NCADD
NATIONAL COUNCIL ON ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG DEPENDENCE, INC.

Helping a Family Member or Friend

Helping a loved one struggling with alcoholism or drug dependence can be heartbreakingly painful, but with help, it can be remarkably rewarding. At times, it can seem so overwhelming that it would be easier to ignore it, pretend that nothing is wrong and hope it just goes away. But in the long run, denying it or minimizing it, will be more damaging to you, other family members, and the person you are concerned about. **Don't Wait, Now Is The Time.**

Alcoholism and drug dependence are complex problems, with many related issues. And, although there is no magic formula to help someone stop his or her drinking or drug use, **you are not alone. We are here to help.**

NCADD Affiliates offer a range of services including help for individuals and family members. If you are concerned about your own alcohol or other drug use or that of someone you care about—a child or other relative, a friend or co-worker—**please make the contact**. You will be able to speak to someone who will listen, assess your needs and provide information about available services, costs and how to deal with another person's alcohol and/or drug use. **Help is just a call or visit away—Make the contact now!**

To get you started, here are some important suggestions:

1. **Learn All You Can About Alcoholism and Drug Dependence**

Utilize the resources we have provided including, Learn About Alcohol, Learn About Drugs and Family Education.

2. **Speak Up and Offer Your Support**

Talk to the person about your concerns, and offer your help and support, including your willingness to go with them and get help. Like other chronic diseases, the earlier addiction is treated, the

better.

3. **Express Love and Concern**

Don't wait for your loved one to "hit bottom". You may be met with excuses, denial or anger, but be prepared to respond with specific examples of behavior that has you worried.

4. **Don't Expect the Person to Stop Without Help**

You have heard it before - promises to cut down, stop but, it doesn't work. Treatment, support, and new coping skills are needed to overcome addiction to alcohol and drugs.

5. **Support Recovery as an Ongoing Process**

Once your friend or family member is receiving treatment, or going to meetings, remain involved. While maintaining your own commitment to getting help, continue to support their participation in continuing care, meetings and recovery support groups. Continue to show that you are concerned about their successful long-term recovery.

Some Things You Don't Want To Do:

- **Don't Preach:** Don't lecture, threaten, bribe, preach or moralize.
- **Don't Be A Martyr:** Avoid emotional appeals that may only increase feelings of guilt and the compulsion to drink or use other drugs.
- **Don't Cover Up**, lie or make excuses for them and their behavior.
- **Don't Assume Their Responsibilities:** Taking over their responsibilities protects them from the consequences of their behavior.
- **Don't Argue When Using:** Arguing with the person when they are using alcohol or drugs, at that point they can't have a rational conversation.
- **Don't Feel Guilty** or responsible for their behavior, it's not your fault.
- **Don't Join Them:** Don't try to keep up with them by drinking or using.