

The *Loved Ones Group* Newsletter

an educational resource for those who are concerned about a loved ones alcohol or drug use

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Are you concerned about a loved one's alcohol or drug use?

We want you to know, you are not alone. Loved Ones Group is a free, education-based service and supportive program that provides information about the brain disease of addiction, plus education on how you can help loved ones who may have an addiction problem. Each edition of this newsletter will offer information, support, testimonials and resources designed to help loved ones encourage the addicted person to seek treatment with a goal to embrace a long-term recovery lifestyle. For family resources or information about Loved Ones Groups contact Robin Looney, Director of Day One Admissions Center at 740-354-6878. Walk-ins are welcome at 816 Fourth St. Portsmouth between 8-4pm Monday through Friday to obtain literature.

Just Say NO

by Ed Hughes

This article is not about the popular but ineffective anti-drug campaign of the 1970's. Rather it's a challenge for us, as parents, to keep our children safe and simultaneously prepare them for adulthood. Powerful influences are at work. Media advertising, for example, continually suggests that certain material items are necessary for our youths to be satisfied, popular, or cool. And peer pressure only magnifies these suggestions.

It's difficult to say "no" to the demands of youth. Not only do we wish to avoid conflict, but we also want our children to be liked and accepted by their peer groups. We view "keeping up" as the acquisition of material possessions. Many parents report that their kids just "wear them down" with requests and they finally "give in" against their better judgment. As parents we have a natural desire for our children to have everything possible to ensure their happiness. In most instances this effort is harmless. It may be expensive, but rarely does it cause lasting difficulties. Increasingly, however, children are pushing the limits to the point where their requests may actually put them in danger.

When children are permitted to overpower their parents the potential exists for serious future problems. Remember that we're not raising children—we're raising adults. Developing individuals must learn that it's not always possible to have everything they want when they want it. And teaching this lesson becomes more difficult with every passing year. Many parents tell me of their struggles with demands for cell phones, four-wheelers, provocative clothing, socializing with older youths, and permission to attend parties with questionable parental supervision. Though they're frequently uncomfortable with these requests, the parents often give in just to keep peace and remain popular with their kids. But each "better judgment" boundary that's crossed makes it more difficult to say "no" in the future.

Think of "no" as a loving word. Saying "no" to dubious requests and behaviors demonstrates concern for your child's safety. I work with families whose loved ones are struggling with addiction. While parenting essentially plays no role in causing the disease, imagine the difficulties that previously permissive parents will have in saying "no" to the rescuing demanded by addiction. When setting rules and boundaries, parents and grandparents must be in agreement. There is nothing more damaging than to have the authority of one parent undermined by the whims of the other parent or grandparent. Consistent and mutual support of the behavioral parameters is essential.

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Loved Ones Group

 THE counseling center, INC.
we believe in miracles



Ed Hughes is one of the originators of the Loved Ones Group. He is a licensed, Independent Chemical Dependency Counselor for the State of Ohio, and served as Executive Director of The Counseling Center, Inc., from 1989-2013. He is currently a contributing columnist for the Loved Ones Newsletters. Mr. Hughes earned a B.A. in Sociology from Ohio University and a Master's of Public Service Counseling from Western Kentucky University, and has written a companion book titled *Baffled by Addiction*.

JUST SAY NO continued....

Single parents often find themselves alone in their efforts to set boundaries and they're often "ganged up on" by their kids. Needed support can be found among friends, church groups, pastors, and counselors.

In the end, parents must be able to live with themselves. When the day is over, we want to feel that they've done the right thing for our children. Rarely will parents have lasting regrets for refusing to allow their child to attend a certain party or buy the latest electronic gadget. Regrets come when we neglect to provide leadership by saying "no" to requests that later bring harm.

Please remember, someone will eventually tell our children "no". It is much better for them to learn to deal with boundaries from parents rather than a probation officer, police officer, college professor, or employer.



Family Story

The Loved Ones Group changed my life. I cannot emphasize enough what a blessing this group was to me during the most challenging time of my life. My daughter's addiction began in high school, continued throughout college, and took control of her nursing career. Her addiction consumed me. I was mentally exhausted. I would drive around before work, on my lunch break, and after work to see if she was in class or at work. I could not eat or sleep because my thoughts were consumed by my daughter's addiction. I reached out for help from a family friend, who was also a physician. I was devastated with his brutal honesty. His words were like lead on my soul, "She is not ready." How could he say this? I was ready. Sure she is ready, nobody wants to be an addict. Then Ed Hughes explained "rock bottom" to me and I knew in my heart that my friend was right. She has not reached "rock bottom", but I had.

My sister encouraged me to attend a Loved Ones Group. I was unaware at the time how much I needed to hear that I was not alone. I needed for someone to listen that knew what I was going through and without judgement. I left that first meeting with a sense of relief. I learned how to help my daughter.

Family Story continued....

As my sister and I completed the series of meetings, I realized that I, too, had an addiction. I was addicted to enabling her. I had to learn to say "NO" or it was going to kill us both. As I was learning how to provide the "tough love" my daughter needed, she continued in her addiction which led to her arrest. I remember the sense of relief telling my husband that we could finally sleep tonight, our sweet baby girl was safe. I slept that night but my daughter's legal consequences were just beginning. She returned home after being released from jail and I wanted to believe that she was clean but everything that I had learned contradicted my need to believe her.

I remember the day I had to practice the "tough love" I had been taught. It was a week before Christmas and I walked behind my house to find my daughter "shooting up". This was it! I had no other choice, I was going to save her. I told her she had 24 hours to get out of the house and that she was not to take the car. With nowhere to go, she made some calls and was accepted to a local recovery program. She spent Christmas in recovery and I thought this was an answer to our prayers. However, two weeks after completing the recovery program she was sentenced to 13 months in prison. I cannot find the words to describe how terrified I was for her. My sister and I visited every month, praying relentlessly for God's presence in her life. She was released and I was yet again faced with challenges of my daughter's addiction. I went to my pastor and his wife who graciously offered to "babysit" my daughter everyday so that I could work. She began to volunteer at The Counseling Center and was later given an opportunity to work in their jail diversion program. She worked so hard in recovery that eventually she was able to get her nursing license back and even continued her education. She now helps others with their addiction. I cannot put into words how proud I am of her. She is my inspiration!

I never once thought of giving up on her. Today, I see the daughter that I always knew she was. She is a strong and compassionate woman with a passion to help people. She works hard to help others that are traveling down the dark road that she once emerged from. I think that gives her a special perspective that only someone that has been there can understand. Speaking from personal experience, the recovery community has so much to offer. You just need to take that first step and ask! - PL

