



PHASE III
“The Pathfinder Certificate of Completion Seminar”

Seminar # 10

Issue # One: Enabling vs. Consequences

Introduction



Enabling vs. Consequences is an Issue the Family Faces

Those who habitually enable dysfunctional behavior are often referred to as co-dependent. It's a telling word, because an enabler's self-esteem is often dependent on his or her ability and willingness to "help" in inappropriate ways. This "help" allows the enabler to feel in control of an unmanageable situation. The reality, though, is that enabling not only doesn't help, but it actively causes harm and makes the situation worse.

By stepping in to "solve" the addict's problems, the enabler takes away any motivation for the addict to take responsibility for his or her own actions. Without that motivation, there is little reason for the addict to change. Enablers help addicts dig themselves deeper into trouble.

Here are some questions to ask yourself when considering whether you are an enabler:

- Do you often ignore unacceptable behavior?
- Do you find yourself resenting the responsibilities you take on?
- Do you consistently put your own needs and desires aside in order to help someone else?
- Do you have trouble expressing your own emotions?
- Do you ever feel fearful that not doing something will cause a blowup, make the person leave you, or even result in violence?
- Do you ever lie to cover for someone else's mistakes?
- Do you consistently assign blame for problems to other people rather than the one who is really responsible?
- Do you continue to offer help when it is never appreciated or acknowledged?



Obstacle the Family Addresses

Enabling behavior:

- Protects the addict from the natural consequences of his behavior
- Keeps secrets about the addict's behavior from others in order to keep peace
- Makes excuses for the addict's behavior (with teachers, friends, legal authorities, employers, and other family members)
- Bails the addict out of trouble (pays debts, fixes ticket, hires lawyers, and provides jobs)
- Blames others for the addicted person's behaviors (friends, teachers, employers, family, and self)
- Sees "the problem" as the result of something else (shyness, adolescence, loneliness, broken home, ADHD, or another illness)
- Avoids the addict in order to keep peace (out of sight, out of mind)
- Gives money that is undeserved or unearned
- Attempts to control that which is not within the enabler's ability to control (plans activities, chooses friends, and gets jobs)
- Makes threats that have no follow-through or consistency
- "Care takes" the addicted person by doing what she is expected to do for herself



Solutions to Issues & Obstacles

1. Gain support from peers

Peer support groups like Al-Anon can put family members in touch with others who know a great deal about addiction, and the information shared in these meetings can be transformative. In fact, according to a 2012 Al-Anon membership survey, 88 percent of people who came to meetings for the first time reported understanding the seriousness of the addiction only after they'd attended several meetings. In other words, people who go to these meetings may not know very much about the challenges their families are facing, but if they keep going to meetings, they'll learn.

Some families go to meetings just to listen. They come to understand that other families are also dealing with this problem, and they learn how these families are focusing on success. Others go to these meetings to network. They seek out peers who have overcome nasty addiction challenges, and they ask for advice on steps that really work. Either method could be helpful. The key is to get started.

2. Talk openly about the shift

After attending Al-Anon meetings, families may have a deep understanding of the habits and behaviors they'd like to shift. The best way to make those adjustments is to discuss the plan with the addicted person in an open and honest manner. The Partnership for Drug-Free Kids provides these conversation tips:

- Choose a time to talk when the person will be sober.
- Emphasize the fact that the changes come from love, not a desire for revenge or punishment.
- Use open-ended questions about addiction to help the person come to understand that substance abuse might be the root of the issues the family is facing.
- Set limits clearly and be prepared to stick to them.
- Stay positive and resist the urge to fight or give in to attacks.
- This conversation can be brief, but the family should be sure to point out the specific behaviors that they're planning to change, along with the reasons they're changing those behaviors.

3. Work in teams

After that opening conversation, families should work to limit the one-on-one time they spend with the addicted person. That's a tip from an ARISE Intervention, and according to the Association of Intervention Specialists, it's aimed to help reduce pressure and manipulation. If the family doesn't have one-on-one talks, it's harder to perform back-door attacks and sneaky innuendo. One person might be willing to fall under the sway of an addicted person's charm, but the other might be the voice of reason that helps the whole family to stick with their new plan.

4. Don't make excuses or cover up the behavior

Sponsor-relationship Some of the most egregious things that happen during the course of an addiction take place when the person is actively intoxicated, and often, drugs of abuse cause persistent memory loss. Alcohol, according to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, can cause discernable memory changes after just one or two drinks. The more people drink, the more they forget. Some drugs work in the same way.

The family's goal is to make sure that the addicted person sees the consequences of the addiction, so that means the family can't be the cleanup crew. If someone stumbles home and falls asleep in the yard, that person stays in the yard. If the person becomes loud at a party, the family doesn't smooth over the social interaction. The person is forced to deal with all of those consequences alone.

Families should also resist the urge to keep a person's workplace reputation pristine. The National Institute on Drug Abuse reports that people with addictions are much more likely to miss work, when compared to people who don't have addictions. Families may try to smooth this by calling in "sick" for an addicted person, or they might push an addicted person to stop working altogether, so there's a smaller chance of embarrassment. All of those actions should stop, too.

