

NEW DAY NEWS



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WWW.STARTINGPLACE.ORG

addiction is a family disease

families are not responsible for the addiction; the individual family member who has the problem with an addiction is. However, there are factors that contribute to making it a family disease.

For example, the tendency to become addicted may be genetically transmitted. This has been supported by research that has tracked the incidence of addiction even in people raised away from their families as in the case of adopted children.

The family suffers from addiction in many ways. Nearly one third of US families have a family member with a substance abuse problem. One fourth of these are in the nuclear family, i.e. parent or sibling. There is more divorce, domestic violence, child abuse, depression, anxiety, and general medical problems in families dealing with addiction. Spouses/partners of addicts suffer more depression and anxiety than others. Children from families with addicts may have behavior & academic problems, and suffer from low self esteem and depression and have more trouble with the law. As adults these children may suffer from depression, social maladjustment and have relationship problems.

Families face a number of challenges in dealing with a loved one's addiction. Despite having the best of intentions, it is easy for family members to blame themselves, stay silent, try to fix the problem, get angry or give up. Once people adjust to living in dysfunction, it can be difficult to reconnect in a healthy way.

If the addict and the family get into recovery, many of these affects will begin to decrease with time. Active participation in the companion 12-step programs such as Al-Anon and Nar-Anon, family therapy, or individual counseling can help with recovery of the whole family from this disease.



Joel Kaufman, Ph.D.
CEO

Loving Detachment

An important teacher in my life, Anne Wilson Schaefer, once stated "Everything in our lives is an opportunity for learning. Often our most painful experiences open doors that must be opened before we can take our next steps. That doesn't mean that we don't sometimes have to walk over what seems like beds of hot coals to reach the door. Yet once we reach the other side the learning is there."

Dealing with another person's addiction can be a challenging and at times painful situation. Al-Anon teaches the concept of "loving detachment." How does one walk the path with someone who has a substance abuse problem and find the "middle way"? That way of showing compassion, caring, concern and even understanding of the addictive process but yet caring enough to detach and let the person be responsible for themselves and what they need to learn for themselves. It is caring and love with boundaries. I have heard it called in the 12 step program, "Tough love."

Not an easy path to walk with someone who one cares about. However, it is also important that one focus on what one needs to learn for themselves from the process and not entirely on the addict.

The serenity prayer is a wise "mantra" for finding the middle way - "God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference"

Smart Recovery

Smart Recovery is not a 12 step group. It is however a facilitated support group focused on "helping individuals gain independence from addictive behavior." In addition to support, it is skills-based and teaches individuals how to (1) enhance and maintain motivation to abstain, (2) cope with urges, (3) manage thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, and (4) balance momentary and enduring satisfaction. It assumes addiction can arise from substance use (alcohol, drugs, food) and involvement in activities (gambling, sex, spending, relationships, etc.). Groups are free of charge and they have online groups as well. For meetings in South Florida- <http://www.smartrecovery.org/meetings/>

Al-Anon & Nar-Anon

Al-Anon and Nar-Anon recognizes that alcoholism and drug addiction is a family disease. No matter what relationship one has with an alcoholic/drug addict, whether they are still drinking or drugging or not, those who have been affected by someone else's substance abuse can find solutions that lead to serenity in the Al-Anon/Alateen fellowship- <http://www.al-anon.alateen.org/> and the Nar-Anon fellowship-<http://www.nar-anon.org/>

Our services and how to contact us

The Starting Place provides outpatient substance abuse and mental health services to children, teens, young adults and their families. Our services include assessments, individual counseling, family counseling, case management, psycho-educational and therapy groups, school based services, and aftercare/continuing care services. Services are office-based and in-home and school-based. Our hours are tailored to meet the needs of our clients. Fees are based on a sliding scale and we also accept a few different insurances.

If you would like to set up an appointment or speak to someone further about our services, please contact us at (954) 327-4060. You can also check us out at our website at www.startingplace.org

<http://www.facebook.com/thestartingplace>

