

**Main Office**  
8790 Manchester Road  
St. Louis, MO 63144  
(314) 962-3456



**Branch Office**  
1723 Pennsylvania Ave.  
St. Louis, MO 63104  
(314) 664-7550

## TWELVE THINGS TO DO IF YOUR LOVED ONE IS AN ALCOHOLIC

1. Don't regard this as a family disgrace. Recovery from alcoholism can come about as in any other illness.
2. Don't nag, preach, or lecture to the alcoholic. Chances are he has already told himself everything you can tell him. He will take just so much and shut out the rest. You may only increase his need to lie or force him to make promises he cannot possibly keep.
3. Guard against the "holier-than-thou" or martyr-like attitude. It is possible to create this impression without saying a word. An alcoholic's sensitivity is such that he judges other people's attitudes toward him more by small things than outspoken words.
4. Don't use the "if you loved me" appeal. Since the drinking is compulsive and cannot be controlled by willpower; this approach only increases his guilt. It is like saying, "if you loved me, you would not have tuberculosis."
5. Avoid any threat unless you think it through carefully and definitely intend to carry it out. There may be times, of course, when a specific action is necessary to protect children. Idle threats only make the alcoholic feel that you don't mean what you say.
6. Don't hide the liquor or dispose of it. Usually this only pushes the alcoholic into a state of desperation. In the end, he will simply find new ways of getting more liquor.
7. Don't let the alcoholic persuade you to drink with him on the grounds that it will make him drink less. It rarely does. Besides, when you condone his drinking, he puts off doing something to get help.
8. Don't be jealous of the method of recovery the alcoholic chooses. The tendency is to think that love of home and family is enough incentive for seeking recovery. Frequently the motivation of regaining self-respect is more compelling for the alcoholic than resumption of family responsibilities; or, you may feel left out when the alcoholic turns to other people for help in staying sober. You wouldn't be jealous of the doctor if someone needs medical care, would you?
9. Don't expect an immediate 100% recovery. In any illness, there is a period of convalescence. There may be relapses and times of tension and resentment.
10. Don't try to protect the recovering alcoholic from drinking situations. It is one of the quickest ways to push him into a relapse. He must learn on his own to say "no" gracefully. If you warn people against serving drinks you will stir up old feelings of resentment and inadequacy.
11. Don't do for the alcoholic that which he can do for himself or which must be done by himself. You cannot take his medicine for him. Don't remove the problem before the alcoholic can face it, solve it, or suffer the consequences.
12. **Do** offer love, support, and understanding in his/her sobriety! (over) *Reviewed 7/09*