



New York State Bar Association

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ENABLING

The "do's" and "don'ts" in dealing with a substance abuser:

1. **DON'T** allow the dependent person to lie to you and accept it for the truth, for in so doing you encourage this process (enabling). The truth is often painful, but get at it.
2. **DON'T** let the drug abusing person exploit you, or take advantage of you, for in so doing you become an accomplice (enabler) in the evasion of responsibility.
3. **DON'T** lecture, moralize, scold, praise, blame, threaten, or argue. You may feel better, but the situation will be worse.
4. **DON'T** accept promises, for this is just a method of postponing pain. In the same way, don't keep switching agreements. If an agreement is made, stick to it.
5. **DON'T** allow your anxiety to compel you to do what the drug dependent person must do for him/herself.
6. **DON'T** cover up or abort the consequences of drug use. This reduces the crisis but perpetuates the illness (enabling).
7. **DON'T** try to follow this as a rule book. It is simply a "guide" to be used with intelligence and evaluation. If at all possible, seek good professional help. You need it as well as the drug dependent person.

8. Above all, **DON'T** put off facing the reality that drug dependency is a progressive illness that gets increasingly worse as use of mood altering chemicals continues. Start now to learn, to understand, and to plan for recovery. To do nothing is the worst choice you can make.
9. **DON'T** make threats or promises that you are unable or unwilling to carry out.
10. **DO** seek help. In seeking help you are preventing further damage from the disease of addiction...to yourself and the person you are concerned about.
11. **DO** remember....Alcoholism is a treatable disease. Alcoholics can get better when they stop drinking and begin the road to recovery.
12. **DO** participate in 12 Step meetings and counseling sessions to help yourself and your family.
13. **DO** learn the facts about the disease of alcoholism and drug abuse.
14. **DO** look for warning signs of alcohol problems. Each alcoholic has a different drinking pattern. Some alcoholics never look or act drunk.
15. **DO** realize that you are **NOT** the cause for the alcoholic's drinking or behavior.