

8 Steps to Take When Your Spouse Displays Abusive Alcoholic Behavior

Posted on by [Pathways Florida](#)



Marriage is such a beautiful part of life. It changes your life plans for the better, turning individual goals and ideas into thoughts of planting roots and starting a family. It's exciting, supportive, and of course, incredibly loving.

Sometimes, though, people change after "I do's" are said; the story starts to change for the worse. Your spouse may become distant, begin to spend more time out of the house or show less interest in you while at home.

In the worst of cases, he or she becomes abusive. This often happens with alcoholics. Although alcoholism and abuse don't necessarily cause one another, they tend to correlate.

If the person you love has been picking up the bottle a lot lately and putting their hands on you too, it's time to take action. Here are a few steps you can take to solve the abusive alcoholic behavior happening in your home.

1. Distance Yourself When They Drink

The best thing you can do for yourself when living with an abusive alcoholic is to [create distance](#). Spend more time out of the house instead of going straight home after work. Fill your schedule on the weekends so you don't leave yourself available to the alcoholism and verbal abusive happening at home.

As effective as this can be, it's much easier said than done. After all, it's your home too! Not to mention, you probably still care about your spouse even with the issues they're dealing with and putting on you.

But, the point is to take care of yourself first. Taking the space you need to avoid a verbal attack or physical confrontation helps you start the healing process. From there, you can better assess the situation between the two of you and figure out how to deal with an abusive alcoholic wife or husband.

2. Talk to Them When They're Sober

What happens if you come home in the middle of your spouse's drinking activities? Distance yourself somewhere within the home to avoid the abuse that may come your way. Try not to say or do anything that will set them off either. The best thing to do is wait out the effects of the alcohol. Then, start a conversation with your spouse when he or she is sober.

Watch Your Words

As you sit down to talk about the alcoholism, be careful of what you say. The last thing you want to do is bring out the abusive tendencies your partner has taken on.

Instead, try to create a safe space for the both of you. This is one in which the other person doesn't feel threatened or attacked for their behavior. Such a setting also protects you from the insecurity and shame that can cause abuse.

Try Not to Place Blame

Confronting an abusive alcoholic about the pain they're causing you is like poking at a sleeping bear. You don't know what will be the thing that sets them off. One subject is definitely off limits, though. You can't place blame. This is sure to send your spouse into a whirlwind of intense emotions and make them act out.

3. Avoid Ultimatums

Another subject to avoid is [an ultimatum](#). Sometimes, partners of abusive alcoholics threaten to leave or get a divorce if the other person won't clean up their act.

This may sound reasonable enough to you. But to the other person, it can feel like they're put in a corner – and they'll do anything to get out. Offering an ultimatum is pretty much a sure-fire way to experience even more abuse.

If you do feel like leaving or a divorce is the right answer, make the proper preparations before bringing it up. You should be ready to walk out the door and not look back. Maybe even make arrangements to have other people present when telling your partner about your decision.

4. Protect Your Children and Pets

Speaking of other people, consider the safety of your children and pets. As heartbreaking as abusive alcoholic behavior can be within a marriage, it's just as scarring on little kids or household animals.

Separate them from the situation as much as possible. Put your kids in after-school activities and send them to grandma's house on the weekends. Also, consider giving away your pets or at least having them watched by someone else for a little while.

5. Throw Out All the Alcohol in the House

It's a good idea to get yourself and the other people you care about out of the house. But, the first thing you should actually get rid of is all the alcohol.

Clean out the adult cabinet and do a search for any hiding spots. Remember, alcoholics will do anything for a drink so they tend to have more than one stash lying around. Find them and get rid of them.

Keep in mind this may result in a violent verbal or physical outbreak. If you think this is the case, get the alcohol out then get yourself out ASAP.

6. Ask Your Spouse to Spend a Few Days Away

While you're weighing your options of where to go to get out of the house, consider the alternative. Why should you be the one to leave if your spouse is the one causing problems in the home?

If you can, kick them out. The thing about this is that it can end up in a serious outbreak if you aren't careful. You may have to trick your spouse into going away. Take a drive with them and drop them off at their friend's place. Invite his/her friends over for an outing and have them help you check this person into rehab instead. These measures may sound extreme, but they're best for the safety of everyone involved.

Attempting to kick your spouse out alone could backfire. Still, continuing to coexist with them – along with their alcoholism and their abusive tendencies – is not good for anyone, either.

7. Stop Ignoring the Issue

You may feel stuck between a rock and a hard place when figuring out how to live with an alcoholic husband or wife. But, this is no reason to let the problem continue to grow.

The more you keep yourself from taking action, the worse the problem will get.

Even if you're afraid, unsure, or just plain tired, you have to do something.

Begin with baby steps if you have to. Seek treatment for yourself, then figure out how to help the person you married. You may need medical attention for the physical abuse you've undergone, and definitely some sort of emotional support for verbal abuse.

There are [support groups](#) available for victims of abuse. You can also look for a therapist to talk to or reach out to a friend or family member who's dealt with something like this before.

Little by little, you will start to heal, which sets the foundation for you to help your spouse recover as well. Who knows, your marriage may even turn around completely.

8. Seek Professional Help

Just as you need support to confront the pain alcoholism and abuse have caused you, you should look into professional help for your spouse as well. The two of you

can't come out of this situation alone. You need the right professionals to guide you through such a dark time.

So, who do you call first? The cops for abuse and domestic violence? A withdrawal and recovery center for alcoholism?

That's a decision only you can make, but you do have to decide. If you feel like you're stuck with your spouse out of fear, legal authorities may be your safest way out. If you still want to mend your marriage and get back to a better place, rehab is your best bet.

There are a few other things to think about. You could try hosting an intervention for your spouse before sending them off to rehab. There's also [a non-emergency police line](#) you can call to have an officer come to your home and escort your spouse out.

Whatever you decide, though, do it with your safety in mind. As much as you may care about your husband or wife, you have to watch out for yourself, too.

When Enough Is Enough: Changing Abusive Alcoholic Behavior for Good

Maybe you've tried some of the methods of dealing with abusive alcoholic behavior already. Maybe this problem has only started to happen recently and you want to stop it as soon as possible.

Either way, there is hope for better days to come. [Alcoholism recovery](#) is possible for your spouse, and finding the spark in your marriage again is possible for the two of you.

It will take much effort on both ends. Recovery isn't easy and it takes a lot out of the alcoholic as well as the people they care about. But, it's worth the work.

[Click here](#) to put your spouse – and your marriage – on a better path.