How To Love an Addict Without Enabling Them

By The Professionals At Robert Alexander Center

It is hard to watch a loved one struggle. Sometimes helping them out or looking the other way when problematic behaviors arise can seem like a way to support them, but is it doing more damage than good? When does support become enabling?

At the Robert Alexander Center (RAC) our addiction treatment includes family therapy options to support those who may struggle with differentiating, being supportive, and enabling negative behavior. Our comprehensive treatment programs are designed to support individuals through all stages of addiction treatment including rebuilding relationships and family connections.

Contact our facility today to see how we can support you through this challenging time.

What Does It Mean to 'Enable' Someone?

Enabling comes in many forms, but it generally comes out of a place of love and fear. Fear for your loved one's safety. Fear of rejection. Fear of loss. Where many people feel they are being supportive or helpful or minding their own business, this could be enabling the behaviors of an addict.

Some common enabling behaviors include minimizing the situation, taking on additional responsibilities, keeping feelings to yourself, justifying their behaviors, controlling or "parenting" the situation, and avoidance and denial.

Enabling can also include drinking or using with the addict for your own peace of mind, prioritizing their needs over your own, and blaming others for the addict's actions. These actions can create feelings of resentment and superiority in the relationship.

How Can You Love an Addict Without Enabling Them?

Stopping enabling behavior can be difficult and may initiate an increase of negative feelings in the relationship for the time being, but by setting these boundaries, you can help them realize their behavior has consequences and when they are sober, they will thank you for it.

There are several practical things you can do to set boundaries for yourself and your loved one that can help them realize and get the help they need.

One of the first things you can do is stop giving or loaning them money. While this may seem harsh, it is a boundary that you need to set for yourself and them. By removing that financial support you have been providing, will make it harder for them to obtain the drug and may help them realize the need for a steady job and help them develop responsibility and discipline.

Another thing you can do to set a boundary for your loved ones is by allowing them to manage their own personal responsibilities. Whether it be financial or cleaning up the house or parenting duties, by removing yourself from the situation, you are forcing them to step up and be responsible for and it. When you take over the responsibilities for them, it makes them feel like you've got it handled so they don't have to, making them reliant on you.

A final thing that you can do, to stop enabling your loved ones, is to stop making excuses for them. When you make excuses for them, you remove their responsibility for their actions. A person who feels no responsibility for their actions will not seek help to alter their behavior.

How Can RAC Help Your Loved One Get Sober Today?

At the Robert Alexander Center (RAC) our clients work with trained professionals to develop personalized addiction treatment programs designed around their specific treatment needs. Through this process, individual ownership and goal setting can help them take responsibility for their actions and motivate their recovery.

Through RAC we support our client's holistic health by providing evidence-based therapeutic treatment options for the mind, body, and spirit.

Contact us today to see how we can help your loved one get sober today.

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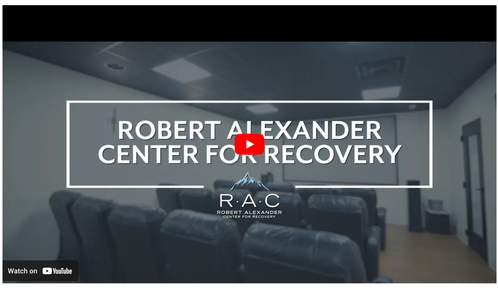

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