

Loving an Addict: 5 Tips for Facing the Pain

We don't want to see our loved ones hurting. Loving an addict is one of the most painful relationships you can experience.

When we are involved with someone who has addiction issues, it can feel difficult to be supportive. Enabling describes ways in which we keep, prevent or protect loved ones from experiencing the full consequence of their actions. When you enable someone, you prevent them from hitting rock bottom. Thus, you may be prolonging their usage.

Some ways to be of support:

1. When talking with your loved one, compliment their successes, help brainstorm alternative activities, let them be heard. Offer your love and support and try to help them to find their way.
2. Join a support group or family therapy. Fellowship groups like Al-anon can be very helpful. You will be among others who understand your challenges.
3. Set boundaries. Allow your loved one to deal with their own problems. Don't cover for them or make excuses for them.
4. Do not be afraid of the outcome. This is a hard one. Many people feel that if they stop enabling, the person will die. Understand that you cannot fix them. The reality is, nothing we do will save a person from themselves.
5. Remember to take care of yourself. When involved in these relationships, we tend to put our own needs last. Self-care does not mean you are being selfish. This way, you are in better shape to walk through life and be there for loved ones.

If you are unsure of how to help a loved one with an addiction, contact a mental health specialist for support.

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Wishing you joy and good health,
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