NATIONAL ADDICTIONS MANAGEMENT SERVICE

Family Support Guide:

Supporting Your Loved Ones on Their Journey to Recovery



Health Promotion Board - I Quit Programme
If you need help to quit vaping or are under 16, call QuitLine at 1800 438 2000.

QuitVape Hotline: 6389 2929
Appointment: for.sg/quitvapeappt

National Addictions Management Service
10 Buangkok View
Buangkok Green Medical Park
Block 9, Basement 1
Singapore 539747

General Enquiries: 6389 2000
Appointment Line: 6389 2200

www.nams.sg
National Addictions Management Service
@nams.sg

Scan for more educational resources

Dec 2025

Supporting Your Loved One: A Guide for Families

Learning that someone you care about is struggling with substance abuse, whether vaping, etomidate, or other substances, can overwhelm you with intense emotions. You may feel shocked, disappointed, worried, or angry. These reactions are entirely normal, and countless families face similar challenges in this difficult time.

This guide aims to help you navigate these challenges whilst providing meaningful support to your loved one. Recovery and positive change are achievable, though they require understanding, patience, and appropriate support from family members.

The Treatment Journey

Your loved one will participate in a structured treatment programme, including medical consultations and regular individual and group counselling sessions with professionals from the National Addictions Management Service (NAMS).

Your Essential Role

As a family member, your involvement is vital to the recovery process. Research consistently demonstrates that strong family support significantly improves outcomes for individuals overcoming substance abuse challenges. However, effective support requires specific knowledge and skills. Sometimes well-intentioned actions can unintentionally hinder recovery, whilst other approaches genuinely facilitate positive change.

What You'll Learn

This guide provides practical advice on effective communication, establishing healthy boundaries, recognising signs of progress, and maintaining your own wellbeing throughout this journey. Supporting someone through recovery does not mean attempting to fix or control them. Rather, it involves creating an environment where positive change can take root and grow.

We thank the Singapore Prison Service for granting NAMS permission to use the infographic images and content in this handbook.



What is Addiction?

Addiction is a complex medical condition that affects the brain's reward, motivation, and memory systems. When someone develops an addiction, their brain chemistry changes in ways that make it extremely difficult to stop using a substance, even when they want to, and despite harmful consequences.

Think of addiction as similar to other chronic medical conditions like diabetes or heart disease. It's not a moral failing or a lack of willpower. The brain becomes dependent on the substance to function normally, creating powerful cravings and compulsive behaviour patterns.

Key characteristics of addiction include:

Loss of control - The person cannot consistently limit their use of the substance, even when they genuinely want to stop or reduce consumption.

Continued use despite harm - They persist in using the substance even when it causes problems with health, relationships, work, or school.

Cravings and preoccupation - Much of their mental energy becomes focused on obtaining, using, or recovering from the substance.

Tolerance and withdrawal - Over time, they need increasing amounts to achieve the same effect, and experience uncomfortable physical or emotional symptoms when not using.

It's important to understand that addiction can develop gradually. What might start as occasional recreational use can slowly progress to regular use, then problematic use, and eventually to addiction. This progression can happen over months or years, making it difficult for families to recognise when casual experimentation has become something more serious.

Common Substances and Their Effects

Learning about different substances and how they affect people helps families spot warning signs early and know how to respond. Different drugs affect people in distinct ways depending on what type of substance is used. There are two main types of drugs: uppers and downers. They work in opposite ways on the body.

Effects of Drugs

Uppers (Stimulants)

Examples include:
Meth (Ice), Ecstasy, LSD

What they do to the body:
Uppers speed up the body's systems, causing faster heart rate, increased alertness, higher blood pressure, feeling "high". Users may feel more confident, talkative, and energetic than usual.

When someone stops using:
Withdrawal can include severe fatigue, depression, anxiety, sleep problems, rapid heart rate, and sometimes hallucinations.

Downers (Depressants)

Examples include:
Alcohol, Cough Syrup, Heroin
Etomidate

What they do to the body:
Downers slow down the body's systems, causing slower heart rate, feeling relaxed, drowsiness, sleepy, dull feeling. Users may appear calm but can also seem confused or disconnected.

When someone stops using:
Withdrawal symptoms include insomnia, flu-like symptoms, irritability, and cramps. Some can be medically dangerous.



