How can I set boundaries with someone who uses substances?





















Self-care

Do you feel overwhelmed by your loved one's substance use? Do you feel that it's important to be there for them, but in doing so, you sometimes forget about your own needs? Despite all the love that you have for this person, it's important to take care of yourself and do things that make you feel good. Here are some suggestions to help you reclaim power over your life.

- → Meditate or pray.
- → Be grateful for the good things in your life.
- Connect with your culture and participate in traditional activities.
- → Talk with an Elder or a guide.
- → Sing, play music, dance.
- → Connect with who you are (strengths, qualities, dreams, interests, values).
- → Do things according to your values. Have respect for yourself.
- → Don't be too hard on yourself, try to have positive thoughts about yourself.
- Although it may be difficult for you to accept, remember that your loved one's choices are not your own.





- → Make healthy food choices, cook traditional meals.
- → Take time to rest.
- → Go out on the land. Enjoy nature.
- → Do activities that you like, that get you moving and that help clear your head.
- → Try new things, develop your interests.





- → Talk to positive people that make you feel good.
- → Welcome the support of others.
- → Express yourself through art or writing.
- → Take some time to have fun. Enjoy life!
- → Participate in a support group ora sharing circle.
- → Remember happy memories.

Taking care of yourself also means learning to protect yourself and set boundaries:

- 0
 - → Identify the behaviours of your loved one that make you feel disrespected and that you don't want to tolerate anymore (e.g., your loved one calls you during the night to ask you for money, they drink at home).
 - → Set a few boundaries that you feel ready to apply (e.g., turn off your cellphone for the night, ask them to drink outside the house, don't give them money to pay their debts).
- $\mathbf{2}$ \rightarrow Choose a moment when you feel ready to talk and when your loved one is available to listen to you.
 - → Explain to them that while you love them and want to be there for them, you made the decision not to tolerate certain behaviours anymore.
- 3 → It is important to set boundaries and maintain them so that your loved one takes you seriously.
 - → At first, your loved one may react to these boundaries because they are new. However, little by little, they will learn to know what to expect from you.
 - → Be patient with yourself! Learning to set boundaries is not easy and may require several tries.

Setting boundaries means doing what is best for you and your family. This includes keeping some time for yourself.

Don't hesitate to seek help when you need it!

This project is a work of co-construction involving several people from various Indigenous nations and organizations. The comic book format, the stories and the contents were chosen with the intention of supporting family and friends with compassion and empathy. Thanks to the family and friends of people experiencing addiction, to the students (Eden, Gloria, Kassandra and Marie-Pier), to the caregivers, to the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission, and to the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services.

© Plourde, Laventure, Ferland, Blanchette-Martin, Tremblay, Beauregard & Côté-Dion (V1, 2022)

Original ideas: Ann-Catherine Choquette
Illustrations and graphic design: Patricia Carignan

Inspired by *Vivre avec un proche ayant une dépendance* (Plourde et Laventure, 2019), Bayard Canada.







With the financial support of:



Resources

Hope for Wellness Helpline 1 855 242-3310 hopeforwellness.ca

Support group for the family and friends of people affected by addiction al-anon.org/al-anon-meetings

Youth Helpline 1 800 668-6868 kidshelpphone.ca

Referral line about substance use 1 800 265-2626 aidedrogue.ca/en

Health or addiction rehabilitation center near you