



Addiction: A Family Disease

By Spark of Hope Treatment Center

An addict in the family

- If someone in your life is struggling with addiction, you already know the negative impact of that addiction stretches far beyond just the person using drugs or alcohol. Loving and caring about someone who is addicted to drugs is stressful. There really is no way around it. You worry about them and you always fear the worst. It's hard to sleep. It's hard to eat. It's hard to think about anything other than what your loved one is doing and whether or not they'll survive. You need to take care of yourself and you need to find ways to cope or that cycle of pain will just continue. Let's talk now about what you can do to cope with a loved one's drug addiction so that addiction doesn't destroy your life too.
- **Gather resources and learn about drug addiction. In this case, knowledge is power.**
- **Research treatment centers and give your loved one several options**
- **Speak with an intervention specialist to stage and intervention**
- **Provide opportunities to take your loved one to a therapist or a doctor when they're ready to seek help**
- **Become an example by abstaining from drugs and alcohol.**
- **Keep a safe and friendly environment in the home that provides a stress-free environment to aid in the recovery process.**
- **Try to be sympathetic, even though the person may be difficult to deal with**

Dealing with an addict close to you

- ▶ When we talked about getting your loved one help for their drug addiction, we talked about how important it is to learn as much as you can about addiction, but that's an important part of the coping process as well. As they say, knowledge is power. Although all drug addicts are different, trying to understand what they're going through physically, emotionally and mentally can be a good way to get a new perspective on the addiction. A little research into addiction can also help you understand what you can expect from your loved one while you're trying to get them help or even while you're just trying to deal with them. Knowing what you can expect is a great way to prepare yourself for the tough journey you're about to embark on.

Understand it's the drugs talking.

- ▶ While your loved one is abusing drugs, they're likely to say or do things that hurt you in a very real way. More often than not, the things they are doing and saying are the result of their addiction and it's very important to try to understand that. That isn't always as easy as it sounds. Addicts have a unique way of exploiting weaknesses and hitting where it hurts. When someone says or does something that cuts us to the very core, it's hard not to take it personally. It isn't personal though. It really is the drugs talking. Your loved one's body and mind is being torn to bits by the drug they're abusing. They'll say and do things they wouldn't normally do to try to get their next fix and this goes beyond just words.
- ▶ As we've already said, addicts will do anything they can to get their drug and that sometimes means hurting the people they love. Try to understand that they feel guilty about this – or at least will once they come out on the other side of their addiction. In the meantime though, try to be prepared. **Don't put the blame on yourself:** It is important not to let the disease spread. You are NOT responsible for anyone else's addiction issues and in many cases there was absolutely no way it could've been prevented.

Things addicts may do to hurt you

- Lie to you.
- Steal from you.
- Break things.
- Call you names or insult you.
- Use past painful memories or events against you.
- Use your own past mistakes against you.
- Blame you.
- Threaten suicide.
- Act erratic
- Make little to no sense
- Threaten you with violence or actually become violent against you.
- That's really only the tip of the iceberg. Addicts are unpredictable. Your loved one isn't in control of themselves any more. The drugs are in the driver's seat but that's so easy to forget. Take a step back, collect yourself and try to remind yourself that it really is the drugs talking.



How to handle addiction in the family

- ▶ Unless you grabbed your loved one and forced drugs into their body, you are *not* to blame. That doesn't mean you shouldn't be sympathetic. Few people, if any, start using drugs to become an addict. They may be trying to escape some sort of traumatic pain and perhaps you even had a hand in causing that pain but in the end, using drugs was their choice. Everyone has their cross to bear. Everyone has something they have to deal with. Whether you should've seen signs sooner, tried to get them help sooner or could've helped them find help sooner is irrelevant. What matters is the present. You need to put aside any guilt you feel and focus on helping your loved one.
- ▶ **Carry on with your own life.**
- ▶ It is easy to get consumed with your loved one's addiction because you're constantly worrying about what happens next but it is important to make sure you carry on with your own life. Find what makes you happy and spend a little time every day doing it. Make sure you take time to focus on yourself. While you're helping your loved one recover, life can easily become all about their battle but don't forget you're fighting a battle of your own. Force yourself to take time to focus on *your* battle. Force yourself to take time to look after yourself for you and for your loved one.
- ▶ Whether your loved one is in recovery or is still in the depths of their addiction, your own life needs to continue moving forward. You have to continue working on yourself. You can't let your loved one's addiction destroy your life. Keep going to work. Keep going to school. Spend time with your family. Keep yourself busy. Find a new television show you can get lost in. Make a list of movies you've been meaning to check out and spend your free time watching them. Avoid spending all your free time worrying. It isn't good for you and in the end; it isn't good for your loved one. When they get through the fog of their addiction, they're going to have a lot to feel guilty about. Destroying your life is going to be one more thing on that list.



