

INTERVENTION: CONFRONTING THE ALCOHOLIC/SUBSTANCE ABUSER

What is intervention? With so many dramatic stories on television lately involving the antics of show business personalities, many people who live in long-drawn-out alcoholic situations or situations involving substance abuse, think that they must suffer in silence. They are apt to feel despair, frustration, anxiety, fear, sleepless nights and a whole host of other negative feelings. In many cases, their domestic situation may have been going on for many years, with broken promises, acrimonious fights, and stony silences. With appropriate knowledge, this kind of situation does not have to be endured. Most people, however, acting out of impulsive frustration will attempt some kind of behavior change but will renege when immediate signs of improvement are not apparent.

An intervention is any attempt to look at the family situation in a different way, and choose new behaviors that are non-punitive. Alcoholic family systems are usually very dependent, with locked-in dysfunctional family roles (enabler, hero, etc.). Any change in these dysfunctional behaviors creates anxiety in the drinking member of the family. The creative use of this anxiety can be a powerful motivating force toward taking initial steps in recovery. Remember that recovery is a **process, rather than an event.** Family members should be helped to see that all of these change efforts, on their part initially, are part of the process toward working through denial.

How to get help in an alcoholic/substance abuse situation?

- **Come in to EAP, get some private 1-1 counseling and sort out your thoughts and feelings. We will assess your options and come up with a plan. Call X4567 for an appointment.**
- **See an EAP provider in your community, through Cigna Behavioral Health. Call EAP at X4567 to get a referral.**
- **Start attending local meetings of Al-Anon Family Groups. You can download a meeting list by googling the above in your county. Al-Anon is for the family/friends of people who abuse substances.**
- **Print out the link which discusses effective interventions:**
http://www.freedominstitute.org/programs/intervention_guidelines.html

Do not despair...help is available. Just ask.