

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS BY LOVED ONES

1. **I can still drink even though my spouse is an alcoholic, right?**

The choice to drink when your spouse is in recovery is an individual decision. Some people in recovery are not bothered by their loved one's drinking. However, many in early recovery find it extraordinarily difficult, if not impossible, to stay sober when there is alcohol in the home. Can you sacrifice having alcohol in the home if you can have a sober spouse?

2. **Shouldn't my loved one tell everyone they are in treatment?**

There is still a lot of shame and stigma around the issue of alcoholism so it's important to allow your loved one to journey this path at their own pace. Some people in recovery tell everyone whereas others tell only a chosen few. It is not an indication of their success in long-term sobriety. Respect your loved one's process while asking for what you need.

3. **Can I just tell our friends and family that my loved-one is an alcoholic or addict?**

Avoid telling everyone about your loved one's problem as it is his or her story to tell. Choose one or two friends who will keep your confidence so that you have the support you need.

4. **My spouse wants to drink non-alcoholic beer. Is that okay?**

Most Addiction Counselors will suggest the alcoholic stay away from non-alcoholic beverages because it continues the thought processes (neuropathways) in the brain. It is often a slippery slope right back to drinking. Again, try to not manage your loved one's recovery. You can tell them your preference but it is ultimately up to them.

5. **Should we tell family to just hide the liquor when we come over to their house?**

Every alcoholic is different and it's important to ask him/her what they need. Some people in recovery simply can't be around alcohol for the first several months but others have no problem doing so. Respect the wishes of your loved one in recovery.

6. **How much should we tell the children?**

Communication with your children needs to be age appropriate, of course. Be sure to explain that nothing that is happening has anything to do with them as many times kids blame the parent's drinking on themselves for being naughty. Assure them that both parents love them and while the alcoholic is getting the help they need; the other parent is fully available to help the child. It's important to have fun and laughter in the home despite what is going on so try to watch funny movies or do a fun activity to distract everyone from the issue of addiction.

7. **How can I be sure my loved one isn't sneaking alcohol? Sometimes I can't tell when he has been drinking. It's so hard to trust him after all the lies.**

Of course it is hard to trust again. The onus is on the alcoholic to rebuild the trust in the relationship. Family members deserve freedom from playing private eye—trying to discern whether or not there is drinking going on. I recommend the alcoholic purchase breathalyzer and willingly blow into it at least twice a day—perhaps upon arriving home from work and again before bedtime. Of course this is something the alcoholic does without snide remarks or attitude. It is also not the loved one's responsibility to remind the alcoholic. The alcoholic chooses to use a breathalyzer because they care deeply about rebuilding trust in the relationship and they own the fact that they are the ones who broke that bond of trust.