

An Open Letter to My Family

I have a substance use disorder. I need help.

Don't solve my problems for me. This only makes me lose respect for you—and for myself.

Don't lecture, moralize, scold, blame, or argue with me, whether I'm stoned or sober. This may make you feel better but will only make the situation worse.

Don't accept my promises. The nature of my illness prevents my keeping promises, even though I mean them at the time. Promises are my way of postponing pain.

Don't keep adjusting our agreements. If we make an agreement, stick to it.

Don't lose your temper with me. You'll destroy yourself *and* any possibility of helping me.

Don't let your anxiety for me make *you* do what *I* should do for myself.

Don't believe everything I tell you. Often, I don't even *know* the truth—let alone *tell* the truth.

Don't cover up or try to spare me the consequences of my using. Your efforts may reduce the immediate crisis but will make my illness worse.

Above all, don't run away from reality as I do. Drug dependence—my illness—gets worse as my using continues.

Start now to learn, to understand, and to plan for recovery—yours and maybe mine. Find Families Anonymous, whose groups exist to help families in just your situation.

I need help: from a doctor, a psychologist, a counselor; from people in self-help programs who are recovering from their own drug problems; and from a Power greater than myself.

Your “User”



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