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Effects of Alcoholism in the Family

A family with an alcohol in its midst will go through several stages in dealing with the chaos and disruption caused by the alcoholic. These stages are described below in order of appearance.

- 1. Denial:** Early in the development of alcoholism, occasional episodes of excessive drinking are explained away by both marriage partners. Drinking because of tiredness, worry, or a bad day is not unbelievable. The assumption is that the episode is isolated and is, therefore, not a problem.
- 2. Attempts to Eliminate the Problem:** The non-alcoholic partner realizes that the drinking is not normal and tries to pressure the alcoholic to quit, be more careful, or cut down. At the same time, the partner tries to hide the problems from the outside and keep up good appearances. Children may start to have problems in response to the family stress.
- 3. Disorganization and Chaos:** The family balance is beginning to break down. The spouse can no longer pretend everything is okay and spends most of the time going from crisis to crisis. Financial problems are not unusual. At this point the spouse is likely to seek outside help.
- 4. Reorganization in Spite of the Problem:** The partner's coping abilities have become strengthened. He or she gradually assumes a larger share of the responsibility for the family. This may mean getting a job or taking over the finances. Rather than focusing on getting the alcoholic to shape up, the partner is now taking charge and tries to foster family life, despite the alcoholism.
- 5. Efforts to Escape:** Separation or divorce may be attempted. If the family remains intact, the family continues living around the alcoholic.
- 6. Family Reorganization:** In the case of separation, family reorganization occurs without the alcoholic member. If the alcoholic achieves sobriety, a reconciliation may take place. Either way, both partners must realign their roles within the family and make new adjustments.

Some of our best products from [RecoverOz](#) on this issue include

[Addict In The Family](#) Book Stories of Loss, Hope, and Recovery

[Adult Children of Dysfunctional Families](#) 6 DVD set

This 6 CD series looks at assessing your own family of origin, understanding the relationships, recognising the characteristic and patterns and examples of successful re-direction.

[Bradshaw On The Family](#) Book A New Way of Creating Solid Self-Esteem

[Detaching with Love](#) Booklet

[Do's and Don'ts For Family Members](#) Workbook

How To Pull Your Life Together When You're Suffering

[Free to Care](#) Recovery for the Whole Family Booklet

[Freeing Our Families from Perfectionism](#) Book

[Guide for Family of the Alcoholic](#) Booklet Weapons used by the alcoholic to control the family and cover up for consequences of problem drinking are destructive and deadly.

[The Incestuous Workplace : Stress and Distress in the Organizational Family](#) Book

[Lost Childhood: Growing Up In An Alcoholic Family](#) DVD

[Reclaim Your Family from Addiction](#) Book How Couples and Families Recover Love and Meaning

[Self Esteem: A Family Affair](#) Book Strong self-esteem is a critical ingredient for human happiness-- and its development begins at home in the nurturing interactions between children and adults.