



7 Productive Steps to Help an Alcoholic in Denial

Follow these seven steps to guide your loved one toward acceptance and recovery.

1 Educate Yourself About Alcoholism

Knowledge is power. Before attempting to help someone else, educate yourself about alcoholism. Understand its symptoms, side effects, and potential treatment options. Recognize that it's a chronic disease and not a matter of willpower.

Several reputable sources, like the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), offer valuable information. For example, it's estimated that nearly 30 million American aged 12 and older experienced alcohol use disorder (AUD) in the past year. This statistic can help you understand that your loved one isn't alone in their struggle. Furthermore, joining support groups like Al-Anon can help you understand others' experiences and strategies that have worked for them.

2 Show Empathy and Respect

Words matter, so approach your loved one with compassion, respect, and understanding. Avoid confrontational or judgmental attitudes that may push them further into denial. Use 'I' statements to express your concern without sounding accusatory. For example, say, "I'm worried about your health," instead of "You drink too much!"

3 Choose the Right Time

Choose a time to talk when your loved one is sober and calm, and you're unlikely to be interrupted. Find a quiet, neutral location that feels safe and might make the conversation less threatening. Also, be patient. It might take multiple discussions before your loved one becomes open to seeking help.

4 Provide Evidence of Harmful Actions

Sometimes, people struggling with alcoholism aren't aware of how their behavior affects others. Share specific times when your loved one's drinking has caused harm to themselves or others. For example, you might mention situations where their drinking led to accidents, strained relationships, or missed opportunities. But remember, the goal is to enlighten, not to blame or shame.

5 Encourage Them to get Professional Help

Emphasize that it's okay to ask for help and that professional support is courageous and can be beneficial. Talk about various treatment options like therapy, medication, or alcohol rehab centers like Landmark Recovery, assuring them that recovery is possible with the right help and resources.

6 Practice Self-Care

Helping someone with alcoholism can be emotionally draining. Therefore, prioritize your well-being while supporting your loved one. Engage in stress-relieving activities, maintain healthy boundaries, and seek support from support groups or professionals. Remember, you can't pour from an empty cup.

7 Expect Resistance, but Stay Persistent

Even with your best efforts, your loved one might continue to deny their problem. Be prepared for resistance, and try not to get discouraged. Change takes time, and your patience can make a significant difference.