

Cultural Daily

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How To Help A Friend In Recovery

Our Friends · Tuesday, April 13th, 2021

If a loved one in your life is overcoming addiction, you want to be there for them. Long-term sobriety depends on a support system that can listen and help. But most people are not familiar with the world of recovery and may need to learn about what to expect.

This article will break down a few strategies on how to be a great ally and resource for your friend.

Be Sure You Are Up To It

Put on your oxygen mask first. If you do not have the time or focus on assisting someone going through one of the toughest periods in their life, then be honest.

Don't say "call me any time, day or night" unless you wholeheartedly mean it. While you are not quite signing on to be a trained sponsor, it will be a years-long commitment that requires mature communication if you really want to be there.

Plan Sober Activities

Fun activities seem simple but can make a big difference. Invite your friend to your running club, or set up a weekly coffee date. Even taking up a new hobby together can help your loved one focus on something positive and get their mind off the stress of recovery.

It can seem like every activity was enhanced through substance abuse, so try to make the best of these moments without even thinking that it could be better.

Understand Their Recovery Process

Everyone has different methods for letting go of their addiction. Some people will visit daily AA or NA meetings, which are open to everyone, by the way, so feel free to join to learn more about the community.

Others will be using medications like [suboxone detox](#), which have their own side effects or slightly addictive properties. If you live with someone on this medication, offer to hide the bottle and administer the dosages at approved times. But consult with your friend's doctor if you have any questions about this responsibility.

Don't Give Advice

Unsolicited advice on the recovery process isn't always welcome. Leave it to the experts and doctors. Even if you have experienced your own recovery, it will not be the same as someone else.

Free advice can easily sound like judgment, and that needs to be left outside. You are not their parent and should not tell them what to do, even if they make a mistake. Helicoptering will add unneeded stress to your life and make you a worse ally. The rule of thumb is always on your friend's side, even if you don't agree.

Leave Your Own Substances At Home

Never use or drink in front of your friend. While that can be easy to control, also try to avoid triggering environments. That can mean bars or parties where you know there will be drugs and alcohol.

Even if your friend tells you it is ok to have one drink in front of them, be strong and kindly refuse.

Be Patient

There will never be a day when you can celebrate the end of your friend's addiction. It will get easier over time, but addiction is a lifelong battle. It is a journey with many peaks and valleys. Your commitment to be there for the bad times is what will set you apart from other friends.

Of course, there are no rules on how to be an ally for someone in recovery. Once they come out of a treatment center or admit they need help, you should ask what they need. If they don't know yet, just pick up when they call.

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