Remember that medicines from doctors can also be harmful if misused. This includes cough syrup, sleeping pills, and other prescription drugs. They can become addictive if not used correctly. For more information about drugs, visit www.cnb.gov.sg.

Common Myths About Substance Addiction

Myth	Fact
Experimenting with drugs and alcohol is just part of being a teenager.	Teenagers can grow through healthy activities like sports and arts. Substance abuse is not needed for development and can harm growth.
Addiction only affects certain types of people.	Addiction can affect anyone, regardless of background, intelligence, or character. No one is immune to developing an addiction.
Cannabis is harmless since some countries have legalised it.	Cannabis leads to addiction and serious health problems like depression, paranoia, and psychosis. Being a natural plant doesn't make it safer than other drugs. Even the first use can lead to addiction.
It doesn't hurt just to try it once. I won't get addicted.	Taking the first step to smoke or abuse drugs may become the first step towards a life of regret. The first try could trigger a yearning for subsequent consumption, resulting in a never-ending cycle of substance abuse.
Vaping produces only harmless water vapour.	E-cigarette vapour contains harmful substances including diacetyl (linked to lung disease), cancer-causing chemicals, volatile organic compounds, and heavy metals that damage the lungs.
Vaping can help one to quit smoking and is a safer alternative to tobacco cigarettes.	Many people end up swapping one addiction for another. For young people, it creates new addiction. One vape cartridge consumed daily delivers nicotine equivalent to approximately 20 cigarettes per week.

Source: Health Promotion Board



Understanding Addiction: Why it Matters for Families

Understanding addiction as a medical condition empowers families to respond with both compassion and wisdom, creating the foundation for effective, long-term support.

A Medical Condition, Not a Character Flaw

Recognising addiction as a medical condition rather than moral weakness is essential for meaningful support. Addiction alters brain chemistry, affecting decision-making, impulse control, and the ability to stop using substances despite harmful consequences.

Shifting Your Perspective

Understanding that your loved one is not deliberately choosing to be troublesome or self-centred changes how you respond to challenging situations. This perspective reduces blame and frustration, allowing you to approach difficulties with compassion rather than anger.

Embracing the Recovery

This understanding also helps families recognise that recovery is typically a gradual process that may include setbacks. With this knowledge, you can maintain hope and continue providing support even during the most challenging periods of your loved one's journey.

Supporting Without Enabling

Most crucially, when you understand addiction as a medical condition, you can better differentiate between enabling behaviours and offering genuine support that promotes positive change.

Etomidate Abuse

Etomidate has potential for addiction due to its effects on the brain's reward system and potential for dependence. As a short-acting intravenous anaesthetic agent, etomidate can produce feelings of euphoria or relaxation, which might lead to misuse. Prolonged or repeated exposure, especially in non-medical contexts like vaping, increases the risk of developing dependence. The potential for dependence and addiction can lead to psychological distress, including anxiety and irritability during withdrawal.

Signs of Intoxication:

- Drowsiness
- Confusion
- Dizziness
- Loss of body coordination
- Tremors
- Involuntary movements



Singapore's Response

Stricter Penalties

Possession, use, or trafficking of etomidate-laced e-vaporisers now carries stiffer penalties, including imprisonment and fines.

Using or having substance-laced vapes has serious legal consequences under Singapore's Misuse of Drugs Act.

For detailed information about penalties, please visit www.gov.sg/stopvaping.

Concerns About Vaping and Etomidate/ Kpods

If your loved one is vaping, here are important health and safety concerns you should know about.

Why Vaping is Dangerous

- Vapes often have more nicotine than cigarettes. Young people can get addicted after just a few tries.
- Vapes contain harmful chemicals. The vapour is far from harmless water vapour. It has dangerous chemicals like heavy metals and tiny particles that hurt the lungs.
- Easy to hide and use often. Unlike cigarettes, vapes can be used discreetly all day long. This can lead to faster and more severe addiction.

What's Really in Vapes

a. Nicotine addiction/dependence – Nicotine is an addictive chemical compound that stimulates the brain, providing temporary alertness and a sense of pleasure, but also leads to dependence and withdrawal symptoms like anxiety and irritability.

b. Serious lung damage/diseases – Tiny particles can be inhaled deeply into the lungs, causing serious lung disease.

c. No transparency – Numerous chemicals have been identified in vape liquids, including substances never seen in e-cigarettes, pesticides, and chemicals that have toxic effects or can cause respiratory irritation.

