

# Worried about A Loved One's Alcohol or Substance Use?

by Craig Loddeke  
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**RIVERBEND AREA** - Each September, since 1989, SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) has sponsored Recovery Month to promote and support new evidence-based treatment and recovery practices, the nation's strong and proud recovery community, and the dedication of service providers and communities who make recovery in all its forms possible.

The goal throughout September is to come together, celebrate individuals in recovery, and offer hope to those who are struggling. National Recovery Month reinforces the positive message that behavioral health is essential to overall health, prevention works, treatment is effective, and people can and do recover. Also, please note that National Recovery Day of Prayer is September 25.

The 2022 National Recovery Month theme, “Recovery is for Everyone: Every Person, Every Family, Every Community”, reminds people in recovery and those who support them that no one is alone in the journey through recovery. Everyone's journey is different, but we are all in this together.

The Amare NFP and the Metro-East Recovery Council, along with the Take-Action Coalition of Clinton County, Bond County Recovery Council, and the Partnership for Drug Free Communities, partner to support a Family Support Network warm line to assist family members and friends in need of support or resources due to a loved one's alcohol or substance use. The network provides a phone line manned by volunteers with lived experience.

According to Donna, a volunteer for the project, “It is important for family and friends calling in to the Family Support Network to be able to talk with someone who has been in their shoes. Our volunteers have experience in navigating all of the stress, worry, and emotion involved when a loved one is misusing alcohol or other substances, and we are ready to listen.”

The Partnership to End Addiction estimates that “23.5 million Americans are addicted to at least one substance, equaling one in every ten people over the age of twelve.” The families and friends of these individuals often experience serious emotional, physical, and financial stress as a result of their focus on trying to help their loved one recover.

“Individuals who have someone they care about who misuse alcohol or other substances often focus so much on the behavior and problems of their loved one that they forget to care about themselves. It feels like everything centers around the addiction, and the needs of the rest of the family become secondary”, Donna added.

“Craig, also a Network volunteer, added that. “Family members and friends can educate themselves on the misuse of alcohol and other substances. That will improve their understanding of their loved one's situation and the way they relate to that loved one. This can help to facilitate their loved one's recovery, while at the same time bringing hope and peace for themselves. Family members and friends can learn proven ways to help their loved one and ultimately learn to find joy in their own life regardless of the choices of their loved one.”

Amare, a not-for-profit certified Recovery Community Organization (RCO), has provided recovery supports for individuals and family members for over six years. Amare's mission is to "educate, empower, and provide compassionate recovery support services for those suffering from alcohol and substance addiction and their families to strive toward the overall wellness and stability of our community." The Metro-East Recovery Council (MERC), the Take-Action Coalition of Clinton County (TAC), and the Bond County Recovery Council (BCRC) are coalitions that consist of committed community members from the Metro-East area. MERC, TAC, and BCRC are part of an initiative funded through the Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Substance Use, Prevention, and Recovery and are focused on providing support for individuals and families in seeking or maintaining recovery. The Partnership for Drug Free Communities of is a community-based coalition addressing substance use in Madison, St. Clair and surrounding counties.

Dave, from Amare, explains how the idea for the Family Support Network came about. "We have wanted to provide this kind of support system for family members and friends of individuals who are addicted to substances. We are concerned about how people who misuse substances and their loved ones handle the stress this puts on personal relationships. We met with the folks from the Metro-East Recovery Council and tried to focus on what we could do to help. After putting additional programs in place dedicated to supporting those who misuse alcohol and other substances, we realized a gap still existed for family and friend support. We hope the phone line helps to fill this gap."

Individuals calling the dedicated phone line will be connected to a trained volunteer, many who have experienced this in their own family, who offer not only understanding and support, but also a variety of resources. Craig added that, "We are able to mail a packet including: information on recovery and mental health support groups, educational information regarding addiction, local resources including peer support groups, and other important self-care tips for families and friends."

Dave added that, "We just want to be there for people in our communities. We are not counselors, so we cannot offer professional services. What we will offer is support, empathy, and resources. We want people to know that there is someone in your community who cares and is willing to listen."

The Family Support Network can be accessed by calling 314-669-1184. The Family Support Network is open to anyone who calls, but the primary focus is helping families and friends in St. Clair, Madison, Bond, and Clinton counties.

For questions or for more information, please contact Craig Loddeke (618-567-6095) or Ty Bechel (618-780-4843).