



## MARRIED TO SOMEONE IN RECOVERY – by Marney W. DeFoore, LCSW-S

Your self-care efforts are VITAL! Let's face it. If you don't take care of yourself, who will? Are you waiting on your mother, your spouse, your child, Santa? First, take your expectations for your newly recovering husband or wife and place them in check. You will want to make certain that any expectations you may have are set realistically.

Addiction is a disease with a progressive course that always gets worse ending in incarceration, hospitalization, or death unless recovery begins. Recovery is a process with periods of positive and negative change. You will be well-served to begin to study recovery in order to know what is happening in the life of your loved one.

Chances are, these recommendations have already been made to your husband or wife who may or may not engage in the recovery efforts that have been recommended. Regardless of what the other person does or doesn't do we strongly urge you to become familiar with addiction and recovery.

You are in charge of your own recovery experience and that the other person is in charge of his or hers. Simply put, you can not recover for someone else. You can however be knowledgeable about what they are experiencing and why and how this fits into a predictable scheme of recovery experiences.

People in early recovery often have issues with expressing and experiencing emotions (anger, sadness, depression, uncertainty, elation, hopelessness, euphoria). Often, the newly recovering person has moods that swing dramatically and quickly over short time frames. Intimacy is difficult for many in this period and challenging at best. These will not be issues that resolve quickly or quietly. What I am saying here is that problems and discord do not disappear when a person who has been abusing/addicted to a substance finally becomes abstinent.

Attend the next "Open" NA meeting. Go anonymously. Listen. Buy a "Basic Recovery Text" and read more to learn about NA's 12-step recovery program.

Take baby steps to recover your marriage intimacy. Begin by being kind, smiling, being patient, allowing the other person to have their own process. You are best served by doing an outstanding job of taking good healthy care of yourself. In this way you can more easily relax your expectations of others.

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