The Harms of Etomidate in Kpods

a. Risk of dependence/addiction – Etomidate acts on GABA receptors in the brain, similar to other sedatives, which can lead to dependence.

b. Adverse health risks – Etomidate vaping can cause nausea, vomiting, uncontrollable muscle spasms, respiratory, and cardiovascular complications, seizures, and psychosis. It rapidly affects the central nervous, respiratory and cardiovascular systems rapidly.

c. Unpredictable dosing – The dosage of etomidate in vape pod is not regulated, leading to increased risk of overdose and adverse effects.

Why Do People Begin Using Drugs?

People start abusing drugs for different reasons, including:

To cope with stress
Some people abuse drugs to deal with pressure or personal problems.

To feel pleasure
Drugs can create temporary feelings of happiness or excitement.

Out of curiosity
Some people want to experience what drugs feel like.

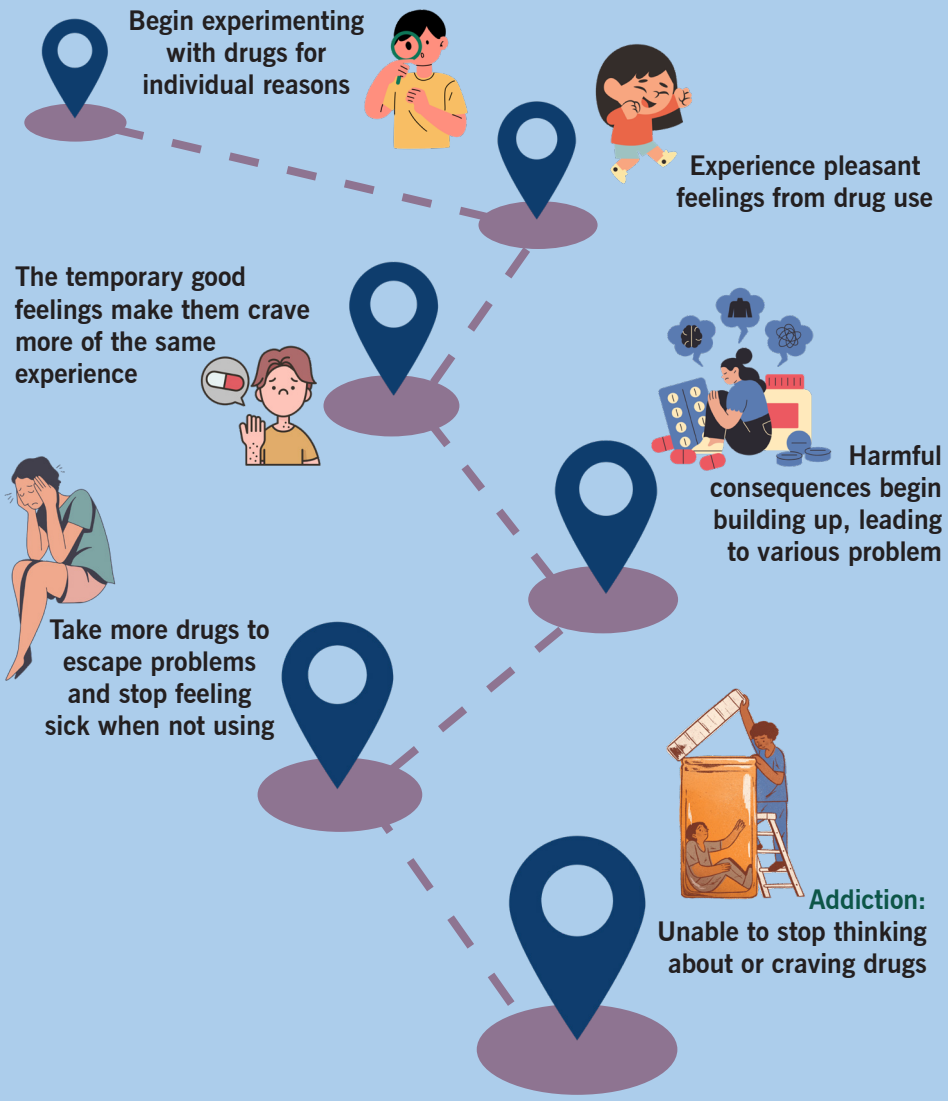
To fill empty time
Some turn to drugs when they feel bored or have nothing to do.

