

Kick the Addiction With Support Around You

If you're suffering from an addiction or are actively trying to kick one, your friends and family can help you succeed. Whether helping you confront your disease or proceed on the path to a successful recovery, those closest to you might be your best resource.

Confronting the disease

Friends and family can help you face your addiction. According to a survey by the Hazelden Foundation, 69 percent of people in recovery said they got help because a friend or relative was honest with them about their addiction. Another 41 percent said they would have sought help sooner if family or friends had spoken up.

Sometimes, this involvement comes in the form of a gentle, honest discussion. Other times, it comes in the stark form of an intervention. Either way, keep in mind that it's not easy for your loved ones to confront you about your addiction. You may not like what you're hearing, but the fact that they took this step shows that they care about you a great deal.

Rebuilding your life for a successful recovery

Your friends and family have helped you confront your disease and put you on the road to recovery, but that's just the start. Now, they can help ensure a successful recovery by helping you rebuild a full, well-balanced life. How can they do this? By leading you toward activities that nourish your physical, mental, social and spiritual health. Here are a few examples:

- **Exercise.** Exercise repairs the damage done by your addiction. It restores energy and reduces stress and tension levels. Your confidence and self-esteem will rise as you start to feel better. Choose activities that you can share with your friends and family. These might include walks, hiking, swimming, canoeing or tennis. *Talk to your doctor before beginning any exercise plan to make sure it's appropriate for you.*
- **Diet.** A well-balanced diet is a must for anyone. Your family members or roommates can support your effort to eat well by helping make sure the pantry is well stocked with healthy choices and joining you for nutritious meals.
- **Hobbies.** Hobbies and other skills provide challenge and a sense of accomplishment, both of which are important to a person recovering from addiction. Consider a sport, or take up a musical instrument, art, gardening or gourmet cooking. Sharing with your family or friends is a great way to spend time together.
- **Relax.** Stress can impede your recovery efforts, so now is the time to relax. A big part of that is just having fun. Let your friends and family help you laugh and

play. If you have kids, have fun with them on their terms. Follow their silliness and curiosity. This "treatment" doubles as quality family playtime.

- **Take care of the routine but important stuff.** Throughout your recovery, you'll have recovery meetings to attend, sponsors to see and so on. Your friends and family can help you keep these priorities at the top of your to-do list.

Kicking an addiction is a little easier with the help of friends and family. Whether they're confronting you about your problem or helping you rebuild your life, take advantage of their help. There's a good chance you will succeed.

Sources: The Hazelden Foundation, www.hazelden.org ; *Dare to Confront! How to Intervene When Someone You Care About Has an Alcohol or Drug Problem* by Bob Wright and Deborah George Wright. Dell Publishing, 1990; *Learning to Live Again: A Guide for the Recovering Addict* by Brian Smith and Jill Smith. TAB Books, 1991; *Passages Through Recovery: An Action Plan for Preventing Relapse* by Terence T. Gorski. Harper and Row, 1989; *Relapse Traps: How to Avoid the Twelve Most Common Pitfalls in Recovery* by Ronald Rogers and Chandler Scott McMillin. Bantam Books, 1992; *Staying Sober: A Nutrition and Exercise Program* by Judy Myers with Maribeth Mellin. Congdon and Weed, 1987.

By James Rea © 2000-2005 Lifescape