

# **Family Recovery From Addiction - 10 Crucial Steps**

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Families with a loved one who is addicted are hurting families. Pain, fear and frustration come from watching someone they love fall between the cracks, perhaps to be lost forever, possibly to death. Then there is the chaos that addiction brings on the family – broken trust, lost intimacy, abandonment, financial disaster, etc. Families dealing with addiction are often stressed to the breaking point.

The good news is that families struggling with addiction are usually strong families. Their strength comes in no small way from the depth of their dedication to their loved one, and the preservation of the family unit. Loving an addicted family member takes loyalty, hope and memory – memory of who the beloved person was before addiction took up residence in the family home, and hope that this person can ‘return’. This kind of love is all about enduring optimism and compassion, but can lead to bigger problems if not backed by wisdom, support and healthy coping skills. No family is born with the knowledge of how to deal effectively with addiction. It is a skill that must be learned and practiced daily, and can be helped tremendously by mentoring.

One of the biggest roadblocks for families is the belief that everything will be ok if they can just ‘fix’ their addicted loved one. I often have to remind families that although the addict is responsible for their own recovery, they are all in this together. Addiction can be so all-consuming that families forget that they have needs that are not being met, that chaos reigns where there should be sanctuary, or that relationships are damaged that need repair. When addiction infiltrates a family, relations are strained, anxious and mistrustful. Battle fatigue and hopelessness set in. Because addiction hurts the whole family, it is absolutely essential that solutions are designed to restore the family to wholeness.

## **Recovery from addiction is a family affair**

Constructive and active family engagement in the recovery process is pivotal if the family is to heal from the destructive impact of addiction. Families need a variety of supports, information and skills to move forward with hope. Ten crucial steps to family recovery are suggested to help families find their way to true health and happiness:

1. Come out of isolation and connect with community resources – join an education or support group; or participate in family counselling
2. Locate reliable information on addiction
3. Understand how addiction affects both the addicted person and the family
4. Learn communication skills that help, such as assertiveness and limit setting
5. Stop dynamics that hinder, including enabling, denial and minimizing ‘the problem’
6. Learn to detach with love, and refocus on the self and other family members
7. Develop strategies for dealing with relapse and other potential setbacks (e.g. depression)
8. Support and protect children
9. Rediscover personal and family strengths
10. Pursue individual and family activities that are a source of fulfillment and happiness

Families that are impacted by addiction can take a few years to recover, as they rebuild and stabilize after their loved one has gone through treatment. It can seem like a very long haul. It helps to keep in mind that commitment to the addiction recovery process is also commitment to the overall wellbeing of the family. Noticeable gains will be made along the way that help everyone. Families are strengthened by increasing levels of genuine intimacy, and seeing themselves coping better with challenges. The discipline of recovery can bring the family together to be the healthiest it has ever been – a true recipe for success.

**Glynis Sherwood** - Your Addiction Recovery Expert - is a Counsellor, Therapist, Consultant and Coach residing in Vancouver, BC. To learn more about how to help your family and yourself become more resilient when overcoming addiction, visit my website [www.RecoveryCounsellingSolutions.com](http://www.RecoveryCounsellingSolutions.com) . While visiting my site I invite you to claim my Free Report: "**7 Addiction Recovery 'Red Flags' and What To Do About Them**". You are also welcome to contact me for a Free Consultation by telephone: 778-837-0616, or by email: [Info@GlynisSherwood.com](mailto:Info@GlynisSherwood.com) .