



**St Hedwig's Church**  
 213 E. Glenwood Avenue  
 Akron, Ohio 44304

**ORIANA HOUSE, INC.**

# Family Matters

# Oriana House, Inc. Family Matters Program

## Family Matters Quarterly Schedule

*January*

JANUARY 7<sup>th</sup>  
 6:00pm-8:00pm

JANUARY 14<sup>th</sup>  
 6:00pm-8:00pm

**JANUARY 21<sup>st</sup>**  
**6:00pm-8:30pm**  
**Multi-Family**

JANUARY 28<sup>th</sup>  
 6:00pm-8:00pm

*February*

February 4<sup>th</sup>  
 6:00pm- 8:00pm

**February 11<sup>th</sup>**  
**6:00pm-8:30pm**  
**Multi-Family**

February 18<sup>th</sup>  
 6:00pm- 8:00pm

February 25<sup>th</sup>  
 6:00pm-8:00pm

*March*

**MARCH 4<sup>th</sup>**  
**6:00pm-8:30pm**  
**Multi-Family**

MARCH 11<sup>th</sup>  
 6:00pm-8:00pm

MARCH 18<sup>th</sup>  
 6:00pm-8:00pm

**MARCH 25<sup>th</sup>**  
**6:00pm-8:30pm**  
**Multi-Family**

**Session Topics**

- Communication Traps
- Rebuilding Trust
- Families in Recovery
- Anger Management
- 12-Step Panel
- Living with Addictions
- Triggers & Cravings
- Healthy Boundaries
- Coping with the Possibility of Relapse

The New Year brings growth, and change and therefore challenges that arise from that. We at the Family Matters Program have listened to your overwhelming concerns. Although we want to answer all your questions and to assist as much as we can, our two-hour program isn't long enough to respond to all of them, so we now offer small discussion groups to increase the understanding of boundaries, family roles, codependency and self care.

These groups are held after every regular session. Space is limited so we encourage you to sign up early to reserve your seat. If you sign up and find that you are unable to attend that week please give us a call so we can remove your name and others can attend. These sessions run from 8:15 pm-9:15 pm in the church at 213 E. Glenwood Avenue, in the building next door to St. Hedwig's (GAC). You can sign up at the Family Matters Program or call Mary Tilden Walker 330-996-2915.

The Family Matters Team!

Here are the session dates and topics; we hope to see you there.

January 7 <sup>th</sup>	Co-Dependency	February 4 <sup>th</sup>	Self Care
January 14 <sup>th</sup>	Boundaries	February 18 <sup>th</sup>	Co-Dependency
January 28 <sup>th</sup>	Family Roles	February 25 <sup>th</sup>	Boundaries
		March 11 <sup>th</sup>	Family Roles
		March 18 <sup>th</sup>	Self Care

### From Our Family to Your Family:

We are the parents of a 36 year-old son who has been struggling for many years with addiction. My husband and I never realized just how addicted our lives had become. With every recovery center or detox center we took our son to, we felt like we were losing ourselves along with our son.

My husband and I realized we needed some counseling ourselves. We had attended several different meetings over the year, but we were getting nothing out of them. This last attempt to get our son detoxed and in a program, I made my husband come with me to the ADM board. I was a mess that day, at that point I was just wanting help for me.

We had talked to a couple of counselors that day who suggested we attend a Family Matters meeting. We were hesitant at first as we had attended other meetings and had got nothing out of them. When we finally attended the first Family Matters meeting we were met at the door with great people. That first meeting was a multi-family meeting, it was very informative, relaxed and a fun evening.

We got to see addiction in action with the role playing it sure helps when you can see a scene from your life played out. As the evening ended my husband and I knew we needed to come back. Every week is a new lesson on getting us healthy and happy.

We have learned so much from the staff here and they make you feel comfortable, at ease, and free to talk openly.

One thing that I have learned so far is that **I DIDN'T CAUSE IT, I CAN'T CONTROL IT, AND I CAN'T CURE IT.**

Lynn

**FORGIVENESS**  
 is not something  
 we do for **OTHER PEOPLE.**  
 We do it for **OURSELVES**  
 -to **GET WELL** and  
**MOVE ON.**

**Stop the Tag Team Enabling: Helping Your Family Member Find Recovery**  
By Peggy L. Ferguson, Ph.D.

Family dynamics of addiction are a complicated phenomenon. The word “addict” conjures up a variety of emotional responses and stereotypical beliefs. This is further complicated by the experiential “filters” that people have regarding their prior experiences with other alcoholics and addicts at some other time and some other place in their lives.

When you have a family member or a close friend for that matter, who has addiction, you want to help. You want to save them from having to experience the consequences that you can foresee in the future. You want to make them be able to also see those consequences and thus avoid them. When you see someone that you love hurting, you want to kiss it, put a band-aid on it, or take away the pain in some way. These are normal reactions.

Family members apply normal solving problem behavior to the “abnormal” problems of addiction and end up enabling the perpetuation of the very “thing” they hope to stop the drink-

ing/using. A simple applied definition of “enabling” is the removal, or reduction, of the natural negative consequences of someone else’s behavior. When you remove the consequences of someone’s behavior, they have no motivation to change that behavior. As far as they are concerned, what they are doing is working for them. You as a family member, and enabler, can be in the bankruptcy courts as a consequence of continuing to financially enable them. If they still have other enablers willing to step up to the plate to carry on after you are broke, they don’t have a problem.

