

Seeking Addiction Treatment

When Your Loved One Resists Treatment

Watching a loved one struggle with addiction is a profoundly painful and disorienting experience, particularly when your loved one resists the treatment that is so desperately needed. How can they not see that they need help? Why won't they change? Why won't they admit they are out of control? How can you make them get treatment? By the time treatment is necessary, there are very real biological and psychological changes that drive your loved one to maintain the addiction; they are not simply being difficult. With knowledge, compassion, and firmness, you can take meaningful steps to help guide them toward treatment. Here are the guidelines we share with concerned loved ones:

Overcome Denial and Minimization

Denial is very real and very powerful, both for people experiencing addiction and for the family members who love them. Everyone involved can be deeply invested in minimizing the severity of the addiction and the need for treatment, allowing the addiction to grow stronger and deeper. If you are concerned about your loved one, it is important to understand two key points:

- What you are currently witnessing is a best-case scenario; chances are that their addiction is even more extensive than you realize.
- You cannot expect a person in the midst of addiction to make rational choices, because addiction inherently drives you to act against your own best interests.

Regardless of what your loved one tells you, the excuses they make, or their accusations that you are making a big deal out of nothing, you know in your heart that they need treatment, and your intervention is essential to helping them find peace.

Use Your Leverage

Family members often fear that pushing too hard will cause their loved one to react with anger, withdraw from the relationship, or increase their self-destruction. In reality, what threatens the well-being of your loved one and your relationship is not your desire to intervene, but the addiction itself. While addiction is not a choice, addiction treatment is, and during the intervention you can clearly delineate what the consequences of not making that choice will be. These consequences must be meaningful, they must be realistic, and you must be willing to implement them.

Work With An Intervention Specialist

Whether this is your first time trying to get your loved one to go to treatment or you have made attempts in the past, working with a professional intervention specialist is the best way to successfully guide your loved one toward the help they need. Intervention specialists have the training, experience, and perspective to design effective intervention strategies to optimize your chances of success. They also give you the chance to occupy your true role as a loving family member, not an addiction expert, and support you through the intervention process. Most treatment facilities can recommend an interventionist, so be sure to ask when you call to inquire about treatment. (There is almost always an extra cost to using an interventionist, but in many cases it gives your suffering family member the best chance of making it successfully to treatment.)

Stick To Your Plan

In order for an intervention to be successful, it is essential that you stick to the plan. This means following your intervention specialist's lead. They are here to help you and are working with your family's best interests in mind. Trust them. If your loved one agrees to go to treatment at the intervention, it is imperative that they leave immediately to seize the momentum of the moment.

Your intervention specialist should pre-arrange transportation to the addiction treatment facility.

If your loved one refuses to go to treatment, follow through with the consequences you have laid out. It is easy to want to take back what you've said and hope everything gets back to normal, but when you're dealing with addiction, "normal" is what is destroying you. The hardest, most painful, and most fiercely loving thing you can do is letting your loved one live with their choice. It is also important to remember that the fact that they are not ready to get help now doesn't mean they won't be ready in the future.

Believe in Your Loved One's Desire to Heal

There is a common misconception that someone has to want to go to treatment in order for treatment to be effective. The fact is that most people who come to addiction treatment arrive reluctantly, as the result of persuasion by those who love them, and it is the recovery process itself that awakens the desire for healing. Believe in the treatment process and its ability to awaken this desire for change and healing in your loved one.

– Take the Next Steps –

If your family member is struggling with addiction and resisting treatment, we invite you to contact us at any time to speak with our experienced staff about how to guide your loved one toward treatment. We are always available to offer advice and support, connect you to a trusted network of intervention specialists, and arrange safe transportation to treatment.

Please reach out to us at 888-475-8177.