

How to Talk to a Loved One About Getting Help

Gentle, effective ways to open the door to recovery. Recommended by the compassionate therapists at River's Bend.

"Families are often the first to see that something is wrong and the first to reach out. If you're reading this, you're already doing something courageous. Know that support is available for the person you love—and for you, too. We're here to help."



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How to Use

Think of this guide as a conversation starter, not a one-time fix. Helping someone with a substance use disorder is a process, not an event. It will likely take many conversations, not just one.

The disease of addiction is designed to deflect, deny, and delay. In a single moment, it often wins. But when you return to these phrases and strategies with calm, consistent love, you're slowly chipping away at the walls the disease has built. Over time, those cracks can let the light in.

Use this language gently, repeatedly, and with patience. Don't be discouraged if the first conversation doesn't lead to immediate change. You are planting seeds, and your steady presence can become the anchor your loved one needs when they're finally ready to say yes to help.

Before You Speak

- **Check your mindset:** This isn't about control it's about connection. Come from love, not frustration.
- **Pick a calm moment:** Avoid starting this during or immediately after a crisis. Choose a quiet time when you both feel safe.
- **Set expectations:** Your goal isn't to convince them it's to plant a seed.

Phrases That Help Open the Conversation

These can help you express concern without blame:

- "I've noticed you've been going through a lot lately. I just want to check in how are you really doing?"
- "You matter to me, and I want to support you however I can."
- "I've read about some programs that could help. Would you be open to just hearing about them?"
- "I'm not here to judge or push only to walk with you if you're open to that."
- "You don't have to go through this alone. We can find support together."

What to Avoid

- Ultimatums, unless safety demands it
- Blame or shame-based language
- Bringing it up when you're angry or emotionally flooded
- Making promises you can't keep

Helpful Reminders

- **They may say no.** That doesn't mean the conversation failed.
- **Keep the door open.** "If you ever want to talk more, I'm here."