



Selected Papers of William L. White

www.williamwhitepapers.com

Collected papers, interviews, video presentations, photos, and archival documents on the history of addiction treatment and recovery in America.

Citation: White, W. 10 Tips for Talking to Parents about Recovery. Posted at www.williamwhitepapers.com

10 Tips for Talking to Your Parents about Recovery

William L. White

Emeritus Senior Research Consultant
Chestnut Health Systems
bwhite@chestnut.org

1. Tell your parents your story that in a general way explains where you were, what happened, and where you are now. Remember that they may be listening through the lens of their disappointment, anger or guilt. This may require several efforts.
2. Tell your story to them in stages, with greater detail when they request it and are capable of hearing it. Their ability to hear you may be limited by their experience with alcohol or drug problems among other family members or, in some cases, by feelings about their own alcohol or drug use.
3. Express your regret for any pain you may have caused them, and make amends in ways you can.
4. Provide your parents information on addiction and recovery. You can get such information from your counselor or your support group.
5. Introduce them to the process of recovery support. Invite your parents to open meetings and prepare them for what to expect. Remember that it is normal for parents to be somewhat jealous of the benefit you get from professional counselors and from recovery support groups.
6. Help connect them with other parents. Encourage your parents to attend Al-Anon, Families Anonymous or Nar-Anon meetings.
7. Discuss with your parents ways they can support your recovery. Some of these may be very simple such as transportation to counseling or support meetings.
8. Let your parents know that you need to be responsible for your recovery and that this is something they can't do for you.
9. Negotiate clear expectations of what each of you will do to improve future communication and problem solving.
10. If your parents aren't yet ready for communication and support, find others who can offer you guidance and support.