



Is just not drinking or drugging enough?

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Vikki Adams, LCSW

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When substance abuse touches many families, the family just "wants it to stop," but is that really enough?

Depending on how much and how often an individual has been using drugs and alcohol (including the perceived legal ones such as over-the-counter or prescription drugs, Herbal Incense, K-2 and bath salts), discontinuing use may not be as easy as it seems.

Post Acute Withdrawal may occur if the individual had slipped into dependency, which may result in a myriad of symptoms including problems with sleep, irritability, loss of memory, loss of concentration. It can possibly create physical repercussions such as seizures or feeling that you have had the worst flu in your life. These symptoms can sometimes last for weeks or even months.

If the individual was using as a way to cope with emotions or stressful situations, they will now be facing the same situations with no substance to "dull the pain." Oftentimes the situation they were dealing with has worsened due to their drug or alcohol use and lack of attention.

Loved ones who have not experienced an addiction may not understand the complexity of becoming and staying clean and sober. They may not see that they can and often do play a role in helping the substance user to stay on track.

How do you know what to do? How do you help the substance user? And when are you doing too much?

Sometimes these answers are found in Al-Anon meetings, faith-based

programs such as Celebrate Recovery or perhaps attending an Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous meeting. These are free, anonymous and you can get a lot of information by just listening.

Most individuals benefit from some level of treatment, which can consist of individual (and family) therapy, an educational group, a more intensive outpatient group or, in some cases, a residential or detoxification unit.

If an individual has been drinking a fair amount on a daily basis, or taking

Benzodiazepines daily, a medical detox may be needed to monitor the individual in the event of a seizure. Most treatment facilities offer some level of family programming.

Just discontinuing use is often not enough. Individuals and families can obtain early recovery skills that will aid in communication and support and help restore lives.

There are many avenues of help in the Tri-State that often can be found in your yellow pages. Or, you may find an Al-Anon, AA or NA meeting list on the Internet.