

HELPING YOUR LOVED ONE

People start using drugs with addictive potential for various reasons. However, at some point, many become dependent on those drugs both physically and mentally. They are addicted. Cravings and compulsions to use the drugs become daily obsessions. Drug addiction -- officially called Substance Use Disorder -- is recognized by the American Medical Association and other authorities as a medical disease that upsets normal brain function. Some have compared substance use disorder with other illness, such as diabetes. It doesn't go away on its own and only gets worse without proper treatment.

Do these programs work?

Medication-assisted recoverySM (MAR) for a person with Opioid Use Disorder is much like insulin for a diabetic. In the 1960s, it was found that MAR as part of a recovery program offering supportive services helps restore more natural brain function. Opioid Use Disorder cannot be "cured," but it can be treated so life can go on more normally. However, recovery is a lifelong journey. If you have a loved one -- family member, companion, or

close friend -- in an opioid treatment program, we offer some suggestions on how you can participate in that journey and offer help.

How does the medication work?

In opioid treatment programs there are three FDA-approved medications available to best fit the needs of each patient. There is no scientific information that tells us one medication is better than the others. At a proper dose, the prescribed medication does not make the person feel "drugged" or "high" like other opioids. Each dose lasts for 24 hours and takes away drug cravings. Many people say that they actually feel "normal" for the first time in a long while. A person in a MAR program combined with behavioral health and counseling can work or go to school and generally live a better, healthier life.

How long does recovery take?

There is no specific length of time that is best for everyone. The longer the person stays in treatment, the greater the chances for successful recovery. Many persons take medication for a lifetime, and gladly so. After a while, some people decide to try a completely medication-free approach without medication assisted recovery, but this should always be discussed first with clinic staff. The time to consider this is

after recovery behaviors are so part of someone's routine that relapse is relatively unlikely.

How can you help? Different patients need different levels of support. If there are difficult dynamics in a family group or set of friends, the counselor may recommend little contact for a while. The most important support you can offer is encouragement. Recovery can be difficult and upsetting both emotionally and physically, especially during the early days. Let your loved one know that you are proud of him or her, that you notice a change for the better, and that you want to help. There are many clinic rules for your loved one to follow, such as attending the clinic to receive medication and to participate in treatment. Understand that these commitments may have to come before other obligations. Medication assisted recovery is not a cure for addiction. Avoid bringing drugs or alcohol into the home. Your loved one also may need to avoid people and places once associated with drug taking. If your loved one has take-home doses, help make certain the correct dose is taken each day exactly as prescribed. This can be done in a caring way, just as you would do with any other life-giving medicine, such as a heart medication.

This is real recovery.SM | Visit us at [BHGrecovery.com](https://www.BHGrecovery.com)
For an appointment call **844.535.7291**

Patient Handbook-01.0721-Helping Your Loved One | © 2021 BHG Holdings, LLC. All rights reserved.

