

"The opposite of addiction is not sobriety; the opposite of addiction is *connection*."

– Johann Hari

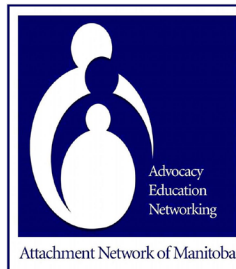
"Not why the addiction but why the pain."

– Gabor Maté



10 IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW

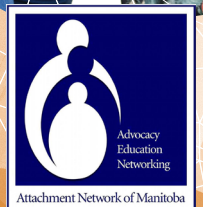
when someone you care about is struggling with an addiction



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1 “All addiction is pain relief.”
It’s important to understand that addiction represents a desperate need to relieve pain, both emotional and physical. *(Gabor Mate, MD)*

2 Your feelings of guilt or responsibility are normal.
Try not to become stuck in those feelings.

3 Your loved one is still there underneath all that challenging behaviour. Loving and accepting them does not mean you’re supporting their behaviour - you are supporting them.

4 Set boundaries to take care of yourself. Don’t confuse giving love with giving in. You still need to have a meaningful life separate from what your loved one is going through.

5 Giving love creates hope.
You don’t have control over how your love is received, only how it is given.

6 Get support. Loving someone with an addiction is hard and can bring up feelings of shame. Keep reaching out until you find acceptance and understanding.

7 Understand harm reduction.
Working towards recovery does not mean your loved one will be completely sober. Reducing one’s use or dependence is also a positive step.

8 You may feel powerless.
Trying to gain control of your loved one’s behaviour by giving or withholding your love doesn’t work.

9 Language is important.
Words like ‘addict’ and ‘clean’ are labels that can generate shame and create distance between you.

10 Relapse happens. It can be heartbreaking, and you may be tempted to step back at those times. Know that your connection is like a lifeline and that healing happens in the context of a relationship.

