

INTERVENTION WEBINAR

How to Talk to an Addict or Alcoholic in Denial

 Starting Soon



Mike Loverde, MHS, CIP

President & Founder,
Family First Intervention

Mike has an extensive history of helping families treat addiction. He is an authority in addiction treatment and remains dedicated to providing hands-on expertise at our clinic.

How to Talk to an Addict or Alcoholic in Denial



Denial Is Not Always What Families Think

- Most addicts and alcoholics are **not** in denial that they have a problem
 - More often, they are in denial about **having to do something about it**
 - How you talk to them depends on **where they are in the stages of change**
 - Talking effectively starts with understanding whether they are:
 - In **pre-contemplation**
 - Or in **contemplation**
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What the Precontemplation Stage Looks Like

- A person in true precontemplation genuinely does not believe there is a problem
 - They may seem:
 - Puzzled
 - Aloof
 - Caught off guard
 - They are less likely to respond with anger when confronted
 - They do not yet believe their substance use is affecting themselves or others
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What the Contemplation Stage Looks Like

- A person in contemplation usually reacts with anger when confronted
 - Anger often comes from fear
 - Fear of:
 - Being exposed
 - Being challenged
 - Losing comfort
 - The family changing its behavior
 - They usually know there is a problem
 - What they resist is doing something different about it
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Why Talking Alone Often Doesn't Work



- Families often believe one good talk will change everything
 - It usually doesn't
 - Why?
 - The addict wants comfort, not accountability
 - The family often gives more comfort than discomfort
 - Broken promises create false hope
 - Real movement usually requires:
 - Consequences
 - Accountability
 - A change in the environment
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The Family's Impact on Denial



- Addicts and alcoholics often choose the path of least resistance
 - If the family keeps cushioning the impact:
 - They see less need to change
 - Denial stays intact
 - Accountability disappears
 - When families stop enabling and start holding boundaries:
 - The addict often sees the problem faster
 - Change becomes more likely
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What Denial in Addiction Often Looks Like



- Common forms of denial include:
 - “I still have a job”
 - “I still pay my bills”
 - “I’m not as bad as other people”
 - “It’s just marijuana”
 - “I only had a few drinks”
 - “I can quit on my own”
 - “I don’t need treatment”
 - “My problems are because of everyone else”
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The Job Myth and Other False Barometers

- Many addicts use employment as proof they're fine
 - They believe:
 - If they still work, it must not be serious
 - If they have money, it must not be that bad
 - If no one has left yet, there is still time
 - But families and employers often already know more than the addict thinks
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What You Should Say



- Do:
 - Talk about how their behavior makes you feel
 - Approach them when they are as sober and stable as possible
 - Reiterate that you love them
 - Encourage professional help
 - Stay calm, direct, and emotionally honest

 - Examples:
 - “I’m scared.”
 - “I feel exhausted and overwhelmed.”
 - “I love you, and I think it’s time for professional help.”
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What You Should Not Say



- Don't:
 - Berate them
 - Blame them
 - Lecture them about what they need to do
 - Engage in a screaming match
 - Try to reason with severe intoxication
 - Make excuses for them
 - Be soft in a way that weakens your boundaries

 - Why not?
 - It puts them on the defensive
 - It invites them to flip the script
 - It feeds manipulation
 - It tells them your position can still be moved
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Why Boundaries Speak Louder Than Words



- Addicts often respond more to changed behavior than changed language
 - If words are not backed by action, they lose meaning
 - Boundaries create accountability
 - Accountability creates discomfort
 - Discomfort is often what moves someone toward change
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Why Professional Guidance Matters



- Families are emotionally attached to the problem
 - That makes objectivity difficult
 - Professionals understand:
 - The stages of change
 - How to move someone from sustained talk to change talk
 - How to work with both the addict and the family
 - Addiction should not be handled by the family alone
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What Productive Change Actually Looks Like



- The goal is not to win an argument.
 - The goal is to help them begin to see:
 - The consequences of staying the same
 - The benefits of doing something different
 - That treatment is not punishment
 - That the family is no longer going to absorb the fallout
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Next Steps for Families



- Stop believing one productive talk will solve the problem
 - Stop mistaking promises for progress
 - Start changing the family response to the addiction
 - Seek professional intervention guidance
 - Focus on reducing enabling and codependency
 - Prepare the family for its own recovery, not just the loved one's treatment
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Final Message



- Denial is often resistance, not ignorance
 - Anger usually means fear, not lack of awareness
 - Words alone rarely create lasting change
 - Families help most when they stop protecting the addiction
 - Professional intervention is not about forcing someone
 - It is about helping the family stop feeding the problem
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Stop Accepting Excuses and Start Getting Help

Questions? The Floor Is Yours!

Prefer to talk in private? Get in touch below:

Call Us: 1 (888) 291-8514

Chat with us: family-intervention.com
