



RECOVERY MINISTRY

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Adapted from His Heart, Our Hands



RECOVERY MINISTRY

Substance abuse ministry can take many forms, but all ministries should be based on compassionate understanding. People with unresolved personal issues about drug addictions, alcohol addictions, and addicted people would do well to find some other type of ministry outlet. Before attempting to plunge in to help the addicted, it would be wise for a church and its members to take stock of their own spiritual health and ask God to help them grow in grace and compassion.

Most addicts have other substance abusers as friends. After a treatment program, they are faced with the difficult task of building a new network of friends who will encourage and support their sobriety. Since so much of their past life has revolved around drugs and/or alcohol, they will be awkward, withdrawn, and artificially cheerful. They may make embarrassing social mistakes. They may need someone to offer to accompany them to recovery group meetings like Alcoholics Anonymous. Loving, faithful friends can help see them through this painful time.

HOW DO WE PLAN A RECOVERY MINISTRY?

A ministry can begin with one dedicated person, although the pastor's support is vital. As that person's enthusiasm spreads, other people may feel God calling them to work in this ministry. Church groups like the On Mission Team, men's ministries, deacons, Sunday School classes, or WMU could be involved. Whatever shape your substance abuse ministry takes, involve the pastor and staff by informing them of plans, inviting them to meetings, and requesting their prayer and advice.

- 1. FORM A TEAM.** At least two people dedicated to ministry and witness should be on this team. Include the pastor. Covenant with God and each other to serve and persevere through all obstacles. Pray for His love and power to work through each team member.
- 2. EDUCATE THE CONGREGATION.** Many drug-prevention curriculum options are available, but choosing one for your congregation could be difficult. See "Sources of Help" below for options.
- 3. CHOOSE A MINISTRY.** Match a need in your community with available people and resources.
- 4. SECURE CHURCH APPROVAL AND SUPPORT.** Present the ministry proposal to the church for its approval. A vote by the church validates it as a church ministry.

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HOW DO WE BEGIN OUR MINISTRY?

You may ask the pastor and other worship leaders to have a call to worship to recognize your church's new ministry focus on substance abuse. Keep ministry prayer requests before the church in various ways: announcements, posters, bulletin inserts, church newsletters, and so forth.

If your ministry has an organized group focus, such as a support group or a prevention education class, publicize it appropriately, taking care not to put anyone on the spot or embarrass anyone publicly.

Caution everyone involved in the ministry to practice confidentiality. Substance abusers and their families are placing painful and potentially damaging information in your hands. By doing so, they are giving you and other ministry participants a high level of trust. Prove yourselves worthy of that trust.

HOW DO WE EVALUATE OUR MINISTRY?

This ministry will not lend itself to numbers as other ministries may. Talk with volunteers, any community agencies with whom you network, church leaders, and of course the addicts or families of addicts whom you serve. Determine what is working well and what is not working. Is Christ being shared? How could the evangelistic focus be strengthened while at the same time offering a high level of help with substance abuse?

WHAT SOURCES OF HELP ARE AVAILABLE?

Breaking the Cycle of Hurtful Family Experiences (Lifeway)

An ideal book for people who wish to learn healthy ways of relating. God created the family to pass a legacy of righteousness from one generation to the next.

Conquering Chemical Dependency: A Christ-Centered 12-Step Process (Lifeway)

A biblically-based, clinically tested, proven program that helps an addicted person move from dependence on mood-altering chemicals to the life of a growing disciple.

Celebrate Recovery

A Christ-centered, 12 step recovery program for anyone struggling with hurt, pain or addiction of any kind.