

Supporting Families Through The Trauma of Recovery

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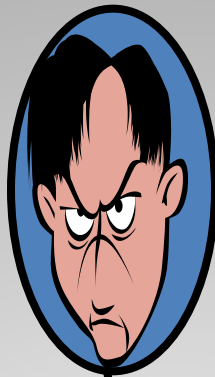
Family Intervention Now

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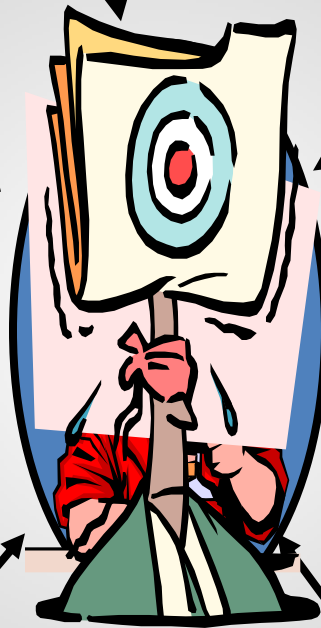
*The Center For Family
Recovery*



Pain
Abandonment



Anger
Rage

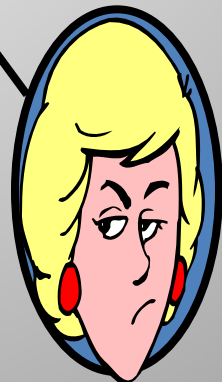


Disappointme

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B. Maher-interventioncenter.com

Shame



Frustration -
mistrust

Co-
Addiction..

Family recovery can be influenced by:

- Nature of specific circumstances-past/present
- Level of exposure to addictive *and* recovery environments.
- **P**rior hx. Of trauma/generational stress
- **P**ast/present family functioning
- **F**amily/individual coping resources
- **A**vailability/utilization of appropriate support
- **M**otivation and courage to change

Stages of Recovery

- **Stage One:** Drinking /Using
Stage
- **Stage Two:** Transition Stage-
from drinking→using to
abstinence
- **Stage Three:** Early recovery
- **Stage Four:** Ongoing
recovery

Family Recovery Stage 1 (addiction)

- ***Family Environment:*** Anxious, unsafe, chronic/acute trauma, tension, shame, chaos, emphasis on control (denial!), inconsistent and unpredictable
- ***Family System:*** Isolated, chaotic, reactive/defensive inconsistent boundaries, unhealthy communication patterns, rules and roles subordinate to addiction-struggle for control and stability
- ***Individual:*** Maintains unhealthy beliefs, behavior and emotions to support the system, sacrifices individual development to preserve the family system

Individual and family energy directed at maintaining denial & unhealthy core beliefs:

e.g. there is no problem. Members must invent rationalizations/explanations for addicted reality and to cover up and protect family secret(s)

Stage 1: Drinking/Using

Tasks

Support

Family

Member(s)

Break denial

“This is addiction
(or co-
addiction)”

“It is out of
control”

“I/we are out of
control”

Supporting professional

Support therapeutic
alliance

Support challenge of
denial by
acknowledging realities
of
addiction.

Provide appropriate
referrals

Patience

Family Recovery stage 2 (Transition - abstinence)

- **Environment:** anxious, chaotic, “feels” unsafe, chronic and acute trauma- beginning of “trauma of recovery”
- **System:** in a state of collapse, chaotic, may be highly defensive - shift towards external support (therapy, 12 step, family programs etc.)
- **Individual:** shift from family focus to individual focus. Confusion, depression, fear, anger and abandonment. Intense feelings of loss of control. Dominated by impulses to seek “relief”.
- *Family Intervention Now
Stephanie Brown*

Treatment in Transition Stage

Impatient treatment allows for the family and addict to break from the addictive environment.

Focus shifts from preserving the addictive system toward family/individual recovery.

Personal growth is now possible as the family is detached from addict and has a chance to focus on themselves.

Little or no contact during treatment until clinically indicated.

Process of self discovery.

