



# HELPING HANDS



## Resources for Families Coping with Mental and Substance Use Disorders

(excerpts from SAMhSA.gov)

Every family is unique, but all families share a bond that can be used to support one another during trying times.

While there is no one-size-fits-all solution for helping a family member who is drinking too much, using drugs, or dealing with a mental illness, research shows that family support can play a major role in helping a loved one with mental and substance use disorders.

When a family member is experiencing a mental or substance use disorder, it can affect more than just the person in need of recovery. Evidence has shown that some people have a genetic predisposition for developing mental and substance use disorders and may be at greater risk based on environmental factors such as having grown up in a home affected by a family member's mental health or history of substance use. Families should be open to the options of support groups or family therapy and counseling, which can improve treatment effectiveness by supporting the whole family.

It is also important to remember that the unique challenges that come from helping a loved one with a mental or substance use disorder can be taxing, so caregivers should take steps to prioritize their own health as well.

Family members may be more likely to notice when their loved ones are experiencing changes in mood or behavior. Being able to offer support, family members can connect those in need with treatment, resources, and services to begin and stay on their recovery journey.

## STARTING THE CONVERSATION

Spend time up front getting clear on the agenda and desired outcome so that when a family member is drinking too much, using drugs, or struggling with a mental disorder, your support can be key to getting them the treatment they need. Starting the conversation is the first step to getting help.

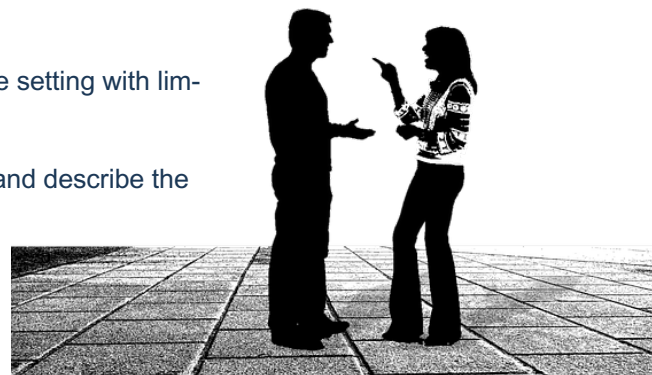
**IDENTIFY AN APPROPRIATE TIME AND PLACE.** Consider a private setting with limited distractions, such as at home or on a walk.

**EXPRESS CONCERNS AND BE DIRECT.** Ask how they are feeling and describe the reasons for your concern.

**ACKNOWLEDGE THEIR FEELINGS AND LISTEN.** Listen openly, actively, and without judgement.

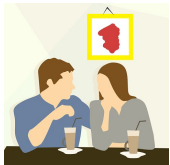
**OFFER TO HELP.** Provide reassurance that mental and/or substance use disorders are treatable. Help them locate and connect to treatment services.

**BE PATIENT.** Recognize that helping your loved one doesn't happen overnight. Continue reaching out with offers to listen and help.



# What to Say

## Supporting a Loved one with a Mental Health or Substance Abuse Disorder



When a family member is drinking too much, using drugs, or struggling with a mental disorder, your support can be key to getting them the treatment they need. Starting the conversation is the first step to getting help. Here are some ways to start a conversation.

**“I see you’re going through something. How can I best support you?”**

**“I care about you and am here to listen. Do you want to talk about what’s been going on?”**

**“I’ve noticed you haven’t seemed like yourself lately. How can I help?”**

**“I’ve been worried about you. Can we talk? If not, who are you comfortable talking to?”**



For more help, contact your Employee Assistance program representative listed below.

## IAM Peer Employee Assistance Program



The heart and soul of the District 141 Employee Assistance Program is the local lodge EAP peer coordinator. These dedicated men and women volunteer their personal time to assist other union members and their families who are experiencing personal difficulties. EAP peer coordinators do not make clinical diagnoses or clinical evaluations, however, they are trained to make a basic assessment of your situation and refer you to an appropriate resource for a more detailed evaluation. EAP peer coordinators will follow up to ensure you have been able to access services that addressed the difficulty you were experiencing.

### IAM EAP Airline Chairmen

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Hawaiian Airlines Meki Pei, mobile 808-208-5950,

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For more resources, visit [www.SAMHSA.gov/families](http://www.SAMHSA.gov/families).

If you or someone you know needs help, call:

**1-800-662-HELP (4357)**

This is free and confidential information and treatment referral.

**Alanon**  
**Al-anon.org**

**Al-Anon is a mutual support group. Everyone at the meeting has experienced a problem with someone else’s drinking.**

**Families Anonymous**  
**Familiesanonymous.org**

**A 12-step program for families living with someone experiencing a substance abuse problem.**