

10 THINGS A PARENT MUST KNOW WHEN THEIR ADULT CHILD SUFFERS FROM ADDICTION

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1 The time for your old style of parenting is over.

Put down the advice giving, the policing, the protecting, and the fixing. Your role is to stay connected to your son or daughter and to provide treatment resources and the practical help to get there (i.e. paying for health insurance, transportation to treatment and meetings, childcare while your Loved One is in treatment, etc.)

2 Communicate by actively listening.

Try not to react to what your child says. Instead, try showing you've really listened closely and heard them, by calmly summarizing what they're saying and asking "Is there more?"

3 Accept that getting into sustained recovery is a process.

This means lapses are likely. It is part of the process. It is how people learn that what they are doing to stay sober isn't enough and that more is needed to protect from another relapse. Keep your distance, stop hyper-focusing on your child, and allow your child the space to figure this out for themselves. Try not to teach them; let them learn for themselves.

4

There is no gray zone.

Your behavior and response to what your child is doing must be black or white – either they are using or they are not. Your actions must reflect that. Otherwise, you send mixed messages like continuing to serve them dinner while being aloof.

5

Build that bridge between you and your child

so that when they are really hurting or really want to better their life (a dip or a wish), they will turn to you for help. Be that key source of support and help in your child's world.

6 Start right away to develop a list of treatment options.

Make it detailed. Keep it in your back pocket and wait for the moment your child walks across that bridge and asks for help. This is their early motivation for change coming through. The rest of the time, don't talk about treatment, or "needing help." Try not to continually point out what's wrong with them.

7 Dig down deep and find the patience

to watch your child bounce between periods of sobriety and periods of use. Step in and reward during moments of sobriety, disengage and take away rewards when you suspect use.



Patience comes from practicing self-care.

Be aware of what your mind is thinking. Do you have reoccurring negative thoughts? Do you distort your thoughts and make them heavier and darker, driving you further down? If you do, learn and use daily skills to calm your mind.

9 Although not easy, work toward compassion and forgiveness.

Addiction is a disease of the brain. Being willful, lying, stealing, manipulating, and being hurtful are some of its byproducts. If you focus on resolving the addiction, you might see the child you once knew emerge again. Your adult child isn't responsible for having an addiction but they are responsible for dealing with it.

10 People do recover, no matter how far down they have gone, no matter their age or circumstance.

Believe this. It will strengthen your resolve, lighten your load, and make you more effective at influencing your child.

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