

For someone struggling with addiction, rehab can be lifesaving. Effective, evidence-based treatment is available and can help anyone with a substance use disorder. To convince a loved one to seek this professional support, talk about addiction, what it is, and how it is impacting their life and yours. Enlist others who care, to help send the message that they need professional support, and then provide options for treatment. Remove any barriers to getting care and answer all objections and excuses calmly. When you take these steps to help someone you care about, you are helping them make lasting, positive change.

## **7 Important Steps to Help an Addict Go to Rehab**

Watching someone you care about struggle with drugs or alcohol is difficult. You may feel helpless and hopeless. But addiction can be effectively treated and managed, so there is something you can do for a family member or friend. You can encourage them to go to rehab.

A program at the right residential treatment facility is one of the best ways to achieve a lasting recovery. It provides expert care, a focus on healing and wellness, and tools that can be used in life after treatment to maintain sobriety and avoid relapse. If someone you love is struggling with an addiction, take these important steps to help them take the major step of going to rehab.

### **1. Start a conversation about addiction.**

Addiction thrives in silence. The most important first step to getting a loved one the help they need is to take addictive behaviors and consequences out of the dark. Confrontation isn't easy. Here are some tips for starting the conversation:

- Avoid talking to them when they are inebriated. Wait until they are sober and there are no distractions.
- Let your loved one know what your concerns are, but keep your emotions stable. Remain calm and controlled.
- Listen to what they have to say without judgment.
- Be very specific about the behaviors you see that are concerning.
- Also be specific about how their behaviors impact you and others they care about.
- Be patient and willing to try again if they are not initially receptive.

When your friend or family member is receptive to listening, educate them about addiction. The stigma surrounding drug and alcohol abuse encourages shame and guilt, when really what your loved one is struggling with is a chronic illness, like any disease. Help them understand [addiction as a brain disorder](#) that is treatable, rather than a moral failing that they need to hide.

### **2. Talk about what treatment can do for your loved one.**

When you suggest rehab, your friend or family member is reticent to take that step. To help convince them, be prepared with facts about treatment for addiction and how it will make their life better.

[Research](#) indicates that treatment is effective for substance use disorders when it:

- Is individualized
- Lasts three months or longer
- Meets all of a person's needs, including mental health care

- Includes behavioral therapies
- Includes medical care

If you can show your loved one rehab programs that include these evidence-based elements, they may be more convinced to give it a try. Focus on personal details too, such as how treatment will help them be a better parent or be able to go back to school and get a better job.

### **3. Enlist other loved ones to help, and consider holding an intervention.**

The more people who have these conversations with your loved one, the more likely you will be able to get through to them and get them into treatment. Seeing how their choices and behaviors impact the people they care about is a powerful type of encouragement. Call on other friends or family members you know are concerned.

In some cases, individual conversations with loved ones will be enough to convince someone to seek help. But an organized intervention can also be useful. [Interventions should be planned in advance](#) and must contain certain elements to be successful:

- A plan, which if possible should include the advice or even presence of a mental health or addiction specialist
- A team of loved ones who care about the subject of the intervention
- Prepared notes from each participant
- Specific consequences for the subject if they refuse treatment
- A plan for what to do next if they agree

### **4. Have rehab options ready to go, and provide choices.**

Whether you choose to go through with a formal intervention or not, be prepared with a list of appropriate rehab facilities and treatment programs. If your loved one takes your concerns seriously and agrees to treatment, but you haven't thought that far ahead, they then have time to backpedal and change their mind.

Prepare options that make sense in terms of cost, insurance coverage, location, and availability. Then let your loved one choose. Being pushed by others to admit to having an addiction and to get help can leave them feeling as if they have no control. By offering choices, you give them back some of that control, which is empowering and encouraging.

### **5. Remove barriers to treatment.**

Even if your loved one admits to needing help and that treatment could improve their life, they may still resist actually going through with it. They will have plenty of excuses ready for why they don't need to go, shouldn't go, or just can't go right now. Be ready to answer those excuses and to remove barriers that prevent them from getting help.

For instance, if cost is an issue, find a facility that you know is covered by their insurance plan. If they have children, provide a solution for childcare while they receive treatment. The goal is to get to the point where they have no excuse not to get the help they need immediately.

### **6. Visit a treatment facility together.**

Going to rehab can be scary. Not only does it mean making a very difficult and major life change, detoxing, and giving up drugs or alcohol, but your loved one is also facing leaving home and staying somewhere new and unfamiliar.

You can help them feel more comfortable about taking this step by touring treatment facilities together. Seeing a residence first, before committing to going, can show your loved one that it isn't that scary. It can reassure them that they are choosing a residential facility with caring staff and relatable residents, not an intimidating, sterile hospital. Tours also allow your loved one more control. They can choose the residence they like best.

#### **7. Suggest a last resort option.**

[In several states](#), it is legally possible to have an adult committed to treatment. To have someone involuntarily committed, you have to follow the guidelines in the state. These usually include petitioning a magistrate or judge and proving that your loved one is a danger to themselves or others. Whether or not involuntary treatment is as effective as voluntary care is debatable and not well understood. But if it is a matter of life or death, when overdose seems likely, it may be a risk worth taking.

If it is not possible in your state or you simply don't feel comfortable trying to force anyone into treatment, there is another option for a last resort. You can remove yourself from this person's life. This isn't a step to take lightly, either. If you love someone it feels like abandonment, but you must take care of your own needs first. And, your leaving may be the final straw that pushes this person to get the help they need.

Addiction is a terrible disease, but it is treatable and the stigma is beginning to lift. You can help someone you care about get the help they need by taking the right steps. Be kind and patient, listen, provide options, and enlist others to make your case with you. When you make the effort for someone you love, they may finally be ready to get treatment.