



## **FAMILY SUPPORT OPPORTUNITIES**

**Participate in Family Therapy:** During family therapy, family members may engage in a wide range of activities that support themselves and their addicted loved ones. Families can meet and talk with the treatment team, understand the team's roles, how treatment plans are formed, and how the team provides insight and accountability. They can also participate in group therapy sessions to learn healthy ways of expressing emotions and hear from other family members about their experiences. In some cases, families can even undergo private counseling sessions with their loved ones to work through family dynamics.

**Improve Communication:** Family members recovering from the sting of addiction must learn how to ask for what they need and negotiate conflicts without inflicting unnecessary damage. Positive communication first involves a willingness to express emotions honestly, and it can take practice before family communication improves.

**Set Healthy Boundaries:** Better communication leads to family members' ability to ask for what they need and say "no" when it is appropriate. Just as an individual in recovery must learn to recognize triggers for use, family members must also recognize situations where limits must be set on potentially harmful behaviors and where healthy boundaries may need to be held firmly

**Rebuild Trust:** When an individual with an addiction learns to be honest and transparent and begins taking responsibility for the damage caused by addiction, it allows the family to start rebuilding trust with the individual. While the process is often fragile in the early stages and can be disrupted by dishonesty or return to use, trust can be reinforced with continued dedicated efforts from both family and the person in recovery.

**Supporting A Loved One In Rehab:** People in recovery often receive a considerable morale boost when their families and friends are involved in their treatment. Such support is invaluable, but it must remain healthy in its approach; the approval of a loved one in rehab involves recognizing when unhelpful patterns may be developing.

It is of critical importance for family members to learn to engage in healthy self-care. Family members who can do so are far better able to support their loved ones in recovery. At times, this support must

come from an emotional distance, mainly from family members affected negatively by addictive behaviors.

**Recovering As A Family:** Multiple studies show that family involvement in recovery efforts leads to long stretches of abstinence, fewer instances of return to drug use, and better psychosocial and treatment outcomes. The benefits of family involvement during recovery can extend far past the immediate episode of addiction treatment. Challenging the usual maladaptive modes of communication and helping the family replace them with healthier alternatives focus on much of the effort in family programs.

**Attend Family Programs:** In addiction treatment, the word “family” is highly inclusive. It can refer to direct relatives of the person in recovery — spouses, partners, siblings, and children — but it can also be expanded to include extended family, a close circle of friends, or anyone else who is likely to have significant personal interactions with an individual in recovery from addiction. Any of these individuals can and should attend family programs when possible. The only actual requirement for attending these programs is a desire to understand better addiction’s impact on family members and the addicted person.

**Family Support Groups:** Mutual support groups such as 12-step programs often play a significant role in an individual’s recovery efforts, and they can be an integral part of family therapy. Groups like Al-Anon and Nar-Anon are structured to support those with a family member suffering from an addiction. These groups can provide significant levels of support by:

**Modeling Productive Relationships:** Helping family members process their feelings about addiction and treatment. Providing fellowship with those who can relate to the presence of addiction in a family