

# BUILDING, SUPPORTING, AND MAINTAINING SUPPORT NETWORKS AND FAMILY SUPPORTS

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# Substance abuse and relationships

- ▣ How does substance abuse/dependence affect family members?
  - Trust, confidence, esteem, worth are damaged as the addict's needs become primary within the system.
  - SA can increase physical, mental, emotional, sexual and financial abuse as well as neglect.
  - SA can increase the feeling of learned helplessness in family members

# Substance abuse and relationships (cont'd)

- Increase in fear and denial, particularly of the addict's reaction to concerns and worries
- Influences choices and pathways that tend to be more toxic
- Learn “cover up” strategies that may affect their own life
- Family members and other support individuals may not be aware of the disease or what it is.

# Substance abuse and relationships (cont'd)

- Support networks may not know differences between what's supportive and what's enabling
- In the family system, the foundation is built on denial, rigidity, silence, and isolation, which influence the "rules" of "Don't talk, don't trust, don't feel."

# Substance abuse and relationships (cont'd)

- ▣ These effects can also expand to other support systems such as:
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# Response to “The Problem”

1. Denial
2. Attempts to eliminate the problem
3. Disorganization and chaos
4. Reorganization in spite of the problem
5. Efforts to Escape
6. Family Reorganization

# “Toxic” Systems

- ▣ Toxic systems tend to promote destruction of recovery systems and a client’s overall values and goals.
- ▣ Some signs and symptoms may include isolating the client: “rationalizing” or denying behaviors; abuse in any form; avoiding the issue, promoting destructive behaviors, etc.

# “Promoting” Systems

- ▣ Social systems that promote recovery tend to encourage acknowledging the problem and seeking help. These social systems demonstrate compassion, non-judgment, education, support, acceptance and developing connections. Additionally, positive support systems can provide necessary and useful feedback and observations. These systems usually begin to feel or have felt, their importance in the client’s recovery.

# “Promoting” Systems (cont’d)

- ▣ Boundaries are an important component of support systems that help individuals move forward in recovery.
  
- ▣ Boundary Styles
  - Enmeshed
  - Rigid
  - Flexible (healthy)

# “Promoting” Systems

- ▣ Types of Boundaries
  - Physical
  - Mental
  - Emotional
  - Spiritual

# Substance Abuse and Relationships

- ▣ What are the advantages to involving family members and others in recovery?
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- ▣ What are disadvantages?
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# Supportive networks

- ▣ Some systems that are included: congregations that promote support for the addict and families or other spiritual/religious systems; work/employment systems; family; friends and other social systems; therapy; online support groups; colleagues; mentors; childcare resources; medical care; transportation; housing; food; clothing; sober housing networks; faith based systems; secular systems (i.e., Women for Sobriety (WFS), Save Our Selves (SOS), Rational Recovery (RR), Men for Sobriety (MFS), Moderation Management (MM), SMART Recovery, etc.)

# Enabling vs. Supportive (some examples)

ENABLING	SUPPORTIVE
“Doing it for them”	Being there when they do it
Interfering with possible consequences (with exceptions)	Being there when they face the consequences (examples)
Not expressing what you feel	Asserting yourself in a respectful and calm manner
Setting boundaries and not following through	Following through
Taking care of ....	Taking care of yourself

# Questions you may be asked as a Recovery Coach

- ▣ What if he/she relapses?
- ▣ What happens to me when he/she becomes sober?
- ▣ What role do I play?
- ▣ What's going to happen?
- ▣ What if I or he/she wants to break up/separate/divorce?
- ▣ What do I do if he/she is still abusive?
- ▣ How do I trust him/her now?
- ▣ What if he/she doesn't want to continue going to meetings?
- ▣ How do I deal with my hurt?
- ▣ How do I know if I'm doing something helpful or harmful?

# References/ Resources

- ▣ Ethical Guidelines for the delivery of Peer based recovery support services, White, W.L. et al.
- ▣ [http://www.nattc.org/resPubs/recovery/Recovery\\_Linking\\_NEATTC.pdf](http://www.nattc.org/resPubs/recovery/Recovery_Linking_NEATTC.pdf)
- ▣ [http://www.bhevolution.org/public/family\\_support.page](http://www.bhevolution.org/public/family_support.page)
- ▣ <http://www.livestrong.com/article/14673-social-support-in-recovery/>