Don't lose hope

- Hope is a hard thing to hold onto when someone you love is using drugs or alcohol. You might see them change before your eyes. The person you love can become someone much different once the drugs take hold of them but that person isn't gone. The person you love is still in there. Hope doesn't mean blindly believing that your loved one will get better. If they have rejected help and are insisting they don't have a problem, they may not get better – at least not right away. That doesn't mean you have to give up hoping that they will see the truth and decide to get help. When it comes to a loved one's addiction, hope simply means that you keep your heart open and ready if and when they decide it's time to make a change. Holding on to your hope also helps you cope with your loved one's addiction because without hope, there is no light at the end of the tunnel and there can be no belief that things will get better.
- **Get help for yourself.**
- One of the greatest things you can do for yourself when coping with a loved one's addiction is to talk about what you're going through. There are lots of great support groups all over the world filled with people who are going through what you're going through. Sometimes just having someone there to listen and to understand is the best coping tool a person has. Let's be honest though. Not everyone is going to feel comfortable sitting in a room full of strangers – even if those strangers share a common problem – to talk about their feelings. This is where the internet can come in handy. Sign up for online support groups. You can remain anonymous which can make it much easier to really open up. You may be surprised just how many people are going through what you're going through. People who have been through it can help you find ways to cope. Your loved one isn't weak for needing help and you aren't either.

Impact on the Family

- Drug addiction can create destruction in all areas of life, as well as the lives of loved ones. Your family dynamics may be greatly impacted, causing damage that can not be easily repaired. This is because, addiction is a disease that does not only affect the addict themselves, it affects nearly everyone you are in contact with, especially your family and friends.
- How is your family affected?
- When abusing drugs you do not stop to reflect on your actions, choices or the consequences of them, this causes conflict and trauma in your personal relationships that may not be repairable.



The Time, Energy, and Focus of an Addict

- Addiction to drugs can consume a large portion of someone's time, energy and focus, making obtaining drugs and using their top priority. Drug users often have very little time left to spend with family and friends. This may leave your loved ones feeling a large variety of emotions towards your drug use; resentment, bitterness, hurt and even jealous. You may notice that you have had increasing numbers of arguments with your loved ones and your relationships are beginning to grow apart because your loved one has been putting drugs ahead of the family.



Financial Stress

- Addiction can cause a great financing issue in the lives of the addict themselves, as well as their family members. Addicts may need to spend money on drugs constantly to feed their habit. This can put a lot of financial stress on the family. They can easily spend hundreds, if not thousands of dollars fueling their drug habit in as little as one day or a short binge.
- Their addiction to drugs may be so severe that they are no longer able to function in the workplace, causing job loss. This creates a bigger burden on the spouse or partner as they are then required to solely provide and care for the rest of the family.
- Far too many families have been faced with the decision of bankruptcy, foreclosure, losing their life's savings, retirement savings and so on due to their loved ones addiction. However these financial stresses should not prevent you from putting your loved one in drug or alcohol treatment. Many treatment centers will do their best to work with you financially in order to get your loved one the help they need.

When Children are Involved

- ▶ Drug addiction can cause serious emotional damage for children. Drug abuse can even cause people to become violent, emotionally abuse children or even sexually abuse them, causing damage that will stay with them for the rest of their lives. Many children of addicts suffer from long term emotional and psychological damage that causes serious affects on their social stability, as well as their education and mental health.
- ▶ Using drugs has can cause children to lose respect for parents as they are no longer reliable. Your home may be lacking structure and rules, which can cause child to turn to a life of alcohol and drugs as well. With such insecurity your children may even begin to blame your drug use on themselves, causing further mental and emotional damage.
- ▶ Government studies show that an estimate of 50-80% of child abuse and neglect incidents are a result of the parent (or parents) being involved with drugs or alcohol.



Effect on the Spouse

- Addiction can lead to spousal or partner abuse; physical and emotional. This can have devastating effects on your relationship. Many intimate relationships suffering through drug addiction can lead to cheating or seeking other forms of satisfaction outside the relationship by the addict, who then justifies their actions. Your loved one may sympathize with you, however this is often a form of manipulation and you should remain careful when dealing with an addict, even if that person is your spouse.
- An estimated 75% of domestic violence incidents occur as a result of one or more of the individuals involved having used drugs or alcohol.



