



## Approaching a Loved One About Substance Abuse

Because they routinely fail to make the connection between their drug use and harmful behavior, intervention is necessary for substance abusers. Remember these dos and don'ts when approaching a loved one about substance abuse.

- **Consider the intervention process carefully.** In an intervention, concerned family and friends convene under the direction of a specialist to confront a substance abuser. Planning is the key.
- **Don't go it alone.** Contact an addiction professional and ask trusted friends, family or clergy for their help in the intervention.
- **Do tell the truth**—in a way it can be heard. Shouting and angry confrontation generally are counterproductive.
- **Don't wait for a loved one to hit bottom.** That may involve jail or serious injury to self or others.
- **Don't enable the problem by making excuses for the substance abuser.**
- **Do spend your time on the solution, not the problem.** Focus on the next step—not a cure for addiction.
- **Don't bluff.** Be willing to follow through on any threats or promises you make and communicate them clearly and calmly.
- **Do stay in the present.** Consider one thing you can change about the situation today.
- **Don't expect a miracle.** As soon as your loved one agrees to the recommendations, the intervention is over—she does not have to like it or thank you for it.
- **Do attend support groups such as Alanon and Parents Anonymous.**

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