



Did You Know?

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Supporting a Loved One in Recovery: Perry Como first sang, “Oh there’s no place like home for the holidays...” But for many in recovery from substance dependency, “home” can be a treacherous and blistering landscape to navigate.

What You Should Know:

- It is important to remember that relapse or “flare-ups” are a normal part of recovery. Possible triggers include high stress levels, and exposure to past substance use experiences.
- Holiday celebrations are often correlated with higher alcohol and substance use, as well as higher rates of accidental deaths attributed to those substances. For example, according to the National Institutes of Health, statistics show that two to three times more people die in alcohol-related crashes during the holidays and New Year’s than during comparable periods the rest of the year.

What You Can Do:

- **Educate yourself:** Use the tools provided by your community to bridge the gap of miscommunication and misunderstanding. For assistance in furthering knowledge needed to aid recovery, please contact ECCPASA. Remember to always stick to the facts, and be aware that dependency is a medical disease.
- **Choose the right time and place:** Holiday gatherings and family dinners aren’t ideal places to open discussions of past tribulations and dependency treatment. Ensure that your loved one feels safe and is in a comfortable environment if and when starting a conversation.
- **Create new Traditions:** Reenacting past holiday rituals can remind loved ones of prior traumas. Rather than falling back on old traditions, try pressing restart on the holidays and discover new memories. Even simple changes (i.e. location) can make a world of difference when avoiding dependency triggers.
- **Plan ahead:** When creating holiday plans, be aware and avoid the places, people, and parties that may not be conducive to maintaining recovery. Steer clear of any situation where loved ones could feel pressured to participate in old habits.
- **Be prepared:** If things don’t go as planned, have an exit strategy. Make an agreed upon excuse to leave any potentially harmful situation early.
- **Know the signs:** The National Institute of Health reminds us to be aware of the potential signs of relapse and poor self-care. Use the acronym HALT as a guideline for symptoms. **Hungry. Angry. Lonely. Tired.** For more information on recognizing the signs and symptoms of depression or substance abuse visit: justtellone.org or eccpasa.org



Information obtained from: www.alcoholtreatment.niaaa.nih.gov; www.drugabuse.gov; www.justtellone.org; www.nimh.nih.gov

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The Erie County Council for the Prevention of Alcohol and Substance Abuse, Inc., publishes Did You Know, a regular update about alcohol & other drugs - - America’s #1 public health problem. ECCPASA • 1625 Hertel Ave., Buffalo, NY 14216 • 716-831-2298 • www.eccpasa.org