



THE

# VESTA

APPROACH



10 WAYS TO FAMILY RECOVERY

# Ten ways to family recovery

## 1. Assess your strategies

Think about all the strategies you have used to try and stop your loved one drinking or using drugs. Have any worked? If so, keep doing them, If not, stop doing them. Only continue with the things that have made a significant change and save your energy.

## 2. Understand your loved one's substance use

Understanding the benefits and the costs of your loved one's substance use is really important if you are going to help them change.

Thinking about the benefits;

What do they like about drugs/alcohol?

What does drugs/alcohol help them avoid?

Thinking about the costs:

What problems do drugs/alcohol cause them?

What do they miss out on when they use?

If you can make your loved one realise what they are missing out on, and understand why they might be using, you are in a better place to make not using more attractive to them.

In order for you to influence change, we need to tip the balance so that being sober, becomes more attractive than being drunk.

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## 3. Keep yourself safe

Substance use can often come hand in hand with abuse, whether it is physical, emotional or financial or a range of others. If this is happening. Make sure you have a safety plan including a safe place to go to. If you have children, consider the impact on them and think about how to keep them safe too. Abuse is always wrong, whether the other person has a problem with alcohol or drug use or not. Please contact emergency services immediately if you feel you are in danger.

If you can, let a friend or family member know what is going on so you have a safe space to go if you need to.

## 4. Introduce regular self-care

Caring for a person who uses drugs or alcohol is absolutely tireless and all-consuming work. On top of your other responsibilities, you are left with zero time for you. You will have lost touch with people because of embarrassment or just that you haven't felt like seeing anybody. Make a plan to do something for you. Call an old friend and arrange something, join a class, read a book, whatever floats your boat. You need this. It will help you stay resilient.

## 5. Set boundaries

Setting and maintaining clear boundaries for yourself and your loved one is essential. A useful starting point for boundary setting is to think about what you absolutely will not accept and work from that point. Then think about what you will accept. If they use their substance of choice, what will happen? Can they use in the house or not? Will you give them money? How will you 'help' them while loving and caring for them without 'enabling'. Write it all down and communicate it to your loved one when they are sober. It's tough, but try and stick to your boundaries. This will influence change.

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## 6. Reward your loved one when they are sober

One of the four principles of The Vesta Approach is to reward your loved one when they have not been drinking or using drugs. This can seem ridiculous, but seriously, even if it's making them a cup of tea, their favourite meal, a bit of affection, whatever THEY will value, do it. This is part of you showing them that being sober is way better than picking up that drink or using. Make sure you acknowledge the sober times too, for example, "I love our time together when you are sober".

## 7. Communicate positively

When we are angry or upset, feeling let down (again) and experiencing yet another broken promise, we don't communicate very well because of our emotions.

Here's a handy tip (even if you say it through gritted teeth!) try not to

So, say what you want to say starting with

"I feel..." -state the emotion you feel

"When you..." - say what caused the feeling

"Next time, I would like..." - explain what you want to happen

For example, "I feel disappointed that you used last night when you had agreed we would have dinner together. Next time, I would like it if you would try to stay sober or let me know if you have used so I am not waiting around".

So... state how you feel, why and what you want to happen next time. This is tricky, but practice it (with everyone!). This method of communication is called an 'I-Message'. Nobody can argue with your feelings, but they can when they feel threatened with "You did X, you did Y" and maybe that's another excuse to go and take a drink/use.

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## 8. Identify helpful and unhelpful strategies

Every single family member I have worked with has tried their very best to help their loved one. Usually with no support apart from Google to get ideas. Helping someone to do something they truly cannot do themselves in this situation is helping.

Have you done any of the following?...

Cover up for them?

Clean up after them?

Make excuses?

Ring in sick to work?

Tuck them up in bed?

Bought drugs or alcohol?

