



# Are You Helping or Enabling? Posted By: Gus Stieber on April 3, 2016, Kiva Recovery Center Blog

As friends and family members of a person with an addiction, we will often do everything in our power to help. Unfortunately, too often instead of helping, our actions actually enable their addiction.

According to experts, enabling is commonly defined as intentionally or unintentionally removing the natural consequences to the individual struggling with addiction of his or her behavior. Professionals warn against enabling because evidence has shown that an addict experiencing the damaging consequences of his addiction has the most powerful incentive to change. How do you know if you're helping or enabling? Ask yourself these questions:

- Do you take steps to cover up the addiction and help keep it hidden?
- Do you make excuses for your loved one's addiction or behavior?
- Do you avoid confronting the addiction in an attempt to avoid conflict?
- Do you have trouble expressing your emotions?
- Do you believe your loved one is just going through a phase?
- Do you believe the problem will eventually resolve itself without help?
- Do you handle the responsibilities or pay bills of your loved one?
- Do you enjoy the feeling of being 'needed' by your loved one?
- Are you guilty of giving second, third, and fourth chances?
- Do you ever participate in risky behaviors alongside your loved one?
- Do you put the addict's needs before your own?
- Do you resent the addict?



Answering "yes" to one or more of these questions could indicate that you've been enabling the addict in your life. Even if your actions come from a place of love, you could actually be prolonging your loved one's addiction and even making it worse. Enabling conveys the message that either the addict's actions have no consequences or that if it does, you'll be there to fix it or clean up the mess.

Once you realize that you are enabling your loved one's addiction, it's time to put your foot down. Try taking these steps:

Talk about it. Instead of just saying no, discuss why you don't want to provide the money or do other favors for the addict. Stay strong. Your loved one may be very persistent about needing your help. Expect this, and make a pact with yourself to resist the desire to "help."

Set boundaries. Use saying no as an opportunity to set limits and steer your loved one toward getting help for the addiction.

Setting boundaries may include limitations such as refusing to give financial help, take on their responsibilities, lie or make excuses for their behavior. Don't Fear Consequences. Trying to control the situation out of fear of repercussion only serves to prevent the addict from suffering the consequences — consequences that may actually provide the incentive to change. Put Yourself First. It doesn't matter if the addict is your husband, wife, son. daughter, mother, father or friend. You cannot risk your own welfare for their sake. Selflessness is admirable, but it does not serve to help the addict or yourself.

Your EAP representative can help you determine if there is a problem, and how to most effectively address the issue. Please contact the representative listed on the next page for more information.



## Signs and Symptoms of Addiction

(excerpts from The National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence - NCADD.com)

Loss of Control: Drinking or drugging more than a person wants to, for longer than they intended, or despite telling themselves that they wouldn't do it this time.

Neglecting Other Activities: Spending less time on activities that used to be important (hanging out with family and friends, exercising, pursuing hobbies or other interests) drop in attendance and performance at work or school because of the use of alcohol or drugs;

Risk Taking: More likely to take serious risks in order to obtain one's drug of choice.

Relationship Issues: People struggling with addiction act out against those closest to them, particularly if someone is attempting to address their substance problems; complaints from co-workers, supervisors, teachers or classmates. Secrecy: Going out of one's way to hide the amount of drugs or alcohol consumed or one's activities when drinking or drugging; unexplained injuries or accidents.

Changing Appearance: Serious changes or deterioration in hygiene or physical appearance – lack of showering, slovenly appearance, unclean clothes.

Family History: A family history of addiction can dramatically increase one's predisposition to substance abuse. Tolerance: Over time, a person's body adapts to a substance to the point that they need more and more of it in order to have the same reaction.

Withdrawal: As the effect of the alcohol or drugs wear off the person may experience symptoms such as: anxiety or jumpiness; shakiness or trembling; sweating, nausea and vomiting, insomnia, depression, irritability, fatigue or loss of appetite and headaches.

Continued Use Despite Negative Consequences: Even though it is causing problems (on the job, in relationships, for one's health), a person continues drinking and drugging.

The heart and soul of the District 141 Employee Assistance Program are local lodge EAP peer coordinators. These dedicated volunteers use their personal time to assist other union members and their families who are experiencing personal difficulties. EAP coordinators do not make clinical diagnoses or clinical evaluations. They are trained to make a basic assessment of your situation and refer you to an appropriate resource for a detailed evaluation. EAP coordinators follow up to ensure you have been able to access services that address the difficulty you are experiencing. Your IAM EAP resource is listed below. Please call the representative listed here for help with troubling issues.

#### United Airlines Employee Assistance Program Airline Coordinator Kathy Ferguson

E-Mail: kfborabora@cox.net, Cell: 703-505-4321

American Airlines Employee Assistance Program Airline Coordinator Chris Davis

E-mail: <a href="mailto:chrisx1959@yahoo.com">chrisx1959@yahoo.com</a> Cell: 704-572-4859

Hawaiian Airlines Employee Assistance Program Airline Coordinator Maurice Masaki

> E-Mail: mmasaki@iam141.org Cell: 808-728-4316

## IAM EAP Calendar

### EAP III

May 22-27, 2016 William W. Winpisinger Education and Technology Center

#### EAP II

July 10-15, 2016 William W. Winpisinger Education and Technology Center

> **EAP IV** (tentative)

December 11-16, 2016 William W. Winpisinger Education and **Technology Center** 