Risking Your Health and the Health of Others

- ▶ Drugs can impair your judgement, this may cause people to take part in risky sexual behavior which puts you in great risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases. When you have a partner or spouse back home you are then putting their health at risk of contracting these STD's.
- ▶ If your loved one uses intravenous drugs and shares needles, they are putting you others at great risk of contracting blood borne diseases that too can transmit to your partner. These diseases that can be contracted through needle sharing can cause you or your loved ones to becoming very ill, potentially killing them, causing an increasing amount of stress on your family.
- ▶ Be cautious when engaging in sexual relations with a partner who is using drugs.
- ▶ Ask your loved one to get tested for HIV and Hepatitis C.
- ▶ Do not exchange blood and fluids with someone who is using drugs intravenously.



Part II: Why do they do it?

Why do people use drugs to begin with?

- Research has shown that people generally take drugs to either feel good (i.e., sensation seekers or anyone wanting to experiment with feeling high or different) or to feel better (i.e., self-medicators or individuals who take drugs in an attempt to cope with difficult problems or situations, including stress, trauma, and symptoms of mental disorders).
- While everybody's situation is unique, more times than not, someone who turns to alcohol and drugs is initially in either some sort of emotional distress or under the pressures of curiosity or peer pressure. Recreational drug use may be initiated from party scenarios. Alcohol use by those both under age and of legal drinking age could also start in a similar way.
- Peer pressure is a huge initiating factor for many teens and young adults when it comes to drug and alcohol abuse. The influence of those around can play a part in making it difficult to say no. In the case of teens and young adults especially, they may find themselves afraid to say no as a result of being embarrassed or taking the risk of being worried about not being accepted.
- The truth of the matter is that no matter what the reason someone decides to abuse drugs or alcohol, the outlook is never a promising one. It is possible that it could be the start of a troublesome habit if not addressed properly. People may choose to abuse drugs and alcohol in a sporadic way initially, but then, if the habits continue, it can turn into advanced stages of abuse like alcoholism and addiction.

Common Reasons

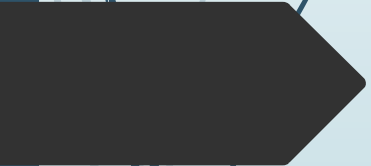
This resource lists 9 different reasons for people turning to drugs, alcohol, and/or other addictions. The 9 reasons listed below are followed up with descriptions and explanations on the original post, so to read the whole article, follow the link above.

- ▶ People suffering from anxiety, bipolar disorder, depression or other mental illnesses use drugs and alcohol to ease their suffering.
- ▶ People see family members, friends, role models or entertainers using drugs and rationalize that they can too.
- ▶ People become bored and think drugs will help.
- ▶ People think drugs will help relieve stress.
- ▶ People figure if a drug is prescribed by a doctor, it must be ok.
- ▶ People get physically injured and unintentionally get hooked on prescribed drugs.
- ▶ People use drugs to cover painful memories in their past.
- ▶ People think drugs will help them fit in.
- ▶ People chase the high they once experienced.

Dangers of Untreated Alcoholism

- ▶ Perhaps someone you love is addicted to alcohol or drugs, yet they have the ability to function each day by going to work and taking care of duties.
- ▶ You might not think that their untreated addiction is harming anyone, but chances are that the longer you ignore the addiction, the more likely they will suffer some mental, emotional, and physical consequences of addiction. Let's take a look at this topic further.
- ▶ Living with an untreated addiction is like drinking poison on a dare, with the full knowledge of the consequences should anything go wrong. Untreated addiction can significantly reduce an individual's life expectancy. As a functioning addict, it is quite easy to ignore the need for an intervention. However, as time goes by, the addict may begin suffering from adverse long-term body damage, as well as emotional and mental health issues.





Part III: Choosing a Treatment Center

Questions to ask your treatment center

- ▶ Every year, millions of people enter drug rehabs in the US alone. While rehab helps many of them, the majority of them have been to rehab before and then relapsed after they went home. **In fact, one in ten had been to rehab five or more times before.**
- ▶ For a family making their choice from a bewildering variety of different programs and different promises, an education in what to look for in a program can save both money and heartbreak. When a family knows just what to ask a rehab facility before trusting a loved one to their care, they can more accurately choose a rehab that fits their needs.

