

## Loving Someone Who Disappoints You

You can't pour from an empty cup

Calling in sick for your spouse. Asking a friend or relative for help paying this month's bills. Unexplained charges on credit cards or withdrawals from the family bank account. These are some of the common occurrences reported by family members of individuals struggling with an addiction. Always remember:

1. A person is never alone in his or her cycle of addiction; family members and other loved ones are impacted as well.
2. At the very least, friends and family members are baffled by the person's continued use despite harmful consequences.
3. At a more severe level, families can end up financially destitute and even homeless because of a loved one's desperate efforts to continue the relationship with their drug or compulsive behavior of choice.



Some individuals remain quite functional even as they succumb to addiction. Despite their continued heavy use of substances or problematic behaviors (such as gambling, chronic overspending, or other negative compulsive behaviors), these individuals are still able to maintain employment and "keep up appearances," even though behind the scenes there may be a great deal of suffering. Very likely, even with so-called "functional addicts," there is still a lot going on behind closed doors. The emotional impact of addiction on the family cannot be overstated.

Just as the person suffering from addiction needs care and treatment, so too do their loved ones.

### Introducing Al-Anon

#### *Al-Anon at a Glance:*

- Al-Anon is a 12-step program for family members and friends of those struggling with alcoholism and other addictions
- Al-Anon defines itself as "a mutual support program for people whose lives have been affected by someone else's drinking. By sharing common experiences and applying the Al-Anon principles,

families and friends of alcoholics can bring positive changes to their individual situations, whether or not the alcoholic admits the existence of a drinking problem or seeks help" (al-anon.org).

For a list of meetings, visit [www.al-anon.org](http://www.al-anon.org)

For the teenage children of those suffering from addiction, check out the Al-Anon Alateen page <https://al-anon.org/newcomers/teen-corner-alateen/>

## Introducing Gam-Anon

### *Gam-Anon at a glance:*

- Gam-Anon is a 12-step program for those who have been affected by the gambling problem of a loved one.
- Gam-Anon encourages those who have been impacted by a loved one's gambling: "Come join with us. We too were alone, afraid, and unable to cope with the deterioration in our relationships, the financial problems, and the debt caused by the gambling problem. We know that living with the effects of a loved one's gambling can be too devastating to bear without help" (gam-anon.org)

For a list of meetings, visit [www.gam-anon.org](http://www.gam-anon.org)

## What happens once the addict is in recovery?

Long-term, sustained recovery from addiction should be applauded – it truly is a miraculous gift, and something for which all family members of loved ones with an addiction strive and hope for. But as we have tried to make clear, addiction affects the family as much as the addict, and sometimes even when a person is sober, the unhealthy and dysfunctional ways a family member may have learned to cope do not typically vanish on their own, nor do the dysfunctional ways the entire family unit has learned to function while living with an addict for many years.

Friends and family members must continue to work at their recovery as much as the addict.

*For assistance with these matters or any other work/life challenge you may be experiencing, contact your Ulliance Life Advisor EAP today.*



**Ulliance provides no cost, confidential, short term counseling  
for you & your family.**

Call us- we're here to help **800.448.8326**