



# Alcohol & *De-addiction* — A Family Guide

Recognising addiction · Family roles · Paths to recovery · Mumbai

Alcohol addiction (Alcohol Use Disorder) is **not a moral failure or weak willpower** — it is a chronic brain disease involving changes in reward, motivation, and impulse control circuits. Families play a critical role in both enabling and supporting recovery. Understanding the difference is the first step.

## WARNING SIGNS OF ALCOHOL USE DISORDER — WHAT FAMILIES OBSERVE

01

PHYSICAL

### Tolerance — needing more to feel the same effect

What once caused intoxication on two drinks now requires five or six — a clear sign of dependence developing.

02

PHYSICAL

### Withdrawal symptoms when not drinking

Shaking, sweating, nausea, or anxiety within hours of the last drink — a medical emergency requiring supervised detox.

03

BEHAVIOURAL

### Drinking alone or in secret

Hiding bottles, drinking before events "to cope," or denying the amount consumed to family members.

04

BEHAVIOURAL

### Repeated failed attempts to cut down

Promises to "only drink on weekends" or "never more than two" that are consistently broken within days.

05

SOCIAL

### Neglecting responsibilities

Missing work, children's school events, or family commitments due to drinking or recovering from drinking.

06

BEHAVIOURAL

### Continuing despite clear consequences

Drinks despite job loss, relationship damage, health problems, or legal issues — loss of control is the hallmark.

07

PHYSICAL

### Blackouts or memory gaps

Cannot recall conversations or events from the previous night — dangerous and a sign of serious dependence.

08

SOCIAL

### Mood swings & irritability when sober

Angry, anxious, or depressed between drinks — uses alcohol to self-medicate emotional dysregulation.

## The CAGE Questionnaire — a 4-question screening tool

**G**

**Guilty**

"Have you ever felt bad or guilty about your drinking?"

**E**

**Eye-opener**

"Have you ever had a drink first thing in the morning to steady your nerves?"

**C**

**Cut down**

"Have you ever

**A**

**An**

"Ha  
pe  
an

felt you should cut down on your drinking?"

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2 or more "Yes" answers suggests a significant alcohol problem — a psychiatrist consultation is strongly recommended.

## STAGES OF RECOVERY — WHERE IS YOUR LOVED ONE?

**1**

### Pre-contemplation

Does not see a problem. Defensive. Not ready to change.

**2**

### Contemplation

Aware of problem. Ambivalent. Thinking about change.

**3**

### Preparation

Ready to act. Making plans. Seeking help.

**4**

### Action

Actively in treatment. Detox or therapy ongoing.

**5**

### Maintenance

Sustained sobriety. Relapse prevention active.

## HOW FAMILY CAN SUPPORT RECOVERY AT EACH STAGE

### When they are in denial

- › Do not argue, lecture, or plead — it triggers defensiveness
- › Use "I feel" statements — "I feel scared when you drink" not "You are ruining us"
- › Attend a family therapy session yourself — even alone
- › Learn about Motivational Interviewing techniques
- › Maintain your own boundaries clearly and calmly

### When they seek help

- › Support the decision immediately — act while the window is open
- › Help arrange the psychiatric appointment — go together
- › Never leave a person in severe withdrawal alone — medical emergency
- › Remove alcohol from the home during detox period
- › Attend family counselling — recovery is a family process

### Long-term recovery support

- › Celebrate sobriety milestones — 30 days, 90 days, 1 year
- › Do not drink in front of them in early recovery
- › Know that relapse is part of recovery — not the end
- › Have a relapse action plan ready with the psychiatrist
- › Take care of your own mental health — Al-Anon groups help

## FAMILY TO-DO & DON'TS

### ✓ SUPPORTIVE FAMILY BEHAVIOURS

- ✓ Set clear, compassionate boundaries with consequences
- ✓ Express love for the person, not the behaviour
- ✓ Seek professional help early — do not wait for "rock bottom"
- ✓ Attend family therapy — your recovery matters too
- ✓ Keep communication open, non-judgmental, and consistent
- ✓ Know the signs of withdrawal — seek emergency care if severe
- ✓ Have hope — recovery is possible with the right support

### ✗ ENABLING BEHAVIOURS TO STOP

- ✗ Covering up, making excuses, or lying to protect them from consequences
- ✗ Providing money that is likely used to buy alcohol
- ✗ Drinking with them "to keep the peace"
- ✗ Threatening to leave and not following through — empty threats enable
- ✗ Blaming yourself — addiction is a disease, not your failure
- ✗ Forcing sobriety without professional support — dangerous withdrawal risk
- ✗ Giving up — even long-term addictions respond to sustained treatment

FREE TOOL

**Take the CAGE / AUDIT-C Alcohol Screening Quiz** — a validated 4-minute self-assessment to understand the severity of alcohol use and whether professional help is needed.

[drpavansonar.com/de-addiction](http://drpavansonar.com/de-addiction)



### Dr. Pavan Sonar

MBBS · DPM · DNB Psychiatry · MS Counselling & Psychotherapy · Sexologist · Life Coach  
[drpavansonar.com](http://drpavansonar.com)

**Andheri West** · Bellevue Hospital  
**Malad West** · Riddhivinayak Hospital  
**Malad East** · New Sanjeevani Hospital  
**Borivali West** · Bhagat Polyclinic

+91 85918 40141

**Medical Disclaimer:** This guide is for general educational purposes only and does not constitute medical advice or treatment. Alcohol withdrawal can be life-threatening — never attempt home detox without medical supervision. Please consult Dr. Pavan Sonar or a qualified addiction psychiatrist for safe, evidence-based de-addiction care.