



Empowering Families Who Face Addiction

A 10-week course for those who love someone struggling with addiction

Family Intake Session:

Incoming family members will need to schedule a private session with the course facilitator, Karen. She can be reached at (843) 936-0031 or karen@collaborativecounselingllc.com. During this one-hour intake appointment, your family's personal experience with addiction, needs, and personal goals will be assessed. Through this process, we will also confirm whether the course objectives meet the needs of your family.

Course curriculum overview:

MODULE ONE: AN EMPOWERED-FAMILY APPROACH

Session 1

Addiction: A Family Disease- In this session we will discuss the terms *co-dependency* and *co-addiction*. We will explore the many reasons why unhealthy family dynamics so commonly emerge when addiction is present in the family. We will also begin to explore some of the healthier options and techniques a family can implement to combat the disease.

Session 2

The Detachment Spectrum- When a family faces the impact of a loved one's addiction, they often try to grasp for control over the situation. While this is understandable (especially given the life or death circumstances of some addictions), the family's attempt to control the loved one's choices will often make things worse for all parties involved. Some families identify that they have hit their own "rock bottom" trying to save their loved one. However, we need not be black and white in our thinking. Many options exist between control and abandonment. In this session we will explore the spectrum of options that exist and how to make choices that are best for you and your family.

Session 3

Influencing Change- After we fully accept that we didn't cause, can't cure, and can't control their addiction, we can then approach the fourth "C. We can possibly *contribute* to positive change in our loved one's life. What is the most constructive role we can play in supporting our loved one on their journey to a healthier life, while still maintaining our own wellbeing in the process? In this session, we'll look at what the evidence shows to be the most effective strategies.

MODULE TWO: VALUE-BASED BOUNDARIES

Session 4

Family Values- When a family is faced with the emotionally charged and sometimes chaotic circumstances of a loved one's addiction, they often go into "survival mode". The result can be that the family feels like decisions are made based on high flying emotions (fear, guilt, anger, confusion). In this session, we will discuss how to ground ourselves as a family using our family values. Once we feel confident that our decisions are based on values we believe in, it becomes easier to set and stick to the boundaries we may need to set.

Session 5

Setting Boundaries-Part 1 (Speakers)- As we launch into several weeks on understanding the art of boundary setting, let's go beyond the textbook. In real life, boundary setting is messy, comes with unforeseen obstacles and emotions. We will hear from family members who have learned these skills and practice implementing them within their own families. Depending on availability of speakers, we may have the opportunity to also hear from a (recovering) addicted person about the impact of family boundaries on their active addiction and recovery.

Session 6

Setting Boundaries- Part 2 (Skills)- Boundary setting is often one of the most important, but complicated skills to establish and follow through on. This week we will focus on the necessary skills to consistently and confidently assert your values with the people in your life. This session will provide communication skills and strategies to establish and maintain necessary boundaries with your addicted loved one.

Session 7

Setting Boundaries- Part 3 (Discussion) Knowing boundaries are "a good idea" is a very different thing than knowing exactly how you would implement boundaries in a specific situation or crisis with your addicted love one. In this session, we will give group members a chance to discuss their specific circumstances, needs, and goals. Group feedback and facilitator input will allow you to get ideas, troubleshoot, and begin to develop a personal strategy for setting the necessary boundaries that are in the best interest you both you and your addicted loved one.

MODULE THREE: EMOTIONAL WELLNESS

Session 8

Guilt and Making Amends- Family members are often prone to self-blame for the role they believe they played in their loved one's addiction. In this session we will talk about what truly causes addiction and why holding onto the guilt can trap you in the enabling role. For those things we did contribute to, we must find self-forgiveness in order to play a healthier role moving forward. In this session we will discuss practical tools to begin this process.

Session 9

Resentment and Letting Go- If you are like most family members effected by addiction, you have been lied to, manipulated, neglected... perhaps worse. In this session, we will provide some understanding of why active addiction causes such hurtful behaviors. We will also discuss if, how, and when forgiveness feels right and learn practical tools to begin this process.

Session 10

Coping with Difficult Emotions- All the education and experience you may hold about loving someone with an addiction will never fully protect you from pain, worry, anger and fear. You can step out of their chaos but you never stop loving them. Therefore, we need to be equipped to cope. In this session, we will discuss some emotional survival skills to deal with difficult emotions you will likely face on this journey.