Tasks for transition

- Break through denial
- Realize family life is out of control
- Begin and continue to challenge core beliefs
- Allow addicted system to collapse
- Shift focus from family to individual
- Begin detachment and recovery for individuals
- Enlist outside support
- Education on addiction, codependency, enabling, healthy communication and boundaries
- Learn new abstinent thinking and behaviors

Transition Stage support:

- Assess family Hx. /dynamics
- Education on addiction/co-addiction and it's impact on family
- Education on recovery and what family can expect-realistic expectations. Encourage *patience* – internalizing reality of transition takes time....
- Emphasize individual reliance on outside supports (AA, NA, Ala/Nar anon, family/children's programs, therapy, workshops, tx. centers etc.)

Supporting families in the transition stage

- Supporting professional needs to have a clear understanding of addictive system dynamics and the challenges individual family members face when making the transition to recovery.
- A “vacuum” is created as the addicted system collapses- the trauma of addiction is replaced by the *trauma of recovery*.
- External support can provide a systematic process for healthy growth and an anchor for the individuals in this traumatic period

Transition Support

cont.

- Continue to support in the challenge of denial and self defeating core-beliefs/behaviors
- Collaborate on strategies to re-direct impulses and reframe anxiety
- Help to identify triggers/explore choices & balanced responses to problem solving
- Utilize and reinforce the “language of recovery”
- Encourage working on “self” vs. “relationship(s)” and support creation of individual boundaries to support self focus

Stage 3: Early Recovery

- **Environment**: hope mixed with tension and some anxiety, depression/confusion, moving from unsafe to safe
- **System**: still chaotic, but moving toward stability and health. Recovery organizes the system; less dominated by impulses; Parallel recovery*/lives focused on external support (AA, Alanon, CODA, ACOA, family programs/workshops, aftercare group, therapy)
- **Individual**: New recovery identity, sense of self development and sense of recovery values, intense self-examination. May still experience periodic depression/anxiety.

Tasks for early recovery...

Steady abstinence, new attitudes, behaviors and thinking becoming integrated – focus on individual development takes precedence over family system.....

- Cont. detachment/reduced focus on family
- Maintain close contact with external supports
- Cont. to learn and practice recovery language/
abstinent behaviors and thinking
- Stabilize individual identities: “I am addict/co-addict and I cannot control my using/the addict”
- Break denial over the *past*
- Maintain parenting responsibilities

Early Recovery

Not typically as traumatic as the transition stage but.....

Fear of relapse of addict/co-addict is common,

Emerging emotions can cause feelings of loss of control

“surrendering” feels superficial at first-can provoke anxiety, once internalized it allows recovery to take it’s course.....

Old system still collapsed/collapsing-reliance on external support crucial.....

Early Recovery Support

- assist in exploring long term solutions/strategies over short term “fixes”
- Communication/Boundaries and experiential workshops*
- Help explore realities of drinking/transition stage (system, environment, thought, attitudes and behaviors)*
- Explore realities of new recovering identity*
- Reinforce use of recovery language/principals
- Challenge attitudes/defenses/behaviors that threaten relapse

Stage 4: Ongoing Recovery

- **Environment:** stable, predictable and consistent. Not organized or dominated by crisis or trauma. Supports abstinence; comfortable, secure and safe.
- **System:** stable/healthy new system organized by recovery principals. Capacity for self and system focus- “I” and “we” without sacrificing either.
- **Individual:** stable individual recovery-behavior/identity secure. Capacity for interpersonal focus, combine “I” and “we”. Spiritual development; shift from external control to internal (higher power). Intensive self examination and development.

Ongoing Recovery Tasks

- Continue abstinent behavior
- Continue and expand addict/co-addict identities
- Maintain individual recovery program/12 steps –internalize 12 step principals-deepen spirituality
- Work through consequences of addiction/

Co-addiction to self and family

- Add focus on couple, parenting and family issue's
- Balance/integrate combined individual and family recoveries

Ongoing Recovery support

While the need for professional ongoing recovery support may be minimal/unnecessary at this stage, family members experiencing ongoing problems with past or present issue's/ trauma's may need:

Referrals to professional support when appropriate

Support in challenging defenses-self defeating or unhealthy behaviors

Encouragement to deepen self-exploration

Monitoring for signs of relapse and *re-evaluation* of personal recovery program

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