

If the addict does not want to get sober, there is nothing you can do to keep them clean. Until they want to be clean, your efforts will fall to the wayside. However, this does not always mean you have to give up entirely. It is especially difficult for the parents of an addict — the two people who brought them into the world.

There is little like the love of a parent for their child, and when the child can't stay clean, as a parent you may feel betrayed or let down. There are a few things you can do to help an addict in your life while they are still in active addiction. Not all will be easy, but many will be effective in keeping yourself sane while trying to manage the insanity of addiction. So, let's get into how to help an addict.

1. Self-Care

If you do not first take care of yourself, there is little you will be capable of when supporting someone else, much less an addict in active addiction. Self-care is incredibly important when you are in the firing lines of an addict's behavior.

Find things that bring you joy and participate in them whenever possible. If you do not focus on yourself and finding ways to meet your needs, you will burn out and do or say something you may regret.

Some examples of self-care include:

- Going on a date with your partner.
- Meeting a friend for lunch.
- Spending time with your other children.
- Exercise.
- Meditation.
- Getting a massage.

Only by placing some attention on providing care for yourself will you be able to provide care for your addicted

child. It may seem counterintuitive but is absolutely necessary if you want to help an addict.

2. Seek Counseling or Support Groups

This point is somewhat in line with self-care, but is specifically about finding support from those around you. When you have an addicted child it is easy to isolate yourself from those around you; you may feel as though no one understands what you are going through or you have shame surrounding the actions of your child.

Regardless of how you feel, seeking the support of a counselor or a support group will help. You will learn coping skills and ways to manage the frustration and sadness sparked by the addict's behaviors.

You'll be surrounded by the understanding of a professional counselor or a group of people who have experienced the same pain.

3. Let Them Hit Their Bottom

As mentioned previously, the only way for an addict to maintain long-term clean time is to get sober for themselves. They can't get sober for you, their partner, their siblings, their job, or any other outside force. The desire to get clean must come from within.

One of the best ways to help an addict is to allow them the space to hit their bottom. This may be one of the most painful things you experience in your life but is often a necessary part of the process.

During this time it is important to have a counselor or support group to help you process the feelings of fear, loss and abandonment.

4. Be Available When They Are Ready to Get Help

Only when they are ready to get sober can you truly help an addict. Once they have expressed a sincere desire and drive to get clean, you can provide them with resources for where to go.

If you have been seeing a counselor or attending a support group, oftentimes they will provide a list of resources for your child when they are ready.

If you do not have any resources, some online research can be helpful. Some options for a newly-clean addict include:

- **Narcotics Anonymous:** A 12-step program based on Alcoholics Anonymous, aimed to help addicts get clean through working the 12 Steps of Narcotics Anonymous.
- **Treatment:** There are multiple levels of treatment centers available, from inpatient detox facilities to intensive outpatient therapy.
- **Counseling:** Drug and alcohol counseling with a certified counselor can help an addict learn the coping skills and relapse prevention necessary for long-term clean time.

Having a child in active addiction is not easy and finding ways to help an addict may seem impossible. Try a few of the above options to see how they help you manage your process.

You never have to struggle alone. Despite the feelings of isolation, there are hundreds of thousands of other parents going through the same thing. By reaching out and finding help for yourself, you will help an addicted loved one in the process.