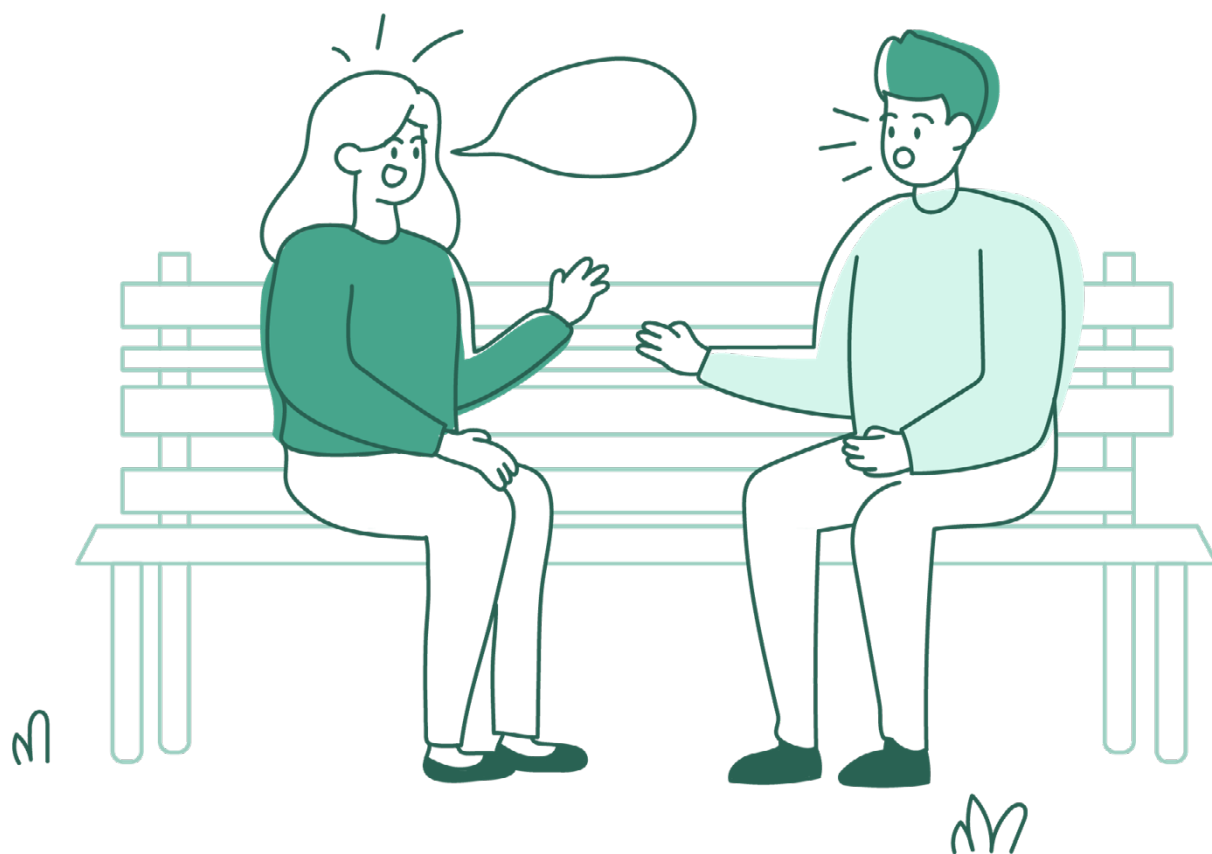


# How To Help An Addict Who Doesn't Want Help





## **Have you found out that a loved one is addicted to drugs or alcohol? Have you confronted them about their addiction?**

Perhaps they have refused treatment. Maybe they do not even admit that they have a problem. When a friend or loved one simply does not want help, it can be devastating and incredibly painful to those who genuinely want to help an addict.

But you must remember that addiction is a powerful disease. Addicts generally do not want to hear about the consequences of their actions. They also do not want to listen to pleas for them to get treatment when they do not believe they have a problem.