5. Let law enforcement officers do their job

Much of the behavior associated with an addiction is illegal. People with addictions might:

- Steal money
- Steal drugs
- Purchase illegal drugs
- Drive while intoxicated

Sometimes, people do things that are even worse. For example, in Ohio, a man who worked for an ambulance company stole blank doctors' prescription pads, presumably so he could write prescriptions for drugs, and he allegedly obtained about \$20,000 of drugs in this manner, per news reports.

These can be awful crimes, and families might have the money, the legal skills, or both to help their loved ones to escape the consequences of these addictions. But in the end, that's not smart.

6. Work with a counselor

Life with a substance abuser is stressful, and according to the Partnership for Drug-Free Kids, it's not unusual for families to develop persistent and uncomfortable health problems, including:

- Backaches
- Digestive problems
- Headaches
- Panic attacks or anxiety
- Depression

Along with all of those signs of upset and stress, family members might still believe that they can somehow shift the behavior and make the person's addiction fade away. They might remember the way things used to be before the addiction took hold, and they might be convinced that those good times are right around the corner, just as soon as they say or do the right thing.

These are tough thought patterns to shift, and a counselor might help. Individual counseling sessions can help people to work through their personal thoughts and feelings about the addiction, and counselors may provide coaching that can assist people when the going gets tough.

7. Continue to emphasize treatment for addiction

As families set limits and make the consequences of addiction more palpable for the substance abuser, they could cause the person to really think about healing and how sobriety might help. However, that person isn't likely to get better without the help of a treatment team. Again, addictions are brain diseases that can't simply be pushed to the side with one conversation. They're caused by changes in brain chemicals and brain circuitry, and they need in-depth treatment to amend.

That's why families should continue to bring up the promise of treatment as they shift from traditional enabling behaviors. They should remind the addicted person that treatment works and that treatment could make the whole family feel better. They should keep brochures about treatment facilities on hand, so the addicted person can peruse them on his/her own time.

Families should remember that some addicted people won't accept the possibility of treatment right away. It's a bold idea, and sometimes, people need to think about it and ponder it before they agree to take action. Families that respect that process of change, and who refuse to give up hope, may see the sobriety come with time.

Practical Exercise # One ENABLING THE WRONG OUTCOMES?
FAMILY WORKSHEET

Their Behavior?	What you would like to see?	Your Actions?	Outcome?

The Story

VIDEO ONE



ASSIGNMENT VIDEO: On www.youtube.com/

Search Title: Signs of Enabling Addicts

Candace Plattor

Educates family members of those in recovery about substance abuse disorders. Three sessions cover triggers and cravings; phases of recovery; and typical family reactions to the stages of addiction and recovery and how they can best support their loved one.

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tSHpgWrCYeY>

Duration: 15:14 min

FAMILY WORK SHEET ISSUE # 1 "Enabling vs. Consequences"

ISSUE # 1. Enabling vs. Disabling (30-minute session)

GOAL: 1. To use this seminar content as a foundation into building communication techniques that do not enable reinforcement of negative substance misuse behavior. 2. To learn how to avoid communication that disables the positive habits of successful recovery. 3. How communication makes a safe place for the family.

QUESTION: _____ **ANSWER:** _____

1. Do you take steps to cover up the addiction and help keep it hidden? _____

2. Do you make excuses for your loved one's addiction or behavior? _____

3. Do you avoid confronting the addiction to avoid conflict? _____

4. Do you believe your loved one is just going through a phase? _____

5. Do you believe the problem will eventually resolve itself without help? _____

6. Do you handle the responsibilities of your loved one? _____

7. Have you bailed your loved one out of jail? _____

8. Have you paid bills for your loved one, who likely used income on their addiction? _____

9. Do you have a parent-child relationship with your loved one even though they're your spouse? _____

10. Do you enjoy the feeling of being 'needed' by your loved one? _____

11. Are you guilty of giving second, third, and fourth chances? _____

12. Do you ever participate in risky behaviors alongside your loved one? _____

TOTAL: _____

SCORE: 1 - Never, 3 – Sometimes, 4 – Often.

If your Score Totals:

12 You are doing great. 36 You could do better. 48 You should seek professional family therapist to learn how.

Practical Exercise # Two:

1. In what way am I enabling?
2. What can I can do to stop enabling?
3. How is my enabling self-gratifying my emotional needs?

MASTER FAMILY PLAN OF ACTION FOR: "FAMILY IS A SYSTEM"

Complete answers and move to "Master Family Plan of Action" found in back of workbook.

1. Our family will identify the characteristic of Enabling and address them using the FTR model.
2. Our Family will use the Individual Family Member Self-Assessment of Denail Worksheet to first understand each member degree of possible enabling and agree that it is accurate then gather the resources which will empower each family member in dealing with their response to the issue.
3. As part of the Master Family Plan of Action we will complete the "Enabling the Wrong Outcomes" worksheet.