

ADDICTION + FAMILY

When you aren't the addict...

As a Disease

The American Medical Association declared alcoholism an illness in 1956, and in 1991 they further endorsed the classification of alcoholism by the International Classification of Diseases under both psychiatric and medical sections. Like diabetes or heart disease, addiction is caused by some combination of biological, environmental and behavioral factors. Genetics are a significant factor as well.

A Family's Role

When it comes to addiction, the family is a powerful presence the life of an addict. EMR staff are committed to helping addicts and their families heal and learn how to live with and help one another, without getting confused about what their part is in one another's recovery. You may have heard this called "enabling", and it can be a difficult line to walk to help yet not enable. We can help with that.



.....but you still find yourself affected by the consequences of addiction, what do you do? That is exactly what we have endeavored to help families with who have loved ones affected by the disease of addiction. Our Family Weekend that occurs once monthly is probably the most effective means we have found for helping families, while *at the same time* helping the addict recover. Of course we also offer family phone sessions that are an effective and often crucial part of the recovery process, but the Family Weekend adds some missing ingredients, such as additional face-to-face time with staff, information, and safe connection with your loved one as well as contact with other addicts and family members who may have something to offer you something that helps.

Perhaps one of the most important pieces of the Family Weekend though is the encouragement and hope that families leave with. Don't take our word for it though, see what some of the folks who have attended have to say. The following quotes come from anonymous responses collected via survey.



The Family Program Coordinator

My name is Jacob Ramsey, and I play a part in arranging the Family Weekend. In my role I ensure that families are encouraged and informed realistically about the road ahead.

The Family Weekend has been a success in ways that we both expected and were surprised by. We knew that if families were just given the right info they would be able to make the next right choice for themselves, and that they would likely get what they needed from the experiences of the weekend.

The surprising part has been just how overwhelmingly positive the response has been, just how encouraged and relieved families have been, and the number of people who have asked to come multiple times, sacrificing in other areas of their lives just to return.

I am thankful to be a part of what is happening here, and I hope that you will be to a part of it, too. For yourself, for your loved one, for your family and their future. If I can do anything to help, please don't hesitate to call or email me at any time.

-Jacob Ramsey

“Overall the weekend was very enjoyable and helpful. Even though I have heard and read about much of the information presented, the doctor and director brought it all together in such a way that brought so much more clarity to my understanding of the disease and the recovery process. Thanks again for making the learning process so enjoyable.”

“wonderful, helpful, healing, informative”

“I loved Family Weekend!”

So thankful for the opportunity to learn about treatment for both our loved ones and us (the family). Thank you for hosting this important event!”

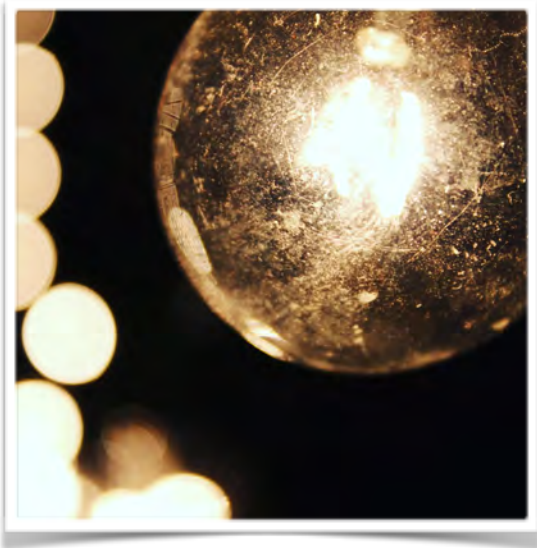
“There was plenty of interaction with our son. The groups were very enlightening and informative. Just communicating with other family members was very valuable and we found a peace. There were plenty of 'ahah' moments. Terrific food too! Also we should have tried harder to invite siblings. This weekend was very enjoyable and has given us hope.”

“The information that I learned will help me to see all the red flags if any issues pop up.”



Other ways to help your loved one...

The number one way that you can help your family member is to go and take care of yourself. For many of us affected by the consequences of someone else's addiction, we are exhausted, at the end of our emotional, financial and mental ropes, and whatever spiritual connections we had have been diminished. Now that your loved one is getting the help they need and learning to take care of themselves, you can do the same for yourself. The best place to start? Honestly? Go to an Al-Anon meeting in your local area.



We all need and enjoy being understood and accepted.

Where AA (Alcoholics Anonymous) is for the person dealing with issues of addiction, Al-Anon is a support group **for the family members and friends** of individuals who are dealing with issues of addiction. For many families and their loved one, a big part of continuing recovery is Al-Anon. Al-Anon has been a source of comfort, knowledge and wisdom for a countless number of people of all kinds for many years, all across the *globe*. There are a few different ways to benefit from what Al-Anon has to offer, and what follows is a list of suggestions that others have found helpful in connecting with this useful support system.

- Go to at least 6 meetings before you make a decision about whether that particular meeting place/people/Al-Anon will work for you. If after that you still think it is not for you, look for a different meeting time as it will be made up of different people and may work better for you.
- Keep an open mind. Answers to our questions and difficulties often don't come about in the ways we desire or expect them to.
- Al-Anon's website has a wealth of resources, including how to find a meeting in your area. Visit: www.al-anon.org
- Local meetings are often plentiful, and you may be surprised to find a meeting takes place very near to where you live and that there a variety of times to choose from.
- In some situations it can be difficult to make it to a meeting in person. In such cases, it is helpful to try the Al-Anon World Conference phone number. There are meetings happening all day on the conference line. Many have found the meetings there to be a life-saver. To access a list of the times for these phone-in meetings, visit www.al-anon.org, and click on "Find a Meeting" in the menu bar.