Let's face it, if it was easy to get help for an addiction, more people would do it. But the fact is that recovery is one of the toughest things to achieve. It does not matter what the substance is. It takes real guts to even admit that we might have a problem, let alone recover from a substance abuse problem.

If you have a loved one who is denying help for their substance abuse problem, know that it is absolutely normal to feel frustrated. While you cannot convince someone to get help, there are some things you can do to help an addict who does not want help.

**Do not lose hope because no one is beyond recovery.**

# What you CAN do to help an addict

## Show tough love

Loving someone does not always mean being as kind and patient as you can. As harsh as this sounds, **sometimes you must treat loved ones with sternness and stringency.** This is especially true when you want to help an addict who doesn't help. Many addicts do not want to get help, yet they expect their loved ones to support them when they evade treatment. They will even try to manipulate you by using multiple tactics. These tactics include using emotional appeals, and making threats and false promises. Remember, addiction affects their brain chemistry. Try not to take it personally, and show tough love when they play emotional games with you.

## Educate yourself

Addiction is a complicated and misunderstood disease. We cannot fight against battles that we know nothing about. Therefore you need to learn about the nature of addiction. **To provide the understanding that your loved one needs, it is extremely important to know how addiction affects the brain.** Their brain is literally hijacked by their addiction. As such, they are unable to make logical decisions. It is simply not a matter of a lack of self-control. They continue to use because they do not know how to stop, and they need the substance to function. Being patient with your loved one involves learning about what they are going through, and not judging them for it.

## Talk about it

Spread the word about addiction. There is such a stigma attached to addiction, especially when it comes to young people and addiction. Many families are too ashamed to talk about the problem, even though it is a family disease. **Shame is destructive.** Luckily, there are families that are upfront about struggles with substance abuse. Social media is one platform family members utilise to get people to be open about addiction and share their stories.

# What you CAN'T do to help an addict

## You can't make them quit

Many addicts who are suffering from addiction are simply in denial about the extent of their problem. Some may be literally forced into involuntary detox due to a court order, an arrest, or hospitalization, among other reasons. While this form of coerced treatment works for some addicts, it is the antithesis of recovery. **Lasting recovery for most people involves long term treatment by their own free will and choice.** Help for an addict should never involve an abuse of power on your part. This does nothing but push them away even further. According to Bill Piper, director of national affairs at the **Drug Policy Alliance**: *'We do know that treatment is generally more effective when it's voluntary. You can't force people to quit using drugs. It just doesn't work.'*

## You can't do their recovery work for them

All you can do is be supportive. Also, keep in mind that relapse may be inevitable and part of the recovery process. Look for signs that they may be using again. **You can be a part of their recovery, but you cannot babysit them.** They must be willing to do the work themselves.

## You can't enable them

You want to be as supportive as you can to your loved one, but you do want to avoid being an enabler. Enabling can take many forms. Providing financial support and rescuing them in legal matters are just some of the ways. Enabling does nothing to help an addict. Instead, **it can hinder the recovery process.**

# Take Care of Yourself

The most important person when you are trying to help an addict: **YOU**. If they do not want help, it does not mean that you cannot get help for yourself. You do not have to be the addict in order to suffer from the disease of addiction. Individual and family therapy can help a great deal in helping you understand what your loved one is experiencing. It is difficult to free yourself from the chains of addiction, but you deserve to be free.

**Do not let addiction inundate your life.** When a loved one refuses treatment, do not give up. If they are not ready now, it does not mean that they will not be ready later on. In the meantime, be kind to them. But do not be afraid to confront their addiction. Your involvement may not ultimately result in recovery right away, but it can do a great deal in breaking down walls.

Sometimes, that is all we can do for the time being. **And sometimes that is just what we need.**





Founded by individuals who understand the journey firsthand, Rebound is a non-profit support group dedicated to uplifting and guiding the loved ones of those struggling with addiction.

Our service is confidential, non-judgmental, and provided free of charge to carers and family members affected by a loved one's addiction and their associated mental health problems. Please email for a quicker response, otherwise call and leave a voicemail and we will respond within 24 hours.

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