

Hello families!

As we welcome spring, the season of rebirth, I'd like to talk to you about setting boundaries with your loved one who is struggling with substance use disorder, and how it can set the stage for your own renewed outlook on life and relationships.

Whether your loved one is seriously considering making changes, is already in their recovery journey, or has not committed to doing anything differently at this time, you can set limits on the types of behavior that you're comfortable allowing in your life. Setting boundaries can foster a sense of control within the circumstances you're facing in your family. You can begin your own recovery process at any point in time.

As a Family Recovery Coach, I can work with you to explore your values, examine the types of things that you may have allowed but can no longer tolerate, create healthy, effective boundaries, and continue on your own recovery journey to health and peace.

I can also introduce you to helpful tools – from programs like SMART Recovery and Invitation to Change, to connections and ongoing support as you navigate your journey.

Warm regards,

Alicia Peterson, RSS



McCall's Family Recovery Coach Program is grant funded and provided at no-cost to all participants.

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In families where there is – or has been – active addiction, each family member's boundaries have become blurred or even abandoned, after being subjected to substance use within the family. Re-establishing boundaries based on your values and beliefs can help to facilitate healing within your family unit.

All healthy relationships are based on respecting the rights of others. It's important for families to understand that they cannot control anyone else's behavior, but they can set limits on what they will allow in their own lives.

Why is setting boundaries so important?

Setting limits helps establish a clear and fundamental point of acceptable behavior. These limits protect us and our physical and emotional well-being and can heal relationships. When a loved one is beginning to make changes in their usage, setting limits with them can help them build recovery time as well as re-build trust within your relationship.

A lack of boundaries leads to us trying to fix other people's problems, which is not beneficial for anyone involved. Trying to cajole, control or change anyone else is ineffective and leaves us feeling resentful and exhausted. Showing up for loved ones with compassion and boundaries allows for a sense of peace for you and potential growth for your loved one.

Qualities of effective boundaries.

Here are some qualities of boundaries. They can be:

- Sustainable
- A reflection of yourself and your values, including what you can/cannot accept
- Used to make you feel helpful in tough moments
- Alterable if necessary

For the best results, boundaries must be put into effect as soon as they are verbalized.

Guidelines for setting boundaries.

To make sure your words are being heard, understood, and respected, conversations about boundaries are most effective when the loved one is not under the influence of any substances. You should make sure that you are calm and direct in your approach. Do not argue with your loved one about your boundary. Also note that arguing about addictive behaviors altogether can be a tiresome and fruitless activity. Allowing yourself to set limits on what you *will* and *will not* allow can help you to focus on your own feelings, problems, needs and desires – so you can better support the journey of your loved one.

When creating boundaries, first address the ones that affect safety issues. (For example: "I will not allow myself or anyone else in this family to ride in a car with you when I believe that you are under the influence.")

Next, move on to the areas that are disturbing, hurtful, problematic, or frustrating between yourself and your loved one. These boundaries may revolve around money, family time, your home, childcare, relationship issues, etc.

To initiate the conversation, it may be helpful to say something that acknowledges that you notice the issues that have been causing conflict in the household and you've decided to make some changes for the benefit of the entire family.

Try to limit blame and remember to use "I" statements such as, "I feel unsafe when you bring substances into the family home and, therefore, I am setting forth the boundary of maintaining a substance free home." For boundaries to be most effective, voice them aloud, uphold and maintain them, and remember to follow through on pre-determined consequences if the boundary is crossed. Boundaries allow you to "detach with love" from the disorder, not from your loved one!!

Setting boundaries does not mean that your loved one's behavior will immediately change. Be prepared to follow through on the consequences that you set in place.

You may find that your loved one is pushing back, especially if this is a new way of relating to them. Check in with yourself when this happens; do you feel anxious, disregarded, guilty or tempted to alter your approach? These are important messages about the healing work still to be done. Give yourself grace and remain kind but firm.

Busting myths surrounding setting boundaries.

1.

FALSE: Boundaries make me selfish.

TRUTH: Boundaries keep me safe, healthy, and happy.

2.

FALSE: If I set boundaries, my loved one will be angry at me, withdraw from me, or be made unsafe.

TRUTH: All human relationships are based on respecting the values of one another. Boundaries prevent other people from crossing limits that you do not like and keep you healthy and whole.

3.

FALSE: Boundaries mean I am angry.

TRUTH: Boundaries mean that I respect myself.

4.

FALSE: Boundaries cause guilt.

TRUTH: Boundaries clear the way for healthy, happy, and functional relationships with others.

If you or someone you know is interested in exploring boundary setting or any other aspect of family recovery, please contact me. We can work together to create a wellness plan to meet your needs and work toward your own recovery goals. I can work with family members and friends of people with a substance use disorder on an individual, voluntary, and completely free basis.

I wish you peace, renewal, and mental health this spring. Please remember to be gentle with yourselves and do what makes your heart joyful.

Upcoming Family Recovery Events:

Recovering Together

When: Every Wednesday, from 5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Where: Via Zoom (See Resources below)

Family Naloxone Training

When: Thursday, March 28, 2024

6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Where: McCall Building, 883 Main Street, Torrington

Resources

McCall Behavioral Health Network

860.496.2100
mccallbhn.org

McCall's Recovering Together Group

Meets every Wednesday,
5:30PM via Zoom.

For more info, email:

leann.mitchell@mccallbhn.org

NAMI CT, Waterbury

Paul Brainerd

860.882.8674 or 860.310.4055
pbrainerd@namict.org

Sound Community Services

New London

Amy Faenza

860.439.6443

amy.faenza@soundct.org

Clifford Beers Clinic

New Haven

Christine Montgomery

203.915.4074

cmontgomery@cliffordbeers.org

Community Renewal Team

Hartford and Middletown

Casie DeRosier

860.549.3350

derosierc@crtct.org

TriCircle, Hope and Support Groups

Hope After Loss Groups

Ana Gopoian

860.349.7074

ana@tricycle.or