

WARNING SIGNS OF AN ALCOHOL OR DRUG PROBLEM:

- Increase in tolerance, amounts, frequency
- Changes in personality and mood swings
- Defensiveness when confronted about chemical use
- excuses, promises, lying, denying, blaming
- Changes in life style to one more centered on chemicals
- Trouble at home, school, work
- Withdrawal from family, friends, activities
- Appearing like a victim needing to be rescued
- Family members arguing, covering up for outsiders, denying a problem, worrying, hurting, wanting another to use normally when it seems they just can't
- Depression, abuse, guilty, fear
- Extravagant, boisterous partying and aggressive behavior regarding chemicals
- Promises to quit, cut down, change friends, jobs, locations

ENABLING IS ANY BEHAVIOR WHICH, HOWEVER WELL-INTENTIONED, SERVES TO PROTECT THE DEPENDENT FROM THE CONSEQUENCES OF HIS/HER USE, THEREBY CONTRIBUTING TO A WORSENING OF THE DISEASE IN THE DEPENDENT AND CO-DEPENDENTS.

EXAMPLES OF ENABLING BEHAVIORS:

- Denying that the drinking or drug use constitutes a primary problem.
- Avoiding problems and conflicts which might "cause" the dependent to use alcohol or drugs.
- Minimizing the problems associated with use or the amount used by the dependent.
- Rationalizing the use; excusing the dependent's increasingly inappropriate behavior as if it is due to other causes.
- Protecting the dependent from the natural and logical consequences of the chemical use.
- Controlling people and situations in order to control chemical use. Attempts to control amount of alcohol consumed.

- Waiting and Hoping. Things will get better. Be patient.
- The "No Talk" Rule, which creates a multitude of taboo subjects including the chemical use itself, sex, family finances, and family relations. Personal feelings, attitudes, values, and fears, especially in any context which would threaten the shaky balance of the family system, also are forbidden topics.

PROFESSIONAL ENABLING:

SOME COMMON PROBLEMS AFFECTING PROFESSIONALS WHO HAVE CONTACT WITH CHEMICALLY DEPENDENT PATIENTS/CLIENTS INCLUDE:

- Lack of knowledge about alcoholism/chemical dependency, and the dynamics of recovery.
- Mistaken belief that the dependent could eliminate problems associated with use if she/he really wanted to.
- Feeling powerless to effectively confront the dependent.
- Live and let live policy.
- Resentment at being manipulated leads to emotional withdrawal from the dependent.
- Fear of professional inadequacy leads to avoidance reaction.
- Professional "No Talk" rule associated with issues of confidentiality, politeness, and personal uneasiness.
- Discomfort with own chemical use or that of a family member.

EMPLOYER ENABLING:

- Accepting sloppy work, excessive sick time, and long lunches.
- Avoidance of confrontation.
- Assuming the dependent's responsibilities; lightening the load.
- Demotions and other arrangements to force the dependent to quit.
- Waiting and hoping.