

How to Tell People You Are Entering **Addiction Treatment**

Telling people you're going to residential addiction treatment can seem intimidating, even when you know that it is the best way for you to heal. Unfortunately, addiction is still a stigmatized and misunderstood condition, and sharing your struggle with others is often difficult. It is common to worry about what others will think and fear their judgment. In other cases, you may be scared that telling them will cause them to worry. By planning ahead, you can decide how and with whom you will share your plans for going to treatment. In this guide, we will discuss:

Telling Family and Friends

Whether your family and friends already know about your addiction or don't, the people who love you will most likely be relieved and happy that you are seeking help. Using the following guidelines, you can help ensure that your disclosure will be a positive experience:

- **Be Honest:** It may be tempting to hide the fact that you're going to treatment by making up stories about vacations, business trips, or hospitalization for another affliction. While you may choose to limit how much you tell certain friends and family members, lying will ultimately add to your stress, increase your feelings of shame, and damage your sense of integrity. It will also prevent your loved ones from offering their support at a vulnerable and pivotal time.
- **Think About What You Will Say:** Deciding how to share your plans with each person in your life ahead of time can increase your confidence and help you determine how much and in what way you want to disclose this. Telling someone who knows the full extent of your substance use may be a very different experience than telling someone from whom you have hidden your substance use. Telling your best friend will likely be very different than telling your children. Planning out what you will say can help you shape the conversation in a way that is appropriate for each person.
- **Tell Them What You Need:** Support from family and friends can be a vital part of the recovery process. Often, however, people are at a loss for what to say or do, and may not know how to give you the support you need. So tell them—whether it's coming to visit you in rehab, helping you arrange child or pet care, writing emails, or even accompanying you on your trip to the treatment facility, being open about what you want can ensure that your needs are met, and gives your loved ones a way to support you in a way they know is meaningful.
- **Don't Doubt Yourself:** Although it is likely that most people in your life will be supportive of your decision to seek help for your addiction, there may be some who respond negatively and question your choice. Whether they are not ready to face the reality of your substance abuse, want to justify their own substance use, or are worried about losing someone to use with, remember that you are not responsible for anyone's reaction to your decision. You are making the best choice for you, and you do not have to convince anyone else of the wisdom of that choice.

Telling People at Work

While being open with family and friends is the best policy, telling people at work is left to your discretion. If your leave is being covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Family Medical Leave Act, or employment-based disability insurance, you may need to disclose the reason for your absence to HR. However, you are not legally obligated to tell your boss or your co-workers, and the decision to disclose is entirely up to you. If you do feel safe and comfortable telling people at work, using the guidelines above can help you decide how to talk about it.

Prioritizing Your Recovery

You are seeking treatment because your substance use has become unmanageable and you want to end the pain of addiction. This is a time to focus on your healing and growth, not the reactions of others, regardless of how important they are to you. You are standing on the cusp of recovery, and committing fully to that journey is ultimately what will allow you to create the life you want.

– Take the Next Steps –

If you have any questions or concerns about how to tell others about going to addiction treatment, you are always welcome to contact us. We are happy to provide guidance and support as you enter this new phase in your life and move toward lasting recovery.

Please reach out to us at 888-475-8177.