

The Addiction Epidemic: Help for Struggling Families

Each day in the United States 129 individuals die from a drug overdose that's more than 47,000 people a year and when you include alcohol related deaths (>88,000 annually) that total soars to more than 135,000 or 370 preventable deaths per day. Last year overdose surpassed automobile crashes as the leading cause of accidental death in this country.

Addiction has exploded on the national landscape and appears to be front and center as a top priority issue in most political campaigns' across this election season. While New York State has made major progress on combating addiction with the recent legislative initiatives being signed into law with an increased financial investment and resources, families continue to struggle with the addiction of a loved one; in many cases a young person with a heroin or other opiate issue. Recent estimates indicate that of the more than 22 million individuals in need of addiction treatment only about 10% of them receive it. In addition we now know that more than one in three families is directly impacted. Clearly addiction is a high priority public health crisis.

There are many community based supports for family members including 12 step programs such as:

- Al-Anon www.alanon-nassau-ny.org 516-433-8003
For loved ones and friends of those with an alcohol problem
- Naranon Family groups www.nar-anon.org 631-582-6465
For those with a loved one impacted by drugs/narcotics
- Families Anonymous www.familiesanonymous.org 516-221-0303
Historically for families largely attended by parents of young loved ones with addiction issues
- Gam-anon www.gam-anon.org 631-321-2883
For loved ones and friends of compulsive gamblers

In addition many addiction treatment provider organizations in the community offer free family education and support groups. You can locate providers in your area on the website of the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) www.oasas.ny.gov

OASAS and county government units throughout New York State are working together on a plan that in the coming months will introduce regional Family navigators who in some cases will work directly with recovery community and outreach centers to assist struggling families to find and access needed resources. In addition recovery coaches and other trained peers will be more visible in hospital emergency rooms and the community, geared towards helping to connect struggling individuals with recovery resources and mentorship across the state.

If you or a loved one is struggling with addiction please call us for help. LECSA has expert clinicians on staff and a wide range of resources to assist families and individuals in need.