

## SUPPORTING FAMILY AND FRIENDS WHO ARE LIVING WITH ADDICTION

Avoiding social interaction can be a source of sadness for many people, but for individuals who are living with addiction, social distancing can lead to isolation, which can be a trigger for relapse. Here are some tips on how family members and friends can support those who struggle with addiction during the COVID-19 outbreak.

- Reach out and check on your loved one at least daily to offer support without being judgmental. Offer positive messages.
- Ensure they have food and their medications.
- If they live with you, offer to take a walk outside, meditate with them, or engage in a family activity like painting or playing a game.
- Encourage them to connect with others through peer support, a sponsor, or a virtual support group meeting. For peer support they can utilize the Peer2Peer Regional Warm Line at 1-833-626-1490.
- Encourage them to create a daily schedule in order to maintain a sense of structure.
- Reach out for help if they are in need of speaking to a mental health or substance use professional. Resources can be found at [www.roadtorecovery.info](http://www.roadtorecovery.info).
- Know the signs and symptoms of substance use. They include bloodshot eyes, change in appetite or sleep patterns, deteriorating physical appearance or personal grooming habits, sudden weight loss or weight gain, appearing anxious, lack of motivation, isolation, and unexplained change in personality or attitude.
- If you have a friend or family member who is at risk of overdosing, you can obtain free NARCAN at any of the Lord Fairfax Health Department Offices. For a list of the local offices visit: <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/lord-fairfax/district-offices/>.
- Practice self-care: When you are taking care of a loved one who is living with addiction, it is also important to take care of yourself. Engage in virtual family support group meetings through Al-Anon <https://al-anon.org/> and Nar-Anon <http://www.nar-anon.org/>.