



HER TURN SOBER LIVING

Helping Without Enabling

A simple test for families who love someone struggling
with addiction — plus what actually helps recovery.

A Free Guide for Families

The Simple Test

If you love someone struggling with addiction, you've probably asked yourself: *"Am I helping her, or am I making it worse?"*

You're not alone in that question. Every parent, spouse, and family member who has watched someone they love battle addiction has faced the same agonizing uncertainty. You want to help. You're afraid of making it worse. And the line between the two feels impossible to see when you're standing in the middle of it.

This guide won't fix everything. But it will give you a simple test — one you can use today — to tell the difference between helping and enabling. And it will tell you what actually helps.

Here's the question that cuts through everything:

Does what I'm doing help her **take responsibility** for her life —
or does it help her **avoid** taking responsibility?

Helping makes it easier for her to do the next right thing: get to a meeting, look for a job, keep a schedule, show up for an appointment.

Enabling makes it easier for her to keep using: covering her rent so she can spend her money elsewhere, lying to her boss for her, bailing her out of consequences that would have made her stop and think.

Helping builds a bridge to independence. Enabling builds a cushion that lets the addiction keep going.

What Enabling Looks Like (In Real Life, Not Theory)

Enabling isn't a character flaw. It's what love looks like when you're terrified. Here's what it actually looks like in families we've worked with:

- **Paying her bills** so she can spend her money on drugs or alcohol — even when you don't know that's what the money is freeing up
- **Calling in sick for her** when she's hungover or coming down — because you don't want her to lose her job
- **Lending her money** that you know you'll never see again — and not asking where it went
- **Letting her live at home** without any requirements — because at least you know she's not on the streets
- **Not setting boundaries** because you're afraid she'll leave and you'll lose her completely
- **Believing the promises** — "I'll stop, I'll change, this time is different" — without requiring action, only words

Every one of those comes from love. And every one of them, if it continues without limits, keeps the addiction alive.

What Helping Looks Like

Real help is harder — for you and for her. But it's what actually works:

- **Paying for a structured sober living home** where she has rules, accountability, and a safe environment — that's helping, because it gives her a real path to independence
- **Refusing to lie for her** — to her boss, her landlord, her friends — because facing consequences is how she learns
- **Setting a clear boundary:** "You can't live here while you're using. But I will help you find a place where you can get well."

- **Saying no to money for "gas" or "food"** when you know where it's actually going — and offering to buy the gas or food directly instead
- **Encouraging her to call a recovery house, a counselor, or a 12-step program** — and standing beside her while she makes the call
- **Getting your own support** — Al-Anon, Nar-Anon, a therapist, a church group. You need people who understand what you're going through.

The Hard Truth About Separation

Here's something most families don't want to hear: sometimes the most loving thing you can do is step back.

When she's in your house, you're the warden. Every rule you set is a fight. Every boundary is a confrontation. You can't be her parent and her recovery coach at the same time — and trying to be both destroys your relationship with her.

A structured sober living home takes that role off your shoulders. The house sets the rules. The house does the testing. The house enforces the curfew. You get to go back to being her family — the person who calls to say "I'm proud of you," not the person who's checking whether she's sober.

Separation is not abandonment. It's how both of you heal.

What About the Money?

This is the question families ask us most: *"If I help pay, am I enabling?"*

Not necessarily. It depends on what you're paying for.

Paying for a structured sober living home — with rules, testing, a house manager, and an employment requirement — is not enabling. It's giving her a real chance. You're not handing her cash. You're paying for an environment that holds her accountable and teaches her to live independently.

In our experience at Her Turn, the women whose families help pay for the first 3 to 6 months are the ones who do best. Why? Because the early days of recovery are overwhelming enough without the crushing pressure of figuring out how to pay for housing while also finding a job, attending meetings, and rebuilding a life from scratch. When you take that pressure off — for a defined period, with a clear structure — she can focus on what matters: getting well.

What IS enabling is paying for things that let her keep living the same way — rent on her own apartment with no structure, cash with no accountability, a car when she lost the last one to a DUI. The difference isn't the dollar amount. It's whether the money creates a path to independence or a cushion for the addiction.

What it costs

- **\$200** move-in deposit (non-refundable)
- **\$800** per month (weekly and bi-weekly plans available)
- Members provide their own groceries, transportation, and personal items

When you cover her first few months, you're not just paying for housing — you're giving her the runway to get a job, build a routine, and learn to stand on her own. Most families spend far more on the addiction itself. This is the money that finally buys something better.

You Need Support Too

Families of addicts carry a weight most people can't imagine. The disappointment, the betrayal, the gaslighting, the theft, the broken promises — it changes you. You need people who understand.

- **Al-Anon** — for families and friends of alcoholics. Free meetings, in person and online. You don't have to speak. You can just listen.
- **Nar-Anon** — for families affected by someone else's drug use. Same structure as Al-Anon.
- **A therapist who understands addiction in families** — not every counselor does. Ask specifically about experience with family addiction dynamics.
- **Your church or faith community** — if that's part of your life, your pastor or clergy may be the first person who can help you think clearly.

You've been carrying this alone. You don't have to.

A Simple Question to Ask Yourself

"If I do this, is she more likely to take the next step
toward recovery — or less likely?"

If the answer is "more likely," do it. If the answer is "less likely" — or "neither, it just keeps things the same" — pause. That pause is where your power is.

If you're ready to explore a structured home

If you're thinking about a sober living home for your loved one — even if she's not ready today — we're happy to talk. No pressure, no obligation. Dana runs the day-to-day at Her Turn and she answers the phone.

210-860-6392

Call or text Dana — a real conversation costs nothing.

herturnsoberliving.com · info@herturnsoberliving.com

— *Her Turn Sober Living*

Her Turn Sober Living is a structured sober living home — not a medical facility, detox center, or licensed healthcare service. This guide is practical experience from operating a sober living home, not medical or clinical advice. For guidance specific to your situation, consult a qualified professional. Thousand Oaks & Henderson Pass · San Antonio, TX 78232.