Alcove
Addiction Recovery for Women

Supporting Recovery Without Enabling

Understanding the Difference

- When someone you love is struggling with addiction, it is natural to want to help.
- Sometimes, however, actions intended to help can unintentionally make it easier for addiction to continue.
- Supporting recovery means helping someone take responsibility for their choices while encouraging healthy change.

What Enabling Can Look Like

- Enabling often happens out of love, fear, guilt, or a desire to protect someone from consequences.

Examples include:

- Giving money that may be used for substances
- Paying bills repeatedly without accountability
- Making excuses for harmful behaviour
- Covering up legal, financial, or relationship problems
- Ignoring concerning behaviour
- Taking responsibility for problems caused by another person's substance use

These actions may provide short-term relief, but they can also delay accountability and interfere with recovery..

What Healthy Support Looks Like

- Healthy support encourages responsibility, growth, and meaningful steps toward recovery.

Examples include:

- Expressing care and concern
- Encouraging treatment and recovery supports
- Setting clear and consistent boundaries
- Allowing natural consequences to occur
- Celebrating progress and healthy choices
- Listening without judgment
- Taking care of your own well-being

Setting Healthy Boundaries

- Boundaries are not punishments.
- Boundaries communicate:
    - What behaviour is acceptable
    - What behaviour is not acceptable
    - What you are willing and unwilling to do

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Examples:

- "I will not provide money."
- "I will support you in attending treatment."
- "I will end conversations that become abusive."
- "I am willing to help you access resources."

Healthy boundaries protect both you and your loved one.

Letting Go of Control

- You did not cause your loved one's addiction.
- You cannot control it.
- You cannot cure it.

What you can do is:

- Offer encouragement
- Maintain healthy boundaries
- Support recovery efforts
- Care for yourself

Recovery belongs to the individual.

Taking Care of Yourself

- Supporting someone through addiction can be emotionally exhausting.
- Remember to:
    - Seek support for yourself
    - Attend family support groups
    - Connect with trusted friends or professionals
    - Prioritize your physical and mental health
    - Make time for activities that bring you joy

You deserve support, too.

A Message of Hope

- Change is possible.
- Recovery is often strongest when individuals are supported by family members who offer compassion, encouragement, accountability, and healthy boundaries.
- You do not have to choose between loving someone and setting limits. In fact, healthy boundaries are often one of the greatest gifts you can offer someone in recovery.