



## Heritage CARES Helps Families Cope on the Road to Recovery from Substance Use

**Coppell, TX (Sept. 10, 2021)** — To recognize National Recovery Month, [Heritage CARES](#), a leading virtual support program designed to help individuals struggling with stress, substance use and suicidal ideation, celebrates the family's role in a substance use disorder (SUD) recovery journey. So often, the focus is on the person struggling with SUD, but more than not, that individual has family members struggling right alongside them. In fact, according to the [National Center for Biotechnology Information](#), family members of people struggling with addiction are five times more likely to be admitted to the hospital in any given year than the general population.

"Individuals with SUD deserve compassion, resources and encouragement, but so do family members," says Heritage CARES EVP and Executive Director [Rich Jones](#), MA, MBA, LCAS, SAP, who has more than 20 years in behavioral health. "There is hard work on both sides. However, family recovery stands on its merit. It is necessary yet has been historically neglected and used as an add-on. It needs to become an easily accessible and affordable option on a universal basis."

Heritage CARES believes so strongly in the role of the family throughout SUD recovery that much of the online platform includes resources, coaching and a risk assessment designed for family members. Here are some commonly asked questions answered by Jones.

### **Question: What is substance use disorder (SUD)?**

**Answer:** It's a brain issue. It's not bad behavior or a bad habit. It will get worse, and it will not go away on its own. Regardless of the reason for initiating use, it progresses to the point of uncontrollable and irrational behavior. SUD is an individualized experience. You DO NOT have to admit you are an "addict" to recover. You must start assessing your situation and planning for change. You may want to seek out expert advice and support as you walk through the process.

### **Question: How do you recover from SUD?**

**Answer:** There are multiple ways to "get better." There is no one prescribed way to recover. It is an individualized experience. Forty-six percent of people report they were able to reach remission of substance use disorder on their own. However, note that the more severe the substance use disorder, the more likely professional support is needed.

### **Question: What are some of the misconceptions about recovery?**

**Answer:** There are several common myths surround SUD recovery:

1. **You can never have another drink again.** On the contrary, you are allowed to talk to someone without committing to quit everything altogether and "never take another drink." That is one of the first steps on the road to recovery, and that road looks different for everyone.
2. **You'll need to go to rehab.** Not always. There is a clinical assessment process that indicates the level of care. The [American Society of Addiction Medicine](#) has established a continuum of care. There is a perception that rehab is necessary for recovery but only [13% of those in recovery report rehab as the gateway to their rescue.](#)

3. **I'll have to take [medicine to support recovery](#).** Staying alive is first on the agenda. Medicine is not the only option. But it is an option.
4. **A person with SUD must "hit rock bottom."** Why? You wouldn't expect a person with diabetes to go into a diabetic coma before dealing with their health issue, would you? Again, what's important is staying alive, and we know that the rock bottom theory contributes to increased deaths, especially in this age of fentanyl and carfentanyl. The truth is there are as many paths to recovery as individuals are struggling with SUD. What's most important is recognizing there is an issue and developing a plan to address the issue.

**Question: How should the family be involved in the recovery process?**

**Answer:** Families are profoundly impacted and deserve information. Families should be included, not removed from the recovery process, unless their involvement is dangerous for the person needing recovery.

Family recovery is a unique process that should be guided by "family systems theory." It is a primary intervention, not an add-on or after-thought, and it's not limited to traditional avenues of "detach with love" and "tough love." Instead of a mirror or approximation of Al-Anon family group meetings, professional family recovery services and interventions should be individualized to the family.

It should not be dependent on the addicted loved one's "recovery status." Family recovery programming should be universally offered. The addicted individual's recovery status may influence the specific support provided. However, families should have access to professional family recovery support even if the addicted individual is disengaged.

"The family has tremendous power that can be harnessed and focused in a way that increases the likelihood their loved one will seek recovery," says Jones. "Frequently, when family members start to change, the person with a substance use disorder will begin to change. Family systems theory tells us that if you move one part of the family, you move the entire family. Like a mobile above a baby's crib, moving one part without impacting the whole is impossible."

Heritage CARES involves the entire family on the recovery journey with resources and coaching designed especially for family members directly affected by SUD. Please call 844-227-3726 or visit [Heritage CARES](#) for more information.

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**About Heritage CARES**

Heritage CARES (Comprehensive Addiction Recovery Education and Support) is a comprehensive program that provides support tools for substance use disorders (SUD), stress management and suicide prevention and intervention to participants and their immediate family members. The platform also includes tools for wellness and mental health, and anxiety issues and is available for use 24 hours a day, seven days a week. There are three components to the program: peer coaching, education and care management. Heritage CARES available for companies, rehabilitation centers and first responders. For more information on Heritage CARES, visit [Heritage CARES](#).

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