To help families make the right choices of rehabilitation service, here are ten questions that a family should ask before they make their decision:



1. What Kind of Result Do You Expect from Rehabilitation?

- ▶ Different programs actually expect different results. Some programs consider success to be a person who continues to attend meetings or takes the methadone or Suboxone that was prescribed. Others consider that a person completing their twenty-eight-day program is a success. Others measure success by the number of people who stay abstinent after they return home. And some include many factors of recovery, such as gainful employment, improved family relations and morality and so on.
- ▶ You and the family must decide which result is acceptable or desired before making a decision. This decision will guide you through the process of selecting a facility. Ask any rehab program you are considering how they measure their success and what that success rate is.

2. Is the Program Short-term or Long-term?

The most common type of drug rehab program is the 28 day program. This may not give people the time they need to achieve stable sobriety. Addiction is a complex problem involving both physical and mental damage. Most people need considerably longer than 28 days to become stably sober.

Ask the program director how long treatment period is. You may also want to ask if that length of time is negotiable. Some treatment centers will keep clients longer or extend their stay if they deem it necessary.

3. Does the Program's Treatment Substitute Another Drug for the One the Person was Addicted to?

- Thousands of drug treatment programs offer methadone, buprenorphine or Suboxone to the person recovering from addiction to drugs like heroin, prescription painkillers or others. This type of program is referred to as a harm reduction program. The goal of this type of program is not to create sobriety but rather to reduce the harm being created through illicit drug abuse, by giving the person a prescription substitute. If your goal is complete sobriety, then a program that employs substitute drugs as treatment will fall short of your goal.

4. Does the Treatment Rely on the Use of Other Drugs That May Themselves Be Addictive or Harmful?

- Many rehab programs with a pharmaceutical orientation may rely on benzodiazepine-class drugs like Valium or Xanax (or even stronger medications) to alleviate symptoms of distress in those going through their programs. While benzodiazepines may be needed for a few days for a person in acute alcohol withdrawal, they are not the only solution for distress during rehabilitation. Other programs emphasize building up a person's physical health early in the recovery process by using vitamins, minerals and exercise. An improvement in health can result in greater mental calmness and alleviation of symptoms of distress for many. Some people also find it easier to be more social and constructive when they feel healthier.
- A reliance on medications as part of treatment can also result in an addiction to these medications. For example, the prescribing information for Xanax warns that dependence on the drug can occur after just twelve weeks of use at some dosage levels.
- Some other programs will give an alcoholic a drug like Antabuse to make him (or her) feel sick he if drinks again. But the possible side effects of Antabuse include severe and sometimes fatal liver problems and impotence. Some individuals may not need these drugs as part of their rehabilitation programs. Ask a potential rehab service what medications they prescribe and why.



5. Does the program have a method of alleviating physical cravings for drugs or alcohol?

- This is an important point for families to understand. When a person is in addiction recovery, he (or she) may struggle each day with severe cravings. Many rehab programs do not have a direct method of alleviating these cravings. Instead, they offer prescription medications to chemically suppress cravings, frequent support meetings and counseling to help a person deal with the cravings. But if there is no method of directly addressing and reducing cravings, the urge to abuse drugs may be stronger than the support and may drive the recovering person back into drug abuse.
- When a program has nutritional, detoxification or other techniques that effectively alleviate cravings, a person in recovery has a greater ability to focus on developing sober living skills and repairing the harm done to others.

6. Does the Program Include a Nutritional Component?

- When an addicted person arrives at a rehabilitation program, multiple studies have shown that it is typical for him to be in a very poor state of health. For example, a report from the University of Maryland Medical Center stated that intestinal problems resulting from opiate abuse can cause malnutrition and that alcoholism can cause anemia and brain disease resulting from nutritional deficiencies.
- A thorough addiction recovery program needs to include nutritional support for the person in recovery so that the person's deficiencies are repaired. Otherwise, symptoms of deficiency can create sleeplessness, depression, lack of appetite, lack of energy, irritation or other problems that are barriers to recovery. These problems could even lead to further prescription of medications such as sleep aids or antidepressants when nutrition might provide a healthier solution.
- A review of published literature on rehab programs that included a nutritional component showed that programs without nutritional support helped 17% to 50% of those treated succeed in staying sober, but programs with nutritional support had success 60%-80% of the time.*

7. Does the Program Teach a Recovering Person Sufficient Life Skills to Support a Sober Life?

- No matter how good a person feels when he leaves a rehab program, he is going to be hit by problems, stresses and influences that might tempt him to use drugs or alcohol again. Old drug-using friends or drug dealers will come around again. There could be a setback, a job loss, divorce or other stressor.
- A person must have the skills to deal successfully with these influences and other problems so they don't drag him down so far that drugs again look like the only solution. A thorough drug rehab program will provide life skills training to make a person capable of dealing with these stresses. If it does not, the other improvements made during the rehab period may be lost.
- In addition, addicts develop destructive patterns of thinking and acting during heavy drug abuse. Their senses of morality are damaged or destroyed. They learn to hide physical and emotional pain with substance abuse. They solve financial problems by resorting to crime. In each of these areas, the person must learn how to break these addictive patterns and regain the ability to act responsibly again.