To belong
Young people may use drugs to fit in or gain acceptance.



Road to Addiction

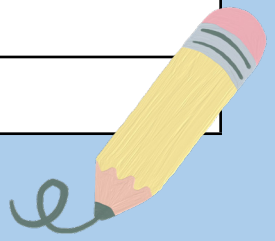
Identifying these patterns early gives you a chance to help before addiction develops!



The Impact of Drug Addiction

Drug addiction doesn't just harm the person using drugs - it creates problems for the people around them. It can lead to many other problems that your loved one and family may face. Every family's situation is different. Use the space below to write down other effects you have noticed in your family:

What Your Loved One May Experience:	What You and Your Family May Experience:
Losing their job or struggling at work	Constant worry and stress about their safety
Damaged relationships with friends and family	Arguments and tension at home
Difficulty thinking clearly	Feeling guilty
Feeling alone and cut off from others	Broken trust and damaged relationships
Believing they are being treated unfairly	Concern that family members might start using drugs
Feeling helpless and out of control	
Feel confused	
Feel shameful	
Health problems	



Understanding Phases of Relapse

Relapse is often seen as a single event, but it's actually a process that happens in distinct phases. Understanding these phases can help you recognise warning signs early and provide appropriate support to your loved one.

Emotional Relapse

Your loved one isn't actively thinking about using drugs, but their emotions and behaviours are setting them up for future relapse.

Signs to watch for: Anxiety, anger, mood swings, isolation, avoiding help, poor self-care, or sleep issues.

How you can help: Maintain a calm, supportive home atmosphere, listen without judgement, and gently encourage healthy self-care habits.

Mental Relapse

Your loved one is having an internal struggle between wanting to stay clean and wanting to use again.

Signs to watch for: Reminiscing about past drug use or the people they used with, or putting themselves in situations where drugs are present.

How you can help: Encourage them to contact their counsellor immediately, help them avoid risky situations, and remind them of their recovery progress.

Physical Relapse

Your loved one has returned to abusing drugs.

What you might notice: Evidence of drug use, sudden changes in how they act or look, unexplained absences from home, or belongings going missing.

How you can respond: Show your concern through love rather than blame. Urge them to seek help right away. Keep in mind that relapse is often part of the recovery journey, not a sign of failure.

Keep in Mind:

- Setting healthy boundaries protects both you and them.
- Recovery is a journey with ups and downs.
- Taking care of yourself helps you be a better support person.

Understanding Enabling Behaviours

What You Need to Know

As a family member, your instinct is to support your loved one's recovery. However, certain well-meaning behaviours can unintentionally enable their continued drug abuse rather than help them overcome it.

What are Enabling Behaviours?

These are actions that protect your loved one from facing the consequences of their drug abuse. Though well-intentioned, these behaviours can harm their recovery.

Who Can Be an Enabler?

Anyone can become an enabler, including:

- Partners and spouses
- Parents and siblings
- Close friends
- Other family members

Why Enabling is Harmful

When you enable your loved one:

- They don't learn from their mistakes
- They become dependent on you to solve their problems
- You may feel frustrated, stressed, helpless, and taken advantage of



Avoid Enabling Behaviours

Don't Make Excuses

Example: "It's okay if he takes drugs at home, at least he's safe there."

Don't Stay Silent

Avoid keeping quiet about their drug use, especially when you both know you're aware of it.

Don't Provide Money

Never lend money if you suspect it will be used to buy drugs.

Don't Take the Blame

Don't blame yourself, their friends, or colleagues for their drug use. They are responsible for their own choices and actions.

Don't Handle All Their Responsibilities

Examples:

- Finding jobs for them when they lose one
- Giving money when they refuse to work
- Solving all their problems for them

Don't Dismiss the Real Problem

Avoid seeing their drug problem as just a symptom of:

- "He uses drugs because he has depression"
- "It's just ADHD affecting his choices"
- "He's young and will grow out of it"

Remember: Supporting your loved one means helping them take responsibility for their recovery, not protecting them from the consequences of their choices.

Talking with Your Loved One: Building Bridges, Not Walls

Note: Your loved one will also receive guidance on communication in their own materials.

The way you speak with your family member can make all the difference in their journey towards recovery. When conversations feel safe and free from harsh judgement, your loved one is more likely to reach out for help and stick with their recovery plan.

