



## Disable the Enabling!

### How Can You Overcome Your Impulse to Fix, Nag, and Protect?

Start by making a list of specific things that you do that you suspect may be enabling. Now that you are aware of some behaviors that you might want to change:

#### Ask Yourself:

- 1. Why am I doing these things? What am I telling myself about this situation that has been making it okay for me to do these things? Some things that you may be telling yourself:**
  - My child needs my help (and I MUST help them).
  - I can't be happy until my child changes.
  - It hurts me to see this.
  - I'm the only one my child trusts to help them fight this addiction.
- 2. Has my behavior been effective in solving the problem?**
- 3. What's stopping me from changing my enabling behaviors? For example:**
  - I don't want to hurt my child.
  - They will be angry with me.
  - It's going to hurt ME to no longer protect my child.
  - I just don't see how it will make any difference.
- 4. Challenge your reasons for continuing enabling behaviors:**
  - Will disabling the enabling truly hurt my child? Yes, they may get angry, but what is that in comparison to the long-term HARM of addiction that I am working to avoid?
  - What will hurt me more: disabling the enabling, or knowing that I didn't do everything I could?
  - What can I expect to happen if I don't change? Will things get better?

#### Expected Outcome of Allowing Natural Consequences

Can you expect your child to pursue recovery as soon as you discontinue any enabling behaviors? Unfortunately, there are no guarantees that your child will seek recovery, no matter what course of action you choose to take. If you do change your behaviors to eliminate any and all enabling, it is even possible that the situation may appear to get worse before it gets better.

Changing how you interact with your child will feel uncomfortable at first. This is normal. Remember just because your new behavior may FEEL wrong, that doesn't mean it IS wrong.

Congratulate yourself for the really hard work you're doing, keep your eye on your goals and remember the Three P's: Be PATIENT with yourself, PRACTICE what you are learning here and be PERSISTANT.

Material adapted from: SMART Recovery Family & Friends Handbook, 2012 pp. 103-104