And having additional enablers waiting in the wings is common place for addicts. Most addicts have layers of enablers. Within a family, the enabling hierarchy would include spouse (if any), parents (individually or collectively), grandparents, siblings. The first line of enablers is usually the spouse. If there is no spouse, the first line is usually the parents or a parent, individually. Tag team enabling starts when one enabler stops the enabling and another enabler steps up to take over that role.

If the primary enabler

gets to a point where they are fed up and begin to detach (usually with anger), making a conscious decision to stop enabling, another person(s) in that family system will usually step up and carry on the rescue services. Often there is one family member, especially in the parental generation who is saying, “I’m not going to keep doing this. I am not willing to bail him/her out anymore. That’s it!” and another who is saying, “Now Honey, wait a minute. What if...”. They trade places as the one in the foreground gets fed up and moves into the background and the one who has been in the background moves into the foreground to continue the enabling. When the one in the foreground feels used up again, they will typically trade places again. If both parents get together on this, a grandparent may step in from the background to take their places as primary enabler. Any other family member could do the same.

Secrecy plays a major role in keeping these dynamics going. Alcoholic/addicts are good at manipulating others to help, and to keep secrets. Alcoholics blame others for their behavior and can be quite convincing on how they have been victimized. Temporary alliances

spring up in alcoholic families, where the enabling of one family member is kept secret from other family members. This is very destructive and one of the common casualties of addiction in the family with an addicted “child” is the divorce of the parents.

How do you stop the tag team enabling? Stop the secrets. Be open and honest with the whole family about what is going on with the addict. Stop your enabling behavior. Don’t fight amongst yourselves over who is the worst enabler. Have a family meeting. Identify your historical enabling behaviors and the ones you are most likely to do in the future. Have a plan for not engaging in those behaviors. Provide support for each other. Support the other family members when they are on the verge of “caving in” and returning to enabling. Remind each other that stopping the enabling is the best thing you can do so that your loved one becomes motivated to change.

An addict is largely prevented from experiencing pain when he is cushioned from the negative consequences of his/her own behavior. He/she is most likely to experience a crisis when

the enablers fold out from under him/her. Family members can actually “help” when a crisis occurs. Without bailing them out or rescuing them from the natural negative consequences, family members can provide access to treatment and recovery resources. Often, the treatment center has a lot more appeal to the addict, than a jail cell.

Don’t worry that they have not “hit bottom” or are going to treatment to stay married, stay out of jail, keep their job, etc. It is a myth that you have had to have had some kind of epiphany to benefit from treatment. An addict who is “coerced” into treatment by the courts, judge, family, boss, etc., has the same probability of getting sober as the addict who enters treatment believing that they have hit bottom and are surrendering to recovery. Family members can help this to happen by getting out of the way and letting the addict suffer the consequences of his/her disease.

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**Why Family Matters?**

There was a time when we attended piano recitals, dance reviews, choir concerts, volleyball and softball games, applauding and cheering on our daughter as she participated in these activities. Now we are reading books about drug addiction and attending Family Matters programs to participate in yet another phase of her life. Drug addiction and alcoholism are foreign diseases to many of us. They have a vocabulary all their own. In our desire to continue to be supportive of our daughter, we believe it is necessary for us to increase our knowledge about what she is experiencing and how we can help not only her but also ourselves. Now “the 3C’s” often

come to mind as does “the Q-tip admonition,” the relationship of our acronym HALT to relapsing, how to separate the disease from the person, to understand that without consequences there is no change and how to fill in the blanks: \_\_\_\_\_ is inevitable, but \_\_\_\_ is optional. We have learned so much from the speakers, the educational sessions, and from each other.

Time is a valuable commodity. Our spending 2 hours on Thursday evenings attending Family Matters is time well spent. We would encourage anyone who has a loved one fighting one or both of these battles to make Family Matters a priority.

**A Time of Renewal**

As we approach the New Year, let’s make a conscious attempt at healing. Healing ourselves and our families, we do this by learning about ourselves, learning other ways to relate, practicing them, owning them and healing our wounds. Connect with others in non-

controlling intimate ways. Give and get support from others. Trauma and addiction involve numbing, instead of numbing, walking away or shutting down, let’s identify, acknowledge and express who we are as individuals. I encourage you to welcome 2015 at a time of Renewal and opportunity

to love and care for yourself and those who are special to you.



**Editor’s Note:**

Thank you to the loved ones who graciously shared their FM experiences for our column From Our Family to Your Family. If you would like to submit an experience, quote, or saying that helps you, etc., and you want to be considered for the next quarter newsletter, email me [KelleykRoss@orianahouse.org](mailto:KelleykRoss@orianahouse.org)

It comes quicker than seems possible! Thank you.

**Terms Used in Family Matters:**

1. The 3 C’s = I didn’t Cause it, I can’t Cure it, I can’t Control it.
2. Q-tip Admonition = Quit taking it personally.
3. HALT = Don’t let yourself get too Hungry, Angry, Lonely, or Tired.