Learning to listen without giving lectures and sharing your worries without placing blame help build the trust that's so essential for honest conversations. This trust creates space for your loved one to share their struggles and celebrate their progress with you.

Timing is everything when it comes to these important conversations. It's best to wait for moments when emotions aren't running high and when your loved one isn't under the influence of any substances. These calmer moments give you both the best chance of really hearing each other.

When families work together to improve how they communicate, everyone benefits. You'll both feel more heard and understood, which opens the door to meaningful conversations about recovery and healing. Remember, this is about creating connection, not winning arguments or proving points.

Building these communication skills takes practice and patience, but the effort creates a foundation of support that can sustain your family through the challenges ahead.

Finding the Right Words: Communication That Heals

"How do I talk to him? He always says I ask the same questions and that I'm nagging. Then he just shuts down completely."
- A concerned father

"I want him to know we're always here for him. If only he would ask for help..."
- A worried mother

These feelings are shared by many families facing addiction together. Good communication doesn't mean you'll never disagree, but it can help prevent small misunderstandings from becoming big arguments and create space for healing conversations.

Building Better Conversations

Remember, changing how you communicate takes time and practice.
Be patient with yourself and your loved one as you both learn new ways of connecting.

Stay Calm and Gentle

When emotions are running high, it's easy for conversations to spiral. Take a breath and speak in a steady, caring tone.

Start With Yourself

Instead of saying "You always..." try "I feel worried when..." or "I've noticed that..." This helps your loved one feel less defensive.

Share What's in Your Heart

Let them know why something matters to you. "I ask about your day because I care about you" is different from just asking "How was your day?"

Give Them Space to Respond

After you've shared your thoughts, pause and really listen to what they have to say.

Work Towards Understanding

The goal isn't to win, but to understand each other better and find a way forward together.

Honour Their Perspective

Even if you don't agree, try to understand their point of view. "I can see why you might feel that way" goes a long way.

Supporting Your Loved One Through Addiction

Create a Safe Space for Connection

Approach your family member with warmth and reassurance. Let them know consistently that you care about them and are committed to standing by them through their recovery journey. Your presence and unconditional love can provide the foundation they need to begin healing.

Allow Trust to Develop Naturally

Recovery involves vulnerability, and your loved one may initially find it difficult to open up about their struggles. Be patient as they learn to share their feelings and challenges with you. Remember that rebuilding trust is a gradual process that cannot be rushed, and your consistent support will help create the safety they need to be honest.

Nurture Their Whole Identity

Help your family member reconnect with who they are beyond their addiction. Engage them in conversations about their dreams, hobbies, talents, and aspirations. Encourage activities and discussions that remind them of their worth and potential. This helps rebuild their sense of self and shows them that you see them as a complete person, not just someone struggling with addiction.

Establish Clear and Loving Boundaries

Work together to create clear expectations about behaviour and communication within your family. Discuss what actions are helpful for their recovery and what behaviours may be harmful to themselves or the family. Frame these boundaries as acts of love and support rather than punishment, explaining how they create a healthier environment for everyone's wellbeing.

How to Approach Your Loved One When You Notice Warning Signs

1. Pick the Right Time

Wait until they're sober and calm. Avoid conversations when they're under the influence or upset.



2. Begin with Compassion

Start by telling them how much they mean to you. Share positive memories to remind them of your strong bond.



3. Focus on What You've Seen

Describe specific behaviours that worry you (mood changes, secretiveness, etc.) and how they affect the family. Don't attack their character.



4. Stay Calm and Gentle

Use a soft tone and avoid blame. Say "I've noticed..." instead of "You always..." Harsh words shut people down.



5. Seeking Help is Normal

Let them know that needing support doesn't make them weak. Many people face similar struggles and get better with help.



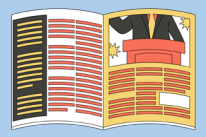
6. Show Your Concern

Be honest about your fears for their safety. Make it clear you're worried because you love them, not because you're judging them.



7. Be Ready with Resources

If they want help, have treatment options and support services ready to share immediately.



8. Don't Give Up

If they're not ready now, that's okay. Keep showing love and try again later when they might be more open to talking.



Words That Work: Example Conversations

Remember, the key is to speak from your heart while keeping the door open for future conversations if they're not ready to talk immediately. When you are ready to have that important conversation, here are conversation starters you can try.



