

Employee Enhancement Newsletter

Helpful Resources from your Employee Assistance Program

October 2014

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Public Employee Benefits Alliance

Drug Abuse and Addiction: Signs, Symptoms, and Help for Drug Problems and



Some people are able to use recreational or prescription drugs without ever experiencing negative consequences or addiction. For many others, substance use can cause problems at work, home, school, and in relationships, leaving you feeling isolated, helpless, or ashamed.

Getting Help for Drug Abuse and Drug Addiction

Find help and support for drug addiction.

Visit a Narcotics Anonymous (NA) meeting in your area. A list of available meetings can be found on their website at <http://www.na.org>. Call 1-800-662-HELP in the U.S. to reach a free referral helpline from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Recognizing that you have a problem is the first step on the road to recovery, one that takes tremendous courage and strength. Facing your addiction without minimizing the problem or making excuses can feel frightening and overwhelming, but recovery is within reach. If you're ready to make a change and willing to seek help, you can overcome your addiction and build a satisfying, drug-free life for yourself.

Support is essential to addiction recovery.

Don't try to go it alone—it's all too easy to get discouraged and rationalize just one more hit or pill. Whether you choose to go to rehab, rely on self-help programs, get therapy, or take a self-directed treatment approach, support is essential. Recovering from drug addiction is much easier when you have people you can lean on for encouragement, comfort, and guidance. Support can come from family members, close friends, therapists or counselors, other recovering addicts, health care providers, and people from your faith community.

When a Loved One Has a Drug Problem

If you suspect that a friend or family member has a drug problem, here are a few things you can do:

- *Speak up.* Talk to the person about your concerns, and offer your help and support without being judgmental. The earlier addiction is treated, the better. Don't wait for your loved one to hit bottom! Be prepared for excuses and denial by listing specific examples of your loved one's behavior that has you worried.

Chat Reminder

Helping a Loved One on the Path to Recovery

Connect with Deer Oaks and a counselor for a live confidential chat.

When:

October 15, 2014

Where:

www.deeroaks.com

Session Time (CST):

12:15 PM to 12:45 PM

Online Seminar Reminder

Identifying Signs of Addiction in a Loved One

When:

October 21, 2014

Where:

www.deeroaks.com

Session Times (CST):

11:00 AM to 12:00 PM

1:00 PM to 2:00 PM





Drug Abuse and Addiction: Signs, Symptoms, and Help for Drug Problems and Substance Abuse

continued...

- *Take care of yourself.* Don't get so caught up in someone else's drug problem that you neglect your own needs. Make sure you have people you can talk to and lean on for support. And stay safe; don't put yourself in dangerous situations.
- *Avoid self-blame.* You can support a person with a substance abuse problem and encourage treatment, but you can't force an addict to change. You can't control your loved one's decisions. Let the person accept responsibility for his or her actions, an essential step along the way to recovery for drug addiction.

Don't

- Attempt to punish, threaten, bribe, or preach
- Try to be a martyr. Avoid emotional appeals that may only increase feelings of guilt and the compulsion to use drugs
- Cover up or make excuses for the drug abuser, or shield them from the negative consequences of their behavior
- Take over their responsibilities, leaving them with no sense of importance or dignity
- Hide or throw out drugs
- Argue with the person when they are high
- Take drugs with the drug abuser
- Feel guilty or responsible for another's behavior

Adapted from: National Clearinghouse for Alcohol & Drug Information

When Your Teen Has a Drug Problem

Discovering your child uses drugs can generate fear, confusion, and anger in parents. It's important to remain calm when confronting your teen, and only do so when everyone is sober. Explain your concerns, and make it clear that your concern comes from a place of love. It's important that your teen feels you are supportive.

Five Steps Parents Can Take

- *Lay down rules and consequences.* Your teen should understand that using drugs comes with specific consequences, but don't make hollow threats or set rules that you cannot enforce. Make sure your spouse agrees with the rules and is prepared to enforce them.
- *Monitor your teen's activity.* Know where your teen goes and who he or she hangs out with. It's also important to routinely check potential hiding places for drugs—in backpacks, between books on a shelf, in DVD cases or make up cases, for example. Explain to your teen that this lack of privacy is a consequence of him or her having been caught using drugs.
- *Encourage other interests and social activities.* Expose your teen to healthy hobbies and activities, such as team sports and after school clubs.
- *Talk to your child about underlying issues.* Drug use can be the result of other problems. Is your child having trouble fitting in? Has there been a recent major change, like a move or divorce, which is causing stress?
- *Get help.* Teenagers often rebel against their parents, but if they hear the same information from a different authority figure, they may be more inclined to listen. Try a sports coach, family doctor, therapist, or drug counselor.

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Healthy Snacking for Kids (and Parents) On The Go



With some planning, healthy snacking can be convenient, tasty, and easy. Here are a few simple steps to successful snacking on the go from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension:

- *Involve your kids in selecting and preparing healthy snacks.* Letting them be involved in a simple task such as sprinkling granola on yogurt or picking out what color of apple they want to eat will significantly increase the likelihood that they will eat it.
- *Take time one day a week to prep and divide food into snack-size portions.* Use baggies, cups, or reusable plastic containers to make the snacks easy to grab and go. This also helps children learn appropriate portion sizes.
- *Use snacks to improve your child's overall diet.* Snacks can be thought of as mini meals that provide nutrients to help your children grow and thrive. Try to limit foods that provide only empty calories and little nutrients such as chips and pop.
- *Choose snacks that contain 2 or 3 of the 5 different food groups:* fruits, vegetables, grains, protein, and dairy such as these:
 - Trail mixes: Mix together dried fruit, cereal and nuts
 - Granola bar and milk fruit smoothies: Blend together fruit (frozen, fresh, or canned), yogurt, and milk or juice
 - Peanut butter on pears, apples, or celery
 - Tortilla wraps: Spread refried beans and cheese on a tortilla and microwave for 20 seconds
 - Cheese sticks and whole grain crackers

Health-e headlines™

Sitting too much?

