

The First 72 Hours

When addiction becomes a family crisis: what to do, and what not to do.

The first three days decide more than the next three months. Under pressure, families pay the problem away, protect the wrong person, or accept the first available bed. A calm, structured response protects the person who is struggling, the family, and everything the family has built.

01

Hour 0 to 6

Safety first

- Is anyone in danger? Overdose, psychosis, threats or talk of suicide: call emergency services first.
- Do not confront someone who is intoxicated. Wait until they are sober.
- People before the story. Reputation can wait a few hours, safety cannot.

02

Hour 6 to 24

Contain

- Keep the circle small. Decide who needs to know, and who does not.
- Choose one family spokesperson.
- No money, bail, cars or promises decided in panic.
- Write down the facts: what happened, when, who was involved.
- Involve your lawyer early if police, media or business interests are at stake.

03

Hour 24 to 72

Take control

- Appoint one independent case manager to coordinate all specialists.
- Assess the whole family, not only the person using.
- Choose treatment on fit and aftercare, not on availability.
- Parents agree on one line: what we will and will not do from now on.
- Plan the return home before admission starts.

The four most expensive mistakes

- 1 Paying the problem away.** Money removes consequences, and consequences are often what motivates change.
- 2 Protecting the wrong person.** Covering up keeps the family stuck. Discretion is not the same as secrecy.
- 3 Leaving the family out.** Treatment works on the person. If the family around them does not change, the old patterns return.
- 4 Waiting for rock bottom.** Families can act long before that. A well-prepared intervention works.

For advisors

Family offices, private bankers, lawyers and reputation specialists are often the first to notice: unusual withdrawals, a stalled succession, a family that suddenly cannot decide. You do not need to solve the human side. You only need to know who to call. One confidential conversation is enough to assess what is needed. The family stays in control.

Code RED Care takes charge when addiction threatens a family, its wealth or its reputation. We put out the fire, and then we work with the parents until the foundation of the family has changed.

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