

A photograph of two men standing in a sun-dappled forest. The man on the left is Black, wearing a plaid shirt, and the man on the right is white, wearing a blue polo shirt. They are both looking at each other and appear to be in conversation. The background is filled with green trees and foliage.

# FRIENDS HELP FRIENDS THROUGH ADDICTION

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## SUPPORT AND GENTLE GUIDANCE MAY BE KEY TO RECOVERY

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It's hard to be supportive and caring when you're watching a person you love destroy him or herself with drugs and/or alcohol. People who abuse alcohol or other drugs may not be able to admit they have a problem. If family members or friends have a drug problem, help them to help themselves.

- **Be supportive and caring.** For most addicts, bullying them into treatment doesn't work.
- **Offer help on your terms.** You want to help the person get clean and sober, not support the habit. Tolerate the struggle, not the abuse.
- **Encourage the person to seek professional help.**
  - Offer to go with him or her to a health care provider visit.
  - Provide phone numbers and websites for places that can help, such as: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) 800.662.HELP (662.4357) [www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov](http://www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov)
  - Find out if his or her workplace has an Employee Assistance Program for drug abuse. If it does, remind the person that what is said to a counselor is kept confidential.

- **Offer to go with him or her to a local support group, such as:**
  - Alcoholics Anonymous  
212.870.3400 | [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org)
  - Cocaine Anonymous  
310.559.5833 | [www.ca.org](http://www.ca.org)
  - Narcotics Anonymous  
818.773.9999 | [www.na.org](http://www.na.org)
- **If your friend chooses rehab,** let him or her know you will continue to be supportive.
- **If the person refuses to seek help,** contact a health care professional for advice on ways best suited to help him or her get the care that is needed.

A small graphic of a silver paperclip.

### Action Step

Be patient. Addiction does a lot of damage. During the rehab process, that damage is unraveling. It takes time.