

Supporting Someone Without Losing Yourself

How to start the conversation, understand boundaries, and protect your own wellbeing.

Immediate danger: call 911.

Crisis support: call or text 988.

Treatment locator: findtreatment.gov or 1-800-662-4357.

You can love someone and still need boundaries. You can support someone without losing yourself.

Before the conversation

- [] Pick a calm, sober, private moment.
- [] Decide what you want from the talk: one honest conversation, not a fix.
- [] Plan to listen more than you talk.
- [] Know one or two resources you can offer.
- [] Know what you will do if things get unsafe.

Boundary vs. control

A boundary

"I will not give money, but I will drive you to treatment." A boundary names what you will do or will not do.

Control

"If you loved me, you would quit." Control tries to force another person into change through pressure, fear, or surveillance.

A boundary

"I cannot have using in the house." It is clear, specific, and tied to your own safety.

Control

"I will watch you every minute." It may come from fear, but it usually burns everyone out.

Take care of yourself too

☐ You did not cause it.

☐ You cannot control it.

☐ You cannot cure it.

☐ Find your own support: Al-Anon, Nar-Anon, a therapist, a trusted friend.

☐ Rest is not betrayal. It is part of staying steady.

One boundary I can keep

One person I can call

One thing I need to stop carrying alone
