

National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)

Families and drug abuse: "I feel so helpless against his addiction."



<https://www.drugabuse.gov>

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"Stephen" is addicted to meth. His brother, "Matt," wants to help Stephen, but he isn't sure how. (This story is based on the experiences of real people whose names have been changed.)



In his junior year, my little brother Stephen changed. He got jumpy. He'd pick fights over nothing. At first we thought he was just being a teenager.

But then we found out he was smoking meth. Mom kicked him out. He stayed at my place, but then he stopped going to school and refused to find a job. I got so frustrated with Stephen. He wasn't himself anymore.

Then I found him smoking meth in my house. I told him to either get into treatment or move out. He got in my face and told me to leave him alone. He was sick of everybody always trying to control him, he said. He stays somewhere else now, but I call him to see how he's doing.

I've always protected my little brother. But I felt so helpless against his addiction. So I found a telephone number for a drug abuse hotline—**1-800-662-HELP (4357)**. I called and explained my brother's situation. And that he wasn't ready to quit, but I wanted to be ready to help him when he wanted to.

The man at the hotline looked up substance abuse treatment clinics in our area, so I had numbers to call in case of a crisis. He pointed me to more information online about meth addiction and support groups. He also told me where to find local Al-Anon meetings, which are for family members of people who are abusing drugs. In these meetings they talk about how to take care of yourself and manage the stress of having a relative with a drug problem.

I know I can't make my brother quit using meth, and it makes me sad. But at least I'm learning more about meth addiction, and things that could help when he's finally ready to quit—or is forced to.

Learn more: Do you have a friend or family member with an addiction? Learn [what you can do to help](#).

Read more about [Matt and his family's addiction history](#).