



AHS ADDICTION SERVICES NEWSLETTER December 2020

Coping with a Loved One's Substance Use or Gambling During the Holidays

The Christmas season is upon us. As we look around at festive stores and brightly decorated homes, we are reminded that during this holiday season people are preparing for a joyful time of celebration and connection. But for some families, the holiday season also includes coping with someone who has a problem with alcohol, other drugs or gambling. On top of the usual holiday frenzy, dealing with a loved one's substance use or gambling problem can cause stress and leave people feeling frustrated, disappointed, sad and even angry.

If you love or care about someone who has a problem with substance use or gambling, you might wonder why the person can't see the problem, or why the person does not change their behavior when they acknowledge they have a problem. You might worry about the effect they will have on your loved ones and your cherished holiday events.

Some steps you can take on your own:

- **Plan Ahead:** We've all heard the saying; the best predictor of future behavior is past behavior. Think about your past holidays with your loved one and try to prepare as much as possible. Create a plan for dealing with your

Peace River Addiction Services

Office hours are
Monday-Friday
8:00am-4:30pm

Addiction & Mental
Health Building
10015-98 St
Peace River, AB
T8S 1T4

Available to all
Albertans: Adults, youth,
family, and friends

**Merry Christmas and
Happy Holidays!**

For more information or
to schedule an
appointment with an
Addictions Counsellor call
780-624-6151

Outpatient services are
voluntary, confidential,
and free of charge.

family member's substance use or gambling. This might include coping with your loved one's absence or how to deal with a potential conflict.

- **Set Boundaries:** Pick fair, yet concrete boundaries that are important to you and remain consistent. Keep your boundaries simple, doable, short, and to the point. Be careful not to set boundaries to hurt anyone, but rather just to help. Discuss these boundaries at least a week before the holiday activity is happening. Tell other participants so that everyone is on the same page.
- **Coping Strategies:** How do you feel better when you're upset? Is it helpful to leave the situation and go to another room? It may be helpful to take some deep breaths, talk the matter over with a family member or friend, or take a walk.
- **Lean on Your Support System:** Buddy up with another family member or friend who also becomes upset by the individual's substance use or at least sympathizes with you. Connect with that person in moments when you are feeling overwhelmed.
- **Take Care of Yourself:** Do the things that make you feel good. Journal, draw, get outside, play a sport or game, listen to some favorite music or a podcast...you are in charge of your life so make yourself happy!

More good news:

- Change takes time, it is a process. Small steps in the right direction can create big results.
- With an effort on your part, you can feel better regardless of whether the person you care about chooses to change their behavior.
- When you start to feel better, it may encourage the person using substances or gambling to want to feel better too.

Rather than trying to manage other people, try to be in the present and be yourself. When you let go of regrets over the past and fears about the future, you can make the most of every day.

"Today I will accept the potent emotions I may feel towards members of my family, and I'll be grateful for the lessons they're teaching me. I accept the golden light of healing that's shining on all of us." Melody Beattie (Releasing Anger toward Family Members)

"Today I will go on living my life and tending to my routines. I will decide, as often as I need to, to stop obsessing about whatever is bothering me. If I don't feel like letting go of something, I will "act as if" I've let go of it until my feelings match my behavior." Melody Beattie (Living Through Problems)

"Today I will communicate clearly and directly in my conversations with others. I will strive to avoid manipulative, indirect, or guilt-producing statements. I can be tactful and gentle, or assertive if necessary. I do what is right in the moment." Melody Beattie (Communicating clearly)

Mock Champagne

Ingredients:

- 2 (2 liter) bottles chilled ginger ale
- 1 (46 fluid ounce) chilled can pineapple juice
- 1 (64 fluid ounce) bottle white grape juice



Directions:

- Step 1: To make ice ring: Fill a ring-shaped pan to half with ginger ale. Freeze until partially frozen. At this stage you can place edible flowers, or pieces of fruit around the ring. Fill pan with ginger ale and freeze until solid. Place in punch bowl just before serving.
- Step 2: In a large punch bowl, combine 1 bottle ginger ale, pineapple juice and white grape juice. Makes forty 4 ounce servings.

Raspberry Fizzler

Ingredients:

- 1 ½ cups raspberry juice
- 3 scoops raspberry sherbet
- ½ cup carbonated water



Directions:

- Step 1: In a blender, combine raspberry juice, raspberry sherbet and carbonated water. Blend until smooth. Pour into glass and serve.
- Makes 2 servings. You can try cranberry-raspberry or apple-raspberry.

Shirley Temple

Ingredients:

- 6 fluid ounce lemon-lime carbonated beverage
- 1 dash grenadine syrup
- 1 maraschino cherry

Directions:

- Into a tall glass, pour soda and grenadine over ice. Add cherry and straw.

