

Intermountain Health Shares How Families Can Help Those in Treatment with Substance Use Disorders

Aug 31 is Overdose Awareness Day. Intermountain Health give tips on how to approach a loved one who is either going through treatment for addiction or should be

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH, USA, August 22, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- National Overdose Awareness Day is August 31st. It can be hard for families to know about how to approach a loved one who is either going through treatment for addiction — or should be going — but [Intermountain Health](#) experts say it is important to have an open conversation.



“Get educated,” said Jesse Ellis, MSW, LCSW, a mental health and clinical practitioner at Utah Valley’s Intermountain [DaySpring Clinic](#) in Provo, Utah. “Learn more about the type of substances your loved one might struggle with and recognize the appropriate signs and symptoms.”

“Also learn more about the delivery of care,” added Ellis. There are many access points for treatment in our community, some private, some public and a lot of services interwoven within the judicial system.”

Each county in the state will have a division of substance use that can serve as a resource hub for family and loved ones as well as brokerage services for individuals seeking treatment.

Substance use disorders are tough for both those addicted as well as their loved ones. Making sure that loved ones get help as needed is a big part of the treatment process.

Seek psychiatric care with a practitioner specifically trained in substance use disorders. There are many medications designed to treat these disorders and they can make all the difference.

What NOT to do if you know and love someone addicted to drugs, etc.

“Remember to treat their addiction as a medical problem, not a moral failure. Avoid heavy conversations about choice. Once someone is physiologically dependent on a substance, it becomes less about choice and more about compulsive uncontrollable behavior. Heavy ‘tough love’ conversations often back-fire, especially when delivered by a loved one, because it can lead to a lot of shame and fear, often activating their addictive behavior,” said Ellis.

The appropriate line between helping and enabling can be really hard for loved ones to find. Learning how to hold your loved one accountable with supportive and healthy boundaries is good for them and good for their loved ones.

Acute substance use disorders are chronic in nature. Because of that, it’s important to focus on the remedies not the cures. In other words, chasing a quick fix often leads parties to feel defeated. Individuals who are successful in their recovery will build a lifestyle and a community that supports their recovery over their lifetime.

Avoid television style interventions, especially while they’re in an altered reality. Getting someone to “see the light” when utterly wasted, for example does nothing for them and only frustrates you. It’s best to get them sober and then have a talk when they are clear headed.

How does someone’s current mental well-being play into the drive to seek help?

Substance use disorders are shrouded in shame and rejection. In many ways they are diseases of disconnection and internal conflict. The hardest part of an addiction is the person’s inability to self-regulate how they want to. This drives a negative relationship with oneself prompting a perpetual need to self-medicate. Deep down, people who are addicted know this, and are more eager to change than we sometimes realize. Their capacity to change is more of a struggle than to express their desire. We help with a lot of support, understanding and community.

The different levels of care at Dayspring Clinics for substance use disorders

The DaySpring Clinics are Intermountain’s program to assist patients on the road to recovery from addiction.

“As a healthcare system we offer medical detox, intensive outpatient, and general outpatient services for drug and alcohol use disorders. This includes individual counseling, group counseling, and family counseling. We also offer specific treatment for opioid use disorder in our opioid treatment program,” said Ellis.

Many counties have substance addiction programs that can offer help and resources as well.

Naloxone – importance of having it and using it, how to get it

A naloxone kit can be used to reverse the effects of overdose with opioids and can help save a life. If you have a loved one who has an addiction, this is a helpful to keep. But also, Intermountain Health encourages everyone who has an opioid prescription to also have a naloxone kit in their house, in case of accidental overdose or misuse.

Drug poisoning deaths are a preventable public health problem; they are the leading cause of injury death in Utah, outpacing deaths due to firearms, falls, and motor vehicle crashes.

According to the Utah Department of Health, ten Utahns die each week from drug overdose. Utah is particularly affected by illicit opioids, specifically fentanyl, which is responsible for 33% of the unintentional and undetermined drug poisoning deaths in the state. According to the Office of Vital Records, 571 people have died this year so far due to drug overdoses. Although that seems like an easy number to quantify, it's an impossible number in some ways to comprehend. How do we measure the value of those lives and really appreciate how many people are actually affected by those deaths?

Treatment can work and our efforts are paying off. For example, according to the Utah Health Department, we have decreased the number of drug related deaths by 5.38% since 2021.

You can ask about naloxone kits at your pharmacy. There are also low to no-cost options by visiting <http://www.utahnaloxone.org/>.

About Intermountain Health

Headquartered in Utah with locations in six states and additional operations across the western U.S., Intermountain Health is a nonprofit system of 33 hospitals, 385 clinics, medical groups with some 4,600 employed physicians and advanced care providers, a health plans division called Select Health with more than one million members, and other health services. Helping people live the healthiest lives possible, Intermountain is committed to improving community health and is widely recognized as a leader in transforming healthcare by using evidence-based best practices to consistently deliver high-quality outcomes at sustainable costs. For more information or updates, see <https://intermountainhealthcare.org/news>.

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