

— with Redwood ATC.

Hi, this is Tom Throssel for Community Comment

One common question I get asked by family members who have someone that they love struggling with addiction is this:

How do I help my family member overcome their addiction without enabling them?

There are not many people in our community who do not know someone struggling with addiction, so I feel this is a legitimate question to answer here for our whole community.

Here are a few tips to help someone without enabling them:

1- If someone asks for money for food, don't give cash, help them by giving food. We have a very generous community, and if you really want to give, give groceries, prepackaged food, restaurant gift cards, or better yet, sit and have a meal with them.

2- Don't go through this alone.

There are many support groups for your loved one **and for you**. AA, NA or Celebrate Recovery are for people struggling with addiction or want help with their hurts, habits and hang-ups. AL-ANON or NAR-ANON are designed for people who have a loved one struggling with a drinking or addiction problem. Find a group that will encourage and support you and your loved one. Be willing to attend a meeting with them. Sometimes giving your time is one of the best ways to help!

3- Support programs that are already helping people  
You don't have to reinvent the wheel.

There are many great organizations in our community that are reaching out to help people. Find out how you can get involved. Maybe you can volunteer, donate food or clothing, or something else they need.

You could also refer your loved one to go to one of the many programs rehabs or services available in our community.

4- remember that no-one will change until **they** are ready for change. No matter how badly we want someone to change, we can love and encourage them, but they must make the decision to get help.

5- Show tough love,

Sometimes people get confused with the term **tough love**.

I am not referring to physical or verbal abuse. One example of genuine “tough love”, might be telling someone you love, that you cannot allow certain behavior or activity to go on in your home, and that they will have to leave until they can follow the rules.

6- This leads into my final suggestion for helping without enabling, Set rules and guidelines with consequences, and be willing to follow through with the consequence if the rules are broken. Remember open threats that you never plan to follow through on are no help at all.

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I will close with a simple quiz you can take to determine if you are helping or enabling

Question # 1- Ask yourself “Is the person I am “helping” getting better? If you continue to “help” them and they are getting further and further into their addiction, you might be enabling.

#2- Does my help prevent the person from experiencing the natural consequences of their decisions?

If you are constantly bailing them out of tough situations that they continue to get themselves into, you might be enabling.

Thanks you for listening to community Comment  
I’m Tom Throssel