NCADD
NATIONAL COUNCIL ON ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG DEPENDENCE, INC.

Our Nation's #1 health problem is alcoholism and drug dependence. For decades, NCADD and our National Network of Affiliates have seen how the disease of addiction not only affects the individual, but millions of family members.

Fathers, mothers, single parents, couples straight or gay, regardless of ethnicity or social group, rich or poor….drug and alcohol abuse can destroy relationships. Most of all, young children and adolescents suffer the greatest from the effects of the abuse of alcohol and drugs in the family.

But, with help and recovery, both for the individual and the family, families can heal together.

What Can Families Do ?

Learn About Alcohol, Drugs, Alcoholism and Addiction:

Our ability to cope with anything is a function of how much we know about what we are up against. Although you have been living with alcohol and/or drug problems for some time, learning about alcohol and drug addiction is a critical first step. You cannot rely on common sense or popular myths (preaching, complaining, acting like a martyr, dumping the alcohol or drugs). Getting the facts about how alcohol and drugs affect the individual and the family is very important (see "Learn About Alcohol" and "Learn About Drugs").

Seek Help and Support For Yourself:

The disease of alcoholism and addiction is a family disease and affects everyone close to the person. Not only does the alcohol or drug user need help, so do you, even if you don't realize it at the time. You and other family members need and deserve appropriate education, help and support in finding healthy ways to overcome the negative effects of the disease. Education, counseling and Mutual Aid/Support Groups can help you realize that you are not alone, that you are not responsible for the drinking or drug use and that you need to take care of yourself, regardless of whether the person you are concerned about chooses to get help.

Learn What You Can Do To Help:

Treatment programs, counseling, mutual aid/support groups are all options for getting help. Only the person using alcohol and drugs can make the decision to get help, but you can help create the conditions to make that decision more attractive. Seeking help and support on your own can encourage interest in treatment or self-help. Look into treatment options and costs together and express your belief that treatment will work.

If Needed, Consider Family Intervention:

If the person you are concerned about is unable or unwilling to seek help, you

should consider a planned, professionally directed intervention. Intervention, with support of a trained and experienced interventionist, is a powerful tool for the family to receive education, guidance and support, with a focus on getting the person to accept treatment.

Be Patient With The Recovery Process:

As with all chronic illnesses, everyone needs time to recover and regain health. For both the individual and family member, there may be relapses or breaks in treatment. Old tensions and resentments may flare up occasionally. Learn from these events and stay focused on recovery.

Hope For Long-Term Recovery:

While addiction to alcohol and drugs has no known cure, the disease can be stopped once the individual abstains from alcohol and other addictive drugs. Today, there are millions of Americans living life in long-term recovery from addiction to alcohol and other drugs. And, millions more family members and children of addiction have also found recovery!