

# STEPS FOR RECOVERY

## Getting Help for Drug and Alcohol Abuse

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Do you think you have a problem with drugs or alcohol? Are you concerned about a family member who has a problem like this? Whatever your situation, it's easy to believe that you're alone with this . . . that, somehow, you have to solve the problem all on your own. That is not the case. There are a lot of people who care about you - and who would like to help you if they can. You don't have to deal with Drug Addiction on your own!

### Family & Friends

If you've abused drugs or alcohol, you might feel that they wouldn't want to help you. That they're already fed up with your behavior. That they don't care. That they don't understand. Well - perhaps they are fed up with your behavior - perhaps they've got good reason to be. But if so, it's your behavior that they don't like. They probably still love YOU as a person.

If you talk to family members or friends honestly about your drug or alcohol problem - and are able to ask for their help in dealing with it - then you might be surprised at their reaction. Usually, if they think that you're being straight with them, your family or good friends will be happy to give you help and support. Remember to always respect them for helping you and remain appreciative for that help. If you're concerned about a family member who is abusing drugs or alcohol, family members and friends can give you emotional support that'll help you to cope with the situation. They can act as a shoulder to cry on - or as a physical support in confronting the abuser about his or her behavior. Maybe they can help you to find a way forward. A way of looking after yourself, while at the same time encouraging the drug/Alcohol Abuser to seek help. As always - a problem shared is a problem halved.

### A Doctor

If you have got a drug or alcohol problem, a doctor may be able to:

- \* Help you to understand what's happening to you.
- \* Explain how you can begin to overcome this addiction.
- \* Refer you to some sort of community help.
- \* Refer you to a day-care or Residential Treatment facility.

But don't 'con' the doctor just to get some pills that you think will make you feel better. That won't help you. That'll only strengthen the power of your addiction. It'll make things much worse. The first step in overcoming drug or alcohol addictions is to stop taking them. Your doctor can be one form of support that you can use to help you to stop.

For anyone who's concerned about the drug or Alcohol Abuse of a family member, your doctor may be able to give you details of what help is available in your area for people like this. Then you'll have some information which you could use to encourage the person you care about to seek help.

### Residential Treatment

Residential Treatment offers intensive drug addiction help over a period of weeks or months.

Residential Treatment has some advantages over out-patient treatment, although it may not be suitable for everyone. For example, those who are responsible for caring for young children may be better suited to attendance at an out patient treatment program. Residential Treatment can also be expensive, although some financial help is often available for those in need.

For those who do attend, Residential Treatment offers a safe, drug and alcohol-free environment where individuals can confront their own drug addiction and associated issues, with the help of qualified staff. Therapy usually consists of a mixture of group counseling, individual counseling and an introduction to the principles of a drug recovery program.

We can't give details here of all Residential Treatment Centers around the world.

**Drug Counseling** Individual drug counseling can be of great benefit to those who are seeking help in tackling their own drug or alcohol addiction. Such counseling can also help those people who are affected by the alcohol or Drug Addiction of another member of the family.

Drug counseling may be more appropriate or practical than either out-patient treatment or Residential Treatment for some people. For example, someone who has a full time job may be unable to attend a Residential Treatment center. Similarly, someone who has children may only be able to secure a child minder for an hour or two in the daytime. In situations like this, using a local drug counselor - where appointments can be made to suit the circumstances of the individual seeking help - may be the best solution. You will be able to find details of drug counselors in your local area by looking in the telephone book or the Yellow Pages.