Understanding Young Person: Building Connection and Support

Supporting a young family member through addiction recovery requires understanding what drives them and what they need to heal and grow. When we recognise these fundamental needs, we can better support them on their journey to recovery.

What Motivates a Young Person?

Every young person, including those struggling with addiction, has three core needs that influence their choices and behaviour:

☑ Connection and Belonging

Your young person has a deep need to feel accepted and valued by people who matter to them. When they don't feel this connection at home or in positive environments, they may seek belonging in risky friendships or groups where substance abuse is common. Understanding this need helps you focus on rebuilding trust and creating a sense of belonging within your family.

☑ Independence and Control

Young people naturally want to make their own choices and have some control over their lives. This desire for independence is normal and healthy, even during recovery. Rather than fighting this need, you can work with them to identify areas where they can make positive choices whilst maintaining necessary boundaries around their safety and wellbeing.

☑ Confidence and Achievement

Your young person needs opportunities to succeed, learn new skills, and feel proud of their accomplishments. Addiction often damages self-esteem, so celebrating small victories and helping them discover their strengths becomes especially important. These positive experiences help rebuild the confidence they need to maintain their recovery and face future challenges.

How This Helps Your Family

When you understand these needs, you can approach your young person with greater empathy and create an environment that supports their recovery whilst meeting their fundamental human needs for connection, autonomy, and self-worth.

Beyond Quick Fixes: Building Lasting Recovery

When your family member is struggling with addiction, it's natural to want immediate results. You might feel tempted to use rewards, punishments, or ultimatums to try to stop their substance use quickly. Whilst these approaches might seem to work in the short term, they rarely create the deep, lasting change that true recovery requires.

This booklet will guide you through more effective approaches that focus on understanding, empathy, and collaboration - methods that help your loved one develop genuine motivation for change from within and build the foundation for long-term success.

Building Connection Through Three Key Elements

Rapport: Show Genuine Interest

Take time to learn about your family member's world beyond their addiction. Ask about their interests, dreams, friendships, and daily experiences. Display authentic curiosity about what matters to them. This genuine interest helps establish trust and creates the foundation for meaningful conversations about their struggles and recovery.

Safe Space: Create an Environment for Openness

Ask open-ended questions that invite them to share their thoughts and feelings without fear of immediate judgment or consequences. Listen actively to their responses, showing that you value what they're telling you. When young people feel safe to express themselves honestly, they're more likely to open up about their challenges and work with you toward solutions.

Empathy: Understand Their Perspective

Put yourself in their shoes and try to see their situation through their eyes. Acknowledge their feelings and emotions as valid, even when you disagree with their choices. Find common ground that you can build upon for deeper discussions. This sense of validation and understanding creates the connection and trust that are essential for supporting their recovery journey.

Why This Approach Works

When your family member feels genuinely understood and supported rather than controlled or judged, they begin to develop their own motivation for change. This internal drive becomes the strongest foundation for lasting recovery.

Understanding Young People's Behaviours

Jump to Conclusions

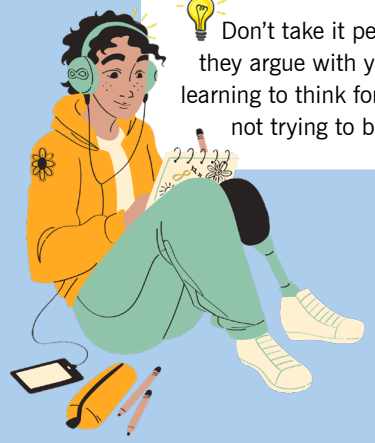
They make quick decisions without thinking about everything first. They want people to listen to their ideas.

Listen without correcting immediately. This keeps them talking. Share other ideas later.

Always Find Problems with What Adults Say

Young people like to point out when adults make mistakes or say things that don't make sense. This is how they practice thinking.

Don't take it personally when they argue with you. They're learning to think for themselves, not trying to be mean.



Question Everything

Young people challenge rules because they're learning to think for themselves and test limits.

Let them think things through safely. Listen to their questions kindly instead of just saying "no."

Focus on Themselves

They can think about others, but it takes practice to do this consistently. Thinking about themselves first is normal for kids their age.

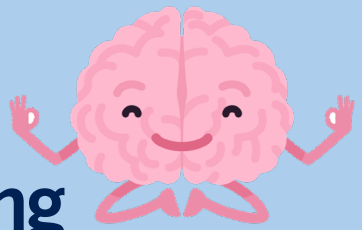
Be patient while they learn to care about others. Say "good job" when they are kind or helpful.

