



Some people describe Madness as doing the same thing over and over yet expecting a different outcome. This describes what happens to the families of addicts/alcoholics in many thousands of homes throughout the country when they ask their husband/wife/partner/child or sibling to stop using their substance of choice.

Addiction doesn't just affect those who are drinking or using drugs, food or other substances, it ultimately affects everyone around them, particularly their loved ones. As the addiction increases the family becomes preoccupied with stopping it, they start to hide drink or destroy drugs, hide car keys, check and re-check anything they believe may help, basically they become obsessed with stopping the addiction, but unfortunately, addiction is a progressive disease which does not have any consideration for others.

Loved ones and friends must decide at some point when they have heard enough lies, been let down once too often, been disappointed or embarrassed sufficiently for them to say ENOUGH. But what does that mean?

Sometimes 'Helping' Doesn't Help at All

Many times when family and friends try to "help" an addicted person, they are actually making it easier for them to continue in the progression of the disease.

This phenomenon is called **Enabling**, which takes many forms, all of which have the same effect - allowing the alcoholic/addict to avoid the consequences of their actions. This in turn allows the addict to continue merrily along his/her way, secure in the knowledge that no matter how much they mess things up; somebody will always be there to rescue them from their mistakes, there is always a soft landing when people around you care.

What is the difference between helping and enabling?

There are many opinions and viewpoints on this, but here is a simple description:

Helping is doing something for someone that they are not capable of doing themselves.

Enabling is doing for someone things that they could, and *should* be doing themselves.

Simply put, Enabling creates an atmosphere in which the alcoholic/addict can comfortably continue with their unacceptable behaviour.

As caring people the hardest thing for you to do is to stop enabling, stop making it ok, do not allow drugs or alcohol in the house, refuse to hand over money, don't accept excuse after excuse and stop pretending this isn't happening. Make a decision, stick to it and (most importantly) be prepared to carry it through. False promises and threats just won't work anymore, talk to professionals, get help and take a stand.

People die as a result of addictions, families break down and children grow up with negative role models – unfortunately some people are afraid to do the difficult thing and they end up losing their loved ones to addiction, and then losing themselves to blame and feelings of guilt.

Don't let that happen to you, we have people you can talk to who understand addictions, who have worked in the field for years and have no illusions as to how hard this is for you, take a step towards getting help and pick up the phone.

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