The list is endless and very personal to you. Let me tell you that none of your attempts are 'right' or 'wrong'. Do not be embarrassed or ashamed.

Make a list of the ways you have been helping your loved one and if it feels safe to do so, stop doing those that perhaps make it easier for (or enable) them to use their substance now. Continue those that work for you because you are truly helping.

The **ONLY** way your loved will change their behaviour, is to allow them to experience the natural consequences of their substance use. This makes being intoxicated less attractive.

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## 9. Withdraw you company & rewards

This might feel massively inconvenient for you. I get it. Put yourself in your loved one's shoes, they get wasted and they get your company all at the same time. Even if it's negative, we are social animals, we like to be around people so your loved one is in a win-win situation.

Take yourself away, go out, go to bed, take a bath. Anything that is going to make you feel good and not disappointed.

If you withhold a reward, the message you could give (and remember to state this) is something like "I can see you are having a drink/using. I prefer spending time with you sober. Let's rearrange this for another time when we can enjoy it together. You carry on. I'll see you tomorrow."

Your loved one is left with their substance alone. Perhaps they will start to realise they don't get you AND their substance of choice, but you still love and care for them.

No arguing, no conflict.

Practice only engaging with your loved one when they are SOBER. Trust me, once they've used their substance, I suggest you save your energy.

Please note, this can cause certain people to kick off, be mindful of previous behaviours and do not put yourself at risk. It is also crucial that you are certain they are intoxicated!

# Ten steps to family recovery

## 10. Get social support and help for you

There is online and face to face support available for your loved one when they are ready (try and be aware of these if you get the opportunity to bring treatment up with them and they agree, you need to act fast).

Think about your own help too. Increasing your social circle is absolutely crucial. Don't focus on changing your loved one, focus on you and how you can change your responses to their behaviour so that you can live a better life.

**I hope this has helped you. Please stay connected.**

For more information about the support I offer, please check out my website [www.vestaapproach.co.uk](http://www.vestaapproach.co.uk)

Join my free Facebook Community for women affected by a loved one's drug or alcohol use

**Vesta Confidential**

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Click on the icons

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# Ten steps to family recovery

## Checklist

Tick off the strategies you have practiced and perhaps have a handy notebook to record your journey.

1. Assess your strategies
2. Understand your loved one's substance use
3. Keep yourself safe
4. Introduce regular self-care
5. Set boundaries
6. Reward your loved one when they are sober
7. Communicate positively
8. Identify helpful and unhelpful strategies
9. Withdraw your company and rewards when your loved one uses their substance
10. Get social support and help for you

Let me know how you get on in my private and confidential Facebook group.

Click > [@VestaConfidential](#)

# Ten steps to family recovery

## Helpful Contacts

[www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)  
(child abuse)

[www.refuge.org.uk](http://www.refuge.org.uk)  
(women's shelter)

[www.nacoa.org.uk](http://www.nacoa.org.uk)  
(children of alcoholics)

[www.victimsupport.org](http://www.victimsupport.org)  
(rape help)

[www.adfam.org.uk](http://www.adfam.org.uk)  
(families, drugs and alcohol)

[www.ncdv.org.uk](http://www.ncdv.org.uk)  
(domestic violence)

[www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)  
(mental health)

[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)  
(children's wellbeing)

[www.cruse.org.uk](http://www.cruse.org.uk)  
(bereavement support)

[www.womensaid.org.uk](http://www.womensaid.org.uk)  
(domestic abuse)

[www.samaritans.org.uk](http://www.samaritans.org.uk)  
(crisis aid and suicide)

[www.mensadviceline.org.uk](http://www.mensadviceline.org.uk)  
(child abuse)

[www.wearehourglass.org](http://www.wearehourglass.org)  
(elder abuse)

[www.samaritans.org.uk](http://www.samaritans.org.uk)  
(crisis aid and suicide)



**You are not alone**

Find more support related to families,  
drugs and alcohol  
**HERE**