Make Everything Feel Like A Big Deal

Young people feel emotions very strongly. Small problems feel huge to them, and they react in big ways to normal things.

Know this is just how they talk and feel, not a sign they'll do something dangerous. Only worry if they've done extreme things before.

What to Keep in Mind While Helping



Recovery is a journey that requires patience, understanding, and love. By keeping these principles in mind, you're providing your family member with the support they need to build a healthier, substance-free future. Remember that your consistent care and understanding make a real difference in their healing process.

They worry more about social consequences than health risks.
Young people often fear losing friends or being judged more than they worry about physical harm. Understanding this helps you address their real concerns.

Help them think through their choices.
Guide them to weigh the pros and cons of their decisions. Support them in setting realistic, achievable goals that matter to them.

Provide honest, accurate information.
Share factual information about substances and recovery in ways that respect their intelligence and help them make informed decisions.

Show them emotions affect their choices.
Help them recognise when strong feelings influence their choices. Simple techniques like deep breathing can help them pause and think more clearly.

Try to understand why they take risks.
Look at the bigger picture of their life - their friendships, pressures, and circumstances. This understanding helps you respond with compassion rather than judgment.

Rebuilding Your Relationship

Healing your relationship with your loved one takes work from both of you. You both need to take steps to rebuild trust and connection.

What You Can Do?

Tell your family member clearly what would help you trust them again. This might be:

- Being honest about their recovery
- Keeping their promises
- Going to counselling sessions
- Following through on what they say they'll do

When you see them trying - even small efforts - praise them for it. This encourages them to keep making positive changes.

It Works Both Ways

Remember, healing isn't just about what they need to change. Look at how you communicate and think about how you can better support their recovery. Sometimes the way families interact can add stress or create conflict. Be willing to make changes too, whilst still keeping boundaries that protect everyone.

Be Patient

Rebuilding trust takes time and there will be setbacks. Accepting their efforts to make things right doesn't mean:

- Forgetting past hurt
- Going back to old patterns immediately
- Dropping all your boundaries

It means being open to gradual healing whilst keeping protective boundaries in place. Healing happens slowly through honest conversations, consistent actions, and everyone's commitment to positive change. Both you and your loved one need to work together to rebuild your relationship.

Restorative Questions for Family

What do you wish could be different or better in our family?

What were your hopes and dreams?

What can you do now to help make things right or move forward?

What's something you've never told your loved one but want to?

Describe how does a healthy, happy family look like to you?

What are you grateful for in your family, even during these difficult times?

What are your biggest concerns or worries about your loved one?

Questions for Patients & Families

How can we keep supporting each other through recovery?

For patients:
What led you to start using substances and what kept you using them?
What positive changes have you made during your recovery sessions?

For family members:
What do these changes mean to you and what do you hope for?
How can we keep showing love during this difficult time?

What steps do we need to take to build and rebuild our relationships?

Take time to write down your thoughts about your relationship:

Self-Care is Essential

Supporting a loved one through addiction recovery is emotionally and physically draining. Taking care of yourself isn't selfish - it's necessary. You might feel guilty focusing on your own needs when your family member is struggling, but if you don't look after yourself, you won't be able to help them effectively.

What Self-Care Means

Self-care means keeping up with your own daily routines, relationships, and activities that make you happy and help you relax. It includes:

- Setting healthy boundaries about what you will and won't do
- Getting emotional support when you need it
- Understanding that you cannot control or fix your loved one's recovery
- Recognising you can only control your own reactions and choices

Why It Matters

When you are well-rested, emotionally balanced, and remember who you are beyond this crisis, you can respond thoughtfully instead of just reacting to difficult situations. You make better decisions and provide more consistent support.

Think Long-Term

Your loved one's recovery may take a long time and have ups and downs. Think of this as a marathon, not a sprint. You need to pace yourself and make sure you have enough emotional energy to provide steady support over months or years.

Looking after yourself isn't taking away from your loved one - it's making sure you can be there for them in the best way possible. You matter too, and your wellbeing is important for the whole family's healing.

Taking Care of Your Physical Health

Looking after your body helps you stay strong and avoid getting too tired while supporting your loved one.

