Enabling Behaviors

To enable the disease of alcoholism/chemical dependency means to shield or protect the alcoholic/chemically dependent person from the harmful consequences of their using/drinking. It means to actually "LOVE THEM TO DEATH".

Enabling behaviors actually feed into the denial systems of alcoholics and addicts and allows the chemically dependent person to think that "chemicals aren't a problem in my life".

1. Denying: She or he's not an alcoholic/addict.

   a. a second component of the denial system and lack of education around addictive disease involves:

      1. expecting the alcoholic/addict to be rational
      2. expecting the alcoholic/addict to control their drug or alcohol use (which is not possible once a person has become powerless over alcohol and drugs)
      3. accepting the blame for another person's alcoholism/addiction (for example: "If only I would have been a better mother"; "If only I would have been a better wife/husband").

2. Drinking or using with the alcoholic/addict.

3. Justifying the drinking or using behaviors of the addict or alcoholic by accepting and buying into their rationalizations for using:

   1. "the job has so many pressures"
   2. "ever since the kids left home"
   3. "ever since our son died"

4. Stuffing feelings; walking on eggs; not making waves; living your life in constant fear but keeping all those feelings inside vs. talking about them and getting help for one's self.

5. Avoiding problems & keeping peace at any cost.

6. Minimizing: "Oh, it’s not that bad".

7. Protecting the image of the alcoholic/addict: calling the boss when they miss work; canceling social engagements because you want to protect self and family from embarrassment.

8. Taking over responsibilities for the alcoholic/addict - covering up.
Enabling Behaviors (cont.))

Avoiding/Ignoring Problems

a. not making waves
b. walking on eggshells
c. keeping peace at all cost
d. leave 'em alone
e. take it away

Minimizing

a. it's not that bad, yet ••••
b. he/she just has ups and downs
c. everybody's doing it

Protecting

a. "I'll call your work and tell them you have the flu".
b. "I'll cancel---------- (social event)".
c. "I'll go get it for you".
d. "I'll get the kids out of the way".

Controlling

a. "I'll take care of the money".
b. "I'll take care of the kids".
c. "I'll take care of the house/yard".
d. FINALLY-- "I'll take complete care of you".

Avoiding Tranquilizing Feelings

a. with food
b. with work
c. with alcohol/drugs
d. with sleep

Preoccupation

a. taking over responsibilities
b. obsessive thinking about him/her
c. Allowing it to completely interfere in your own life.
d. Knowing that you'll be/fee okay once the alcoholic/chemically dependent person "straightens up"