Get up and get active. Physical fitness may buffer some of the adverse health effects of too much sitting such as obesity, diabetes, heart disease and some cancers, according to a study by researchers from the American Cancer Society, The Cooper Institute, and the University of Texas. The study was in the journal *Mayo Clinic Proceedings*.

Health-e headlines™

Tighten up

Place a rubber band on your water bottle, and lower it a few inches after each sip to mark the place you want to drink past each time you're taking more sips. Remember, you should be drinking half of your body weight in ounces of water each day, says fitness expert Jay Cardiello, editor-at-large at *Shape*.

Health-e headlines™

An EAP Reminder

Life Can Be Hectic. The EAP Can Help You Find Your Balance.

Deer Oaks, your EAP, is always available to you and your household members.

If you are struggling with children, finances, or just want some practical advice on health or the mind-body connection, contact Deer Oaks by calling the Helpline.

Counselors are available 24/7 to provide you with immediate care.





Clinician's Corner..

Monthly Advice from the Deer Oaks Clinical Team

Helping a Loved One on The Path to Recovery



Recovering from an addiction is not an instantaneous act; it becomes a lifelong journey that requires commitment, sacrifice, courage, and most importantly, a strong social support system. However, if you have been dealing with a loved one's addiction, you may be feeling frustrated, angry, confused, resentful and hurt. You may think that your loved one is able to stop using substances but that he or she has simply chosen not to. And, your loved one may have done or said very hurtful things while under the influence, or perhaps after you brought the problem to his/her attention.

The best thing you can do not only to help your loved one but to start your own journey to healing is to become as educated as possible on the topic of addiction. Talk to a family doctor, a therapist who specializes in addiction or conduct research on credible websites such as SAMSHA or ASAM so that you can understand that addiction is a disease, not a choice nor a failure of will. Community-based support groups such as 12-step meetings and Smart Recovery offer support groups for family members of people with addictions to not only increase their knowledge but provide them with a place to meet other people who have dealt with similar struggles.

You would also benefit by taking extra good care of yourself; living with a loved one who is in any phase of the addictions/recovery process can be tiring, frightening, and can lead to decreased activity and moods. Make an effort to set aside time for yourself each and every day and schedule relaxing and enjoyable activities such as yoga, reading a book, exercising, spending time with friends, engaging in a hobby, or simply doing some deep breathing or relaxation exercises.

By taking care of yourself and understanding the disease that is addiction you will be more likely to successfully assist your loved one so that your entire family is then on the road to recovery and healing. Support is always available - even though you may feel alone, there are always resources for you to take advantage of. Please take some time to check out our website for more useful resources and information about recovery and addiction at www.deeroaks.com.

By:

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Financially Helping Your Adult Children



Helping someone obtain his or her financial goals can be very rewarding, especially if you are helping your own child. When your adult child asks for financial help, they can be difficult to refuse; however, you need to be careful. Every child (even those within the same family) is different, and you'll need to assess each situation individually. If your normally responsible child needs help, that can be a very different situation than a not-yet-independent adult child needing financial help yet again.

If you feel that your normally responsible child needs help because of an emergency situation, you may consider assisting them, especially if you and your spouse are in agreement. Be very clear with your child about the kind of assistance you are providing, as well as the terms of that assistance. If you offer a loan that must be repaid, discuss loan terms prior to giving any money.

However, if you find that your adult child needs help yet again because he or she isn't financially responsible, providing them financial education rather than money is going to help them more in the long run. Try to talk with your child about developing a long-term financial plan as well as possible solutions to their short-term problem. Constantly providing your child with the money they request will not teach them financial responsibility.

Be especially careful if your child asks for help cosigning a loan. Cosigning a loan carries many risks and very little reward. In fact, many financial experts believe that you should never put your name on someone else's loan. As a parent, however, it can be hard not to help your own child. If you have been asked to cosign a loan, understand the risks before you sign on the dotted line.

You are responsible for the debt

If the primary borrower does not pay the debt as agreed, for any reason, the creditor will hold you responsible. You should not assume that the lender will pursue collecting from the primary borrower if the borrower is unresponsive. In most cases, collectors will seek payment from the person who offers the best chance of recovering the money, which is likely to be you, and if you do not pay, you could be sued.

Your credit report may suffer

Any late payments made by the primary borrower will appear on your credit report. This is true even if you were unaware that late payments were being made. In addition, the cosigned loan could change your debt-to-income ratio, making it harder to qualify for future credit.

Cosigning does not equal ownership

It is a common misperception that cosigning a secured loan entitles you to ownership. However, if you cosign a loan for a vehicle and your name is not on the title, you are not entitled to ownership of the vehicle. This is true even if you are the one making payments.

The decision to cosign a loan for someone comes down to this: Are you willing to pay the debt? If you are not willing to assume total responsibility, you should not agree to sign for the loan. There are other options—you could offer assistance in a different way, one that may help your adult child get back on his or her feet in a more responsible way.

About Money Management International

Money Management International (MMI) is a nonprofit, full-service credit-counseling agency, providing confidential financial guidance, financial education, counseling and debt management assistance to consumers since 1958. MMI helps consumers trim their expenses, develop a spending plan and repay debts. Counseling is available by appointment in branch offices and 24/7 by telephone and Internet. Services are available in English or Spanish. To learn more, call 800.432.7310 or visit www.MoneyManagement.org.