8. Does the Rehab Program you are Considering Think that Addiction is a Chronic Disease and One Should Expect Multiple Relapses on the Way to Sobriety?

- While there are many different forms of rehab, in general they tend to either believe that relapses are normal aftermaths of rehab or that relapse can be prevented by a thorough, effective program. It would be wise for a family to interview a prospective rehab on this point.
- Abilities and Life Skills
- A rehab that does not agree that relapse is a natural result of rehab is likely to be a long-term program that thoroughly addresses the way a person approaches day-to-day problems in life. When a program has methods of relieving cravings and builds up one's skills for dealing with stress and problems, it is possible to achieve sobriety after completion of a program.
- Ask a rehab program you are considering if they feel addiction can be overcome as a result of completing their program. Their answer will enable you to choose a program that agrees with your philosophy.

9. Does the Rehab Seem to Offer an Instant Cure or Some Other Promise that Doesn't Make Sense?

- Treatment programs may promise results that seem illogical. Some practitioners who use the hallucinogenic Brazilian jungle drug ibogaine claim that in just 24 hours, it can cure an addiction that has lasted for years. Aversion therapy programs claim success by using nauseating drugs or electric shocks over a ten-day period. Hypnosis programs make similar claims. LSD and the hallucinogen psilocybin are also being tested as fast addiction treatment drugs that bypass a recovering addict's need to fully confront the changes that are needed in his life.
- While there might be one or two "instant cures" from these unusual forms of treatment, most people only recover from addiction after the years of damage to the body, mind and spirit have been repaired. Most people only stay sober when they have experienced relief from cravings and a restoration of life skills and morality. This takes longer than a single session with a drug or a few sessions with any kind of therapist. This kind of recovery takes most people three to four months of steady work, or even longer.
- The promise being made should sound right to the family trying to save the life of a loved one.

10. Are the Steps of the Program Ones That You Feel Good About Your Loved One Experiencing?

- Families are trusting rehab programs with something very precious: the future of loved ones. In some cases, those loved ones go through unexpectedly severe experiences that families would not really want for them. Forced labor, confrontational methods of counseling, heavy drugging during withdrawal or rehabilitation, even electric shocks or the administration of psychedelic drugs may be used as treatment. It would be smart for a family to understand every phase of treatment and agree with its use as treatment for a someone they care about. Be sure you ask the staff of the rehab facility about each phase of treatment.
- Only you can judge if the answers you get to these questions make a drug rehab program acceptable to you. In delivering drug recovery services for almost fifty years, the Narconon network of rehab centers have shown that careful deliberation should be used when making choices under stressful conditions



Part IV: Removing the Stigma

Why Addiction is harder to treat than other chronic diseases

- ▶ The American College of Physicians recently published a position [paper](#) reminding us that addiction is a chronic illness and should be treated as one. As with other chronic illnesses such as hypertension, asthma or heart disease, addiction has both [genetic and environmental](#) influences. Repeated drug use rewires brain circuits involved in reward, memory, impulse and motivation. As a result, the person with addiction loses control over their use, experiences intense drug cravings and continues to use even as the problems in their life multiply. Cues in the environment that call attention to drugs or alcohol (let's face it, every third TV commercial seems to promote beer) trigger an intense stress response in the addict who is trying to stay clean.
- ▶ Like other chronic diseases, successful addiction treatment requires ongoing care that includes monitoring and disease management to ensure the safety and efficacy of the recovery process. Yet few people receive the comprehensive care they need to sustain their recovery because that type of care isn't widely available. Here are a few ways the standard of care in addiction treatment differs from treatment for other chronic diseases — and why that needs to change:
- ▶ Few people with diabetes or heart disease feel their disease is secret or shameful. This was not always the case for those suffering from certain diseases. Even today, there is considerable [stigma](#) associated with myths and beliefs about cancer, which outside the U.S. contributes to excess numbers of deaths. Although many people are beginning to accept that addiction is a chronic disease that has genetic and environmental components, a stigma lingers that it is shameful because it is somehow connected to weakness of will or questionable morals.
- ▶ In fact, addiction may be the [most stigmatized](#) of all illnesses. Compared with people suffering from other mental disorders, people with alcohol dependency are [held to be](#) more responsible for their condition, are less frequently regarded as mentally ill, provoke more social rejection and negative emotions, and are at high risk for discrimination. As a result of this stigma, many addicts and their families try to keep the disease hidden from others — and this can be a barrier to seeking proper treatment.

