

Leaving Your Family For **Addiction Treatment**

Parents struggling with substance addiction often face unique barriers to residential addiction treatment, due to a host of emotional and practical concerns. But with the right perspective and thoughtful planning, temporary physical separation during addiction treatment ultimately will allow you to be more fully present in the lives of your children and create richer, more meaningful relationships within your family. In this guide, we will discuss:

Overcoming Emotional Barriers

Being away from your spouse and children can be hard in any situation, but the time commitment involved with residential addiction treatment often presents a longer absence than any you have experienced before, and can leave you with second thoughts about the wisdom of coming to treatment. Even if you clearly recognize your need for recovery, the process of working towards sobriety can seem sharply at odds with your responsibilities as a parent and the needs of your children. Ultimately, however, you and your children want the same thing: for you to get better.

The truth is that seeking residential addiction treatment is a loving and courageous act that shows a commitment to both your own well-being and the well-being of your family. If you are struggling with addiction, getting the help you need is the most responsible and generous thing you can do to protect yourself and your children from the harm of substance abuse. While the physical separation may be difficult initially, your time in treatment will allow you to:

- Forge stronger connections with your children.
- Be more fully present in their lives.
- Offer your kids a more stable and healthy life.
- Show your children that healing and change are possible.

Making A Plan

Making a plan for your time in treatment can help both you and your children cope with your absence and know what to expect during your time away:

- Create an honest and age-appropriate dialogue with your children about your treatment so they understand what is happening and can ask any questions they may have.
- If you need to arrange childcare during your absence, do so early and make sure your children are introduced to any new caregivers as soon as possible so they feel comfortable and safe.
- Ask your children if there is anything they need while you are away that you may have overlooked.
- Find out what the visiting policy is at the treatment program you will be attending and make a schedule for your family.
- Make a plan for how you will communicate with your family members while you are in treatment.

By being prepared and having a clear course of action, you can minimize disruption to your children's daily lives and demystify what life will be like during your time in treatment.

Involving Your Family in Treatment

Addiction is a disease that affects the whole family. Even if you have gone to great lengths to protect your children from the reality of your substance abuse, chances are that they need their own support to begin to heal and process the impact of your substance use and your recovery. Addiction treatment can provide opportunities to address the complex ways the illness presents itself in the life of each family member and help you move forward together.

Some residential addiction treatment facilities offer family programming options that allow your children to learn about your illness, process their own experiences, and begin their own healing process. Not only can such programs give your loved ones the support they need to understand your addiction and the impact it has had on them, they can also be critical to helping you recover as a family, disrupt damaging interpersonal dynamics, and create a foundation for collective well-being. Family involvement can also be strongly correlated with positive treatment outcomes.

And remember that help is available for both you and your family members after residential treatment. A variety of peer support groups (such as Al-Anon, Adult Children of Alcoholics, and Alateen) are available for children and can be a critical source of support and healing. Peer support will also be an important part of your journey, and you may want to seek connection with others who understand the issues you face as a parent in recovery.

– Take the Next Steps –

If you would like more information about how to cope with separation from your family during treatment, or are ready to start the journey toward healing, we invite you to contact us at any time. At Alta Mira, we are committed to helping families struggling with addiction find the support and guidance they need to recover together in a way that makes sense for them. As such, we are always available to answer any questions you may have and connect you with any resources you may need to facilitate the healing process.

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