

Stress Relief

Stress and anxiety can get the best of us. But don't let them stop you in your tracks. Instead, follow these tips to help you cope:

- Take a time out by practicing yoga, listening to music, getting a massage or learning other relaxation techniques
- Maintain a well-balanced diet
- Limit your intake of alcohol and caffeine, which can aggravate anxiety and trigger panic attacks
- Exercise daily
- Count to 10 or 20 slowly, then repeat
- Embrace humor—a good laugh can go a long way
- Maintain a positive attitude and replace any negative thoughts with positive ones



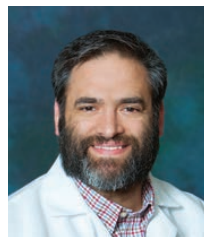
Chemical Dependency: How to Help a Loved One

When addiction strikes, family caregivers play an important support role

Knowing how to help a loved one struggling with addiction can be confusing, and the road to recovery can lead to caregiver burnout. Raman Baishnab, DO, a board-certified psychiatrist on the Medical Staff at Southwest General, offers tips to help caregivers cope.

Be Open and Patient

As a caregiver, encourage your loved one to seek help, and let your loved one know that when he or she is ready, you will be there for support. Don't push.



Raman Baishnab, DO
Psychiatry

“Caregivers can still encourage and plant seeds, but it's hard to wait for the fruit. Your efforts to do so, though, will have benefit later,” says Dr. Baishnab.

Discuss the situation openly with other family members, and establish an agreement in regard to limits they are willing to enforce together. Be united in loving the person and united against the illness. Maintaining a lie of “health and normalcy” is enabling, and presents opportunities for the dependent individual to manipulate family members.

Watch for Signs

Common red flags of chemical dependency include:

- Isolation, which may actually occur as a predecessor to chemical abuse. Ideally,

this is when a loved one would step in to help

- Radically different behavior
- Excuses for missed engagements
- Requests to borrow money
- A sickly appearance

Connect with Resources

Family members can help find and suggest resources for their loved one. The sooner addicted individuals join a 12-step program, such as Alcoholics Anonymous (aa.org) or Narcotics Anonymous (na.org), the sooner healing can begin.

Also, Southwest General's Oakview Behavioral Health Services can help determine next steps by offering assessments as well as support groups, multiple levels of care, an intensive outpatient program and a partial hospitalization program.

Seek Caregiver Support

Supporting a dependent loved one can leave caregivers feeling jaded, helpless and resentful. Dr. Baishnab encourages caregivers to join Codependent(s) Anonymous (coda.org), where families share insights that prepare caregivers to more precisely draw the line between loving and enabling.

For more information about behavioral health services offered at Southwest General, call **440-816-8200** or visit swgeneral.com/behavioral-health.