

**THINK YOU HAVE
UNCOVERED AN ADDICTION
PROBLEM?**

*When faced with such a situation,
family members often feel:*

*guilty and
ashamed*

*grieved and
depressed*

*anxious,
a loss of
control*

*angry and
resentful*

*resistant to
accepting the
truth*

NATIONAL ADDICTIONS MANAGEMENT SERVICE

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HELP
For the Family



**My family
member has an
addiction. How
can I help?**

*Any form of addiction is risky as
it may lead to various negative
consequences such as broken
relationships, family problems,
serious health injuries, legal
problems and so on. Family members
may hope in vain that their loved
ones will stop their addiction and
that their relationships will improve.
Unfortunately, addiction is pervasive
and the problem can only get worse
if it is left unaddressed.*

**NATIONAL
ADDICTIONS
MANAGEMENT SERVICE**



If the addiction problem worsens, family members may even experience a sense of hopelessness. There may be:

- vague, unclear communication
- escalating conflict, breakdown of relationships
- a gradual shift in roles and responsibilities
- efforts to rescue the person from addiction, protect him or her from consequences of the addiction, or to hide the problem from others
- nagging, threatening and setting of ultimatums
- excessive monitoring and distrust

The most important thing you should do is to acknowledge the problem and not deny it. You should seek professional help and support, instead of trying to manage it on your own.



Benefits of Being Involved in Your Loved One's Treatment

The involvement of family members or significant others in an individual's treatment programme can strengthen and extend treatment benefits.

When they are involved, family members gain a clearer understanding of addiction and the process of recovery. Together with their loved one, family members can also better understand their respective expectations, goals and roles in recovery.

Family support will greatly facilitate and enhance the recovery process for patients.

Dealing with Your Loved One Who Has an Addiction: Do's & Don'ts

No one wishes or expects a family member to be involved in any form of addiction. However, when we suspect that this is the case, knowing the do's and don'ts can help facilitate the recovery process.

Do:

- learn about the addiction and how it may affect each member of the family.
- encourage your loved one to seek help and sustain in treatment.
- remember to see the positive in yourself and your loved one.
- allow your loved one to take responsibility for his/her own recovery.
- involve yourself in support groups.
- communicate positively, directly and clearly.
- engage in self-care activities. Ensure that you look after your own physical and mental well-being.
- remember to try to first understand your own reactions and attitudes.
- protect yourself physically, emotionally and financially, as necessary.
- consider seeking support for yourself, even if your loved one is not in treatment. Understanding the problem and the impact it has on you will help you cope better.



Don't:

- try to manage your overwhelming anxiety or depressive symptoms on your own.
- accept guilt for another person's acts and blame yourself.
- nag, argue, lecture, threaten or recall past mistakes.
- overprotect, cover up or rescue your loved one from the consequences of his/her addiction.
- neglect yourself.
- forget that addiction is an illness.
- manipulate or make idle threats.
- demand perfection in yourself or others.
- overlook the growth opportunities in a crisis.

Where Can I Get Help?

Family members are encouraged to attend the family recovery programme, Families in Recovery through Education, Support & Hope (FRESH) to gain knowledge about addictions and also receive valuable peer support from other family members who may be going through similar experiences.

If you have any questions or would like learn more about how to help your family member who has an addiction problem, talk to our counsellor or doctor today.