Why does treatment not always work?

- Many addiction treatment programs and insurance providers still approach addiction as an acute illness. For example, an addict may go through detox and be discharged without enrollment in a program of continuing care. Or, someone may enroll in short-term outpatient addiction treatment, without being referred to extended care for ongoing disease management. Further, health insurance may only partially cover the rehab program, and ongoing maintenance may be an out-of-pocket expense.
- In these scenarios, the patient may be advised to continue seeking support independently through private therapy or self-help support groups to maintain their sobriety. Those kinds of support networks, while critical, do not constitute a comprehensive continuum of medical and behavioral care that is necessary to manage a chronic disease. Detox or a short stint in rehab will not cure addiction. The addict may have detoxified the substance from their system and received coaching in healthier coping mechanisms, but the underlying disease is still there, as is the risk for relapse.
- This mismatch of an acute treatment approach applied to a chronic disease is not typically seen elsewhere in medicine. We would never send a cancer patient home after one course of radiation or chemotherapy with just a list of resources and self-help groups for them to contact on their own. With cancer, even after treatment and remission there is always the risk that the cancer cells can return or become active again, so regular medical monitoring of the patient is necessary.
- With addiction, even after treatment and the transition to recovery there is always the risk that triggers in the environment can cause the addict to relapse and start actively using again. Like cancer, addiction should be handled through comprehensive, evidence-based, long-term treatment followed by monitoring, ongoing management and nonjudgmental return to care in the case of relapse.

Relapse Is Perceived as Failure

- Without ongoing treatment and monitoring, addiction is progressive and can result in disability or premature death. And though we respond with compassion and an immediate return to treatment if someone with diabetes or heart disease relapses, many view a relapse back into active addiction as a personal “failure,” which makes a setback more difficult to identify and address.
- Structured, Long-Term Care Is Difficult to Find
- Fewer than 10 percent of medical schools offer courses in treating addiction. So even though doctors are trained to provide comprehensive services for other chronic diseases, which routinely integrate medications, behavioral therapies, monitoring and management, they aren’t necessarily trained to provide these same services to people with addiction.
- Let’s compare the health care services that people with cancer typically receive. The National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship (NCCS) reports that oncology care programs typically provide structured plans for continuing care. In addition to information about joining cancer survivor groups for emotional support, NCCS notes that cancer care plans generally include ongoing or follow-up medical treatment, information on side effects and interactions with other medications, and a treatment summary to share with other health care providers for safe and coordinated care (e.g., treatment received, prescribed medications, ongoing issues that need to be addressed).

Recognizing the Need for Change

- Thanks to a growing body of scientific research and the work of advocacy organizations like Faces & Voices of Recovery, we are making progress toward reducing stigma and bringing treatment closer in line with the medical approaches that are used in treating other chronic diseases. Legislation such as the Affordable Care Act also has advanced our progress by helping more people access care for mental health conditions that, in many cases, were not previously covered by insurance.
- Still, there's much room for improvement so that those affected by addiction feel comfortable seeking treatment and are able to find high-quality, comprehensive and evidence-based care that they can afford. This shift won't happen overnight, but it can't come soon enough. There are [23.5 million](#) people in the U.S. who need drug or alcohol addiction treatment, but only 2.6 million (11.2 percent) receive the specialized treatment they need. Compare this to the [28.9 million](#) people who were reported to have diabetes in 2012, 20.9 million of whom received evaluation and/or treatment, including specialized medications. Clearly, we can do better — and we have a model that shows us how.

Contact us for more information

- ▶ Spark of Hope is dedicated to providing the best care possible for you or your loved one struggling with addiction. We offer a comprehensive and holistic treatment curriculum that extends far beyond our client's length of stay with us. Our mission is to eradicate the disease of addiction through education, empathy and empowerment. Visit www.sparkofhope.net for info.
- ▶ Or call us now at **1-844-398-9204**

