







# FAMILY COPING RESOURCES

Substance use disorder (SUD) is difficult for individuals and their families and friends. When someone goes to jail (incarceration), it can lead to further pain and disrupt relationships, employment, and mental health for the individual and the family unit. Incarceration also significantly increases the risk of an overdose when the individual returns to the community.<sup>1</sup> Below is information, coping strategies, and resources individuals can use to ease these challenges.



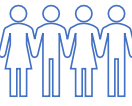
## FAST FACTS




-  An overdose is a traumatic event that affects the mental and physical health of the person and their loved ones.<sup>2</sup>
-  A person may experience a variety of emotions after an overdose, such as embarrassment, anger, and gratitude. Family members may feel judged or inadequate because they could not prevent the overdose.<sup>2</sup>
-  Mental and/or physical concerns often lead to the substance use or overdose, and the person needs support from their loved ones.<sup>2</sup>
-  Incarceration combined with substance use can be overwhelming and challenging for the person and their loved ones.<sup>3</sup>
-  Seeking supportive services is just as important for loved ones to help ease the emotional toll.<sup>2,3</sup>
-  Learning the signs of overdose and carrying naloxone, a medicine that can reverse an opioid overdose, can help save a life.<sup>2</sup>

## RESEARCH FINDINGS

Family support and social support are important parts of the reentry process and in promoting recovery.<sup>4</sup>

Recovery services that involve both the person and their loved ones can support recovery and reduce reincarceration.<sup>3</sup>

	Positive emotional support (understand, listen, provide warmth and sense of being loved, etc.)
Resource support (housing, transportation, etc.)	
	Community and neighborhood support

	Peers with both substance use and incarceration experience help reduce stigma and increase motivation.
Services that navigate treatment/recovery with the challenges of reentry (employment, etc.) improve chances of recovery.	
	Services that include family/loved ones in the recovery process reinforce relationships and support.

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# COPING STRATEGIES

Coping strategies can help adults with the emotional stresses of a loved one with SUD and/or experiencing incarceration.



## Peer Support

Promotes bonding, goals, and coping and reduces stigma.<sup>5</sup>

- Al-Anon & Nar-Anon
- SMART Recovery Family & Friends
- Learn to Cope



## Therapy

Enhances healthy coping skills and promotes well-being.<sup>5</sup>

- Individual counseling
- Family counseling



## Education

Increases knowledge to support treatment and recovery.<sup>5</sup>

- Destigmatized language
- SUD risk factors
- SUD treatments
- Naloxone training



## Self-Care

Reduces physical, mental, and emotional stress and enhances quality of life.<sup>5</sup>

- Exercise
- Good sleep
- Balanced meals
- Hobbies

Use the C.A.R.E.S. approach when talking to a child with a parent experiencing SUD and/or incarceration.<sup>6</sup>

**C**

**Create a safe environment for the child to talk freely.**

**A**

**Acknowledge and validate the child's concerns.**

**R**

**Reassure the child that they are not alone.**

**E**

**Encourage active play and skill-building (e.g., academic, athletic, cultural activities).**

**S**

**Share honest and age-appropriate information with the child.**

Routines can add stability and help reduce trauma for children. Talking with a child and extending their support network to include family, teachers, other trusted adults, and a child's friends can help promote resilience. Allowing a child to connect with the parent, if safe and the relationship is positive, can also help prevent a sense of loss.<sup>6</sup> Visit <https://sesamestreetincommunities.org/topics/incarceration/> for more examples of age appropriate support.

# RESOURCES

## Helplines

- **PA Get Help Now Online Chat:** [Chat with an expert](#) (you can stay anonymous if you wish).<sup>7</sup>
- **PA Get Help Now Hotline:** Call the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs' hotline at [1-800-662-4357](tel:1-800-662-4357).<sup>7</sup>

## Grief Support and Therapy

- **Grief Support:** Helps cope with the loss of a loved one due to an overdose. [Find a grief support group](#) in PA.<sup>7</sup>
- **Family Therapy:** [Find a therapist](#) who specializes in substance use issues.<sup>7</sup>

## Peer Support

- **Nar-Anon Family Groups:** Helps people with a family member or friend with SUD. [Find a meeting](#) near you.<sup>7</sup>
- **SMART Recovery Family & Friends:** Offers online and in-person meetings for loved ones. [Find a meeting](#) nearby.<sup>7</sup>

## References:

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