Eating Well and Stay Healthy

- Take a daily vitamin to support your health
- Eat balanced, nutritious meals
- Drink plenty of water throughout the day
- Don't skip meals, even when stressed



Protecting Your Health

- Keep up with regular doctor visits
- Get your annual flu shot
- Don't ignore health problems. See a doctor if something feels wrong
- Stay up to date with health screenings



Staying Active

- Try to exercise for 30 minutes most days
- Choose activities you enjoy like walking, swimming, or yoga
- Even short 10-15 minute workouts help if you're busy
- Try relaxation activities like meditation or gentle stretching

Taking Care of Your Mental and Emotional Health

Supporting someone with addiction can be emotionally draining, and caregiver stress can lead to depression, anxiety, and burnout if you don't manage it carefully. Taking care of your emotional health isn't selfish - it helps you be a better support for your loved one.

Be Kind to Yourself

- Remember that supporting someone with addiction is very difficult
- Acknowledge your own feelings and limitations
- It's normal to feel frustrated, sad, or angry sometimes

Watch Your Mental Health

- Notice signs of stress, anxiety, or depression in yourself
- Be gentle with yourself when you experience difficult emotions
- Don't ignore warning signs - seek help if you're struggling

Set Healthy Boundaries

- Learn to say "no" when you feel overwhelmed
- Tell others what you need and ask for support
- Take regular breaks to rest and recharge
- Remember you can't fix everything

Stay Connected

- Maintain friendships and social relationships
- Don't isolate yourself during difficult times
- Practice stress-reduction techniques like deep breathing or meditation

Finding Joy and Positive Moments

Even during hard times, it's important to find moments of joy.

- Share laughs with friends when you can
- Make time for hobbies you enjoy
- Practice gratitude for good moments, even small ones
- Allow yourself to have fun and be spontaneous sometimes

Practical Self-Care

You don't have to handle everything alone. Getting help from others is an important part of taking care of yourself.

Connect with Others: Build Your Support Network

- Talk to trusted family members and friends about what you are going through
- Join support groups for families dealing with addiction
- Don't isolate yourself. Stay connected with people who care about you

Ask for Help

- Don't hesitate to ask others for assistance when you need it
- Make a list of specific ways people can help you
- Accept help when it's offered - you don't have to do everything yourself
- Consider respite care to give yourself short breaks to rest or do things you enjoy

Get Professional Support

- Talk to a counsellor or mental health professional if you're feeling overwhelmed
- Speak with your doctor about managing caregiver stress
- Your doctor can offer resources and help you handle the challenges of supporting your loved one

Simple Self-Care Reminders

Supporting your loved one is important, but taking care of yourself is just as important. Caring for others starts with caring for yourself, so make sure to get enough rest and sleep, treat yourself to your favourite food, and do something you really enjoy. Go to counselling or support groups if you feel helpless or lonely, and take breaks when you need them.

You matter too. Getting support shows strength, not weakness.

Getting the Help You Need

Supporting your loved one's recovery is hard, but you don't have to do it alone. Family therapy, support groups, and educational programmes can teach you how to communicate better, understand addiction, and help without making things worse.

When you get support, you feel less stressed and learn skills that really help. This makes you better at supporting your loved one. Remember, taking care of yourself helps your whole family recover.

Family Matters
Individual Counselling Services

We provide individual counselling and support to family members and caregivers, even when your loved one isn't ready to seek help yet. Our service helps you understand and manage the stress of living with someone who has an addiction, giving you the resources and support you need to take care of yourself and your family.

Make an appointment

BRIDGE-Family (Open to Public)
Evening Support Groups for Caregivers

A safe space where caregivers, spouses, partners, family members or friends impacted with substance abuse. Through the support group, you can learn to deal with addiction problems at home and receive support for their self-care.

Day	Every Tuesday*
Time	7.00 pm to 8.30 pm
Venue	NAMS Clinic, Institute of Mental Health Block 9, Basement 1 (Carpark G), 10 Buangkok View, Buangkok Green Medical Park, Singapore 539747

** Excluding eve of public holidays and public holidays*

Other Resources

If your're a caregiver dealing with addiction-related issues and need immediate support, we are here to help you.

National Mindline 1771: 1771 (24-HR) | WhatsApp Message: 6669 1771
Samaritans of Singapore (SOS): 1767 (24-HR) | www.sos.org.sg
Care Text: 9151 1767 (24-HR)