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## Avoid Attempts to Control Outcomes

- You can kill yourself trying to prevent a loved one's relapse.
- Let your loved ones work their own program.
- Stop being a detective; turn them over to their Higher Power. Stop all interrogations immediately. The third degree only sets up resistance, and it gives them an excuse to drink or use with righteous justification.
- Listen with empathy, but don't bail them out with advice.
- Accept that you have no power to keep them from using alcohol & other drugs.
- Rebuilding trust in the family begins by trusting that you are worth taking care of.
- Find support and say no to futility; it is the first pillar of family trust.

## Communicate in a Strength-Based, Non-Shaming Style

- Notice what other family members are doing well. State your compliments in the positive, "You remembered," versus, "You didn't forget."
- If we unwittingly guilt family members, we become part of the problem. Coercing them to keep commitments only triggers their shame. Toxic shame confirms that they are defective and unable to change. Eliminating shame allows trust to increase naturally.
- Everyone in the family needs to be celebrated for their ability to learn and change. Try not to let past resentments stand in the way of this concept. When families can do this for each other, trust blossoms beyond measure.

## Don't Interfere with Natural Consequences

- The only way to help an addict is to allow them to feel the pain they have created. Unfortunately, unless all family members are in agreement, the one person setting healthy boundaries and saying no can get cast as the bad guy.
- You can raise trust considerably in your family by supporting those who stop enabling.
- We need to let addicts learn from their mistakes.
- They are experts at splitting family members, even after sobriety. An addict can sense when you've made the soul-sacrificing deal with your inner terrorist: "I will only feel OK when she likes me again & I get her sober for life." The inner terrorist is your disease – it's the toxic shame urging you to accomplish what is not humanly possible: to save someone from their own choices.
- When an addict, even in recovery, smells your desperation to save, they are no longer accountable for earning your trust. They'll assume that you will be satisfied with something less than their best efforts. They can pit one family member against another until the whole family is torn apart – which serves as the prelude and takes them out of the center of the drama as they slide back into active addiction.
- The desire to save is strong. Get help from your sponsor in a Twelve Step program to help you stand your ground.

## Find a Safe Place to Share Your Feelings

- Families of those in recovery have been hurt and disappointed countless times during an active addiction.
- Addicts are ruthlessly covert and deceptive. Addicts justify all broken commitments; then emotionally abuse anyone who questions their accounts of reality. They deflect human contact, afraid to let anyone know the depth of their shame.
- It's very difficult not to expect more deception even after your loved one gets sober. Only as you're cleared of unfinished resentments, sadness, fear and shame can you be an agent for family trust. Rebuilding trust in your family depends on your own authenticity.
- Truth depends on talking about your emotions, (whether that be anger, fear, shame or guilt), neutralizing fears and eliminating assumptions. Communicate honestly and encourage other family members to do the same. Check in with each other often, and provide a safe environment for doing so. No feelings are bad feelings, and often, unexpressed emotions fuel fear.

When family members of a newly recovery person let their imaginations run wild, they envision the miser of the past and fear an ominous future. Say no to being driven. Say yes to easing up on yourself. Trust in this moment that you deserve peace. Now take a deep breath.



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Adam Finley; MSW, MA, LICSWA, CIP · (509) 991-5822 · [adam@fcsinterventions.com](mailto:adam@fcsinterventions.com)

Jenny Finley; MA, LMHC, SUDP · (425) 445-2513 · [jenny@fcsinterventions.com](mailto:jenny@fcsinterventions.com)

Tami Minchow; MSW, LICSWA · (509) 255-3572 · [tami@fcsinterventions.com](mailto:tami@fcsinterventions.com)