



**St. Hedwig's Church**  
 213 E. Glenwood Avenue  
 Akron, Ohio 44310

**ORIANA HOUSE, INC.**

# Family Matters

# Oriana House, Inc. Family Matters Program

## Family Matters Quarterly Schedule



- October 7<sup>th</sup>—6:00 pm-8:00 pm  
Families in Recovery
- October 14<sup>th</sup>—6:00 pm-8:00 pm  
12-Step Panel
- October 21<sup>st</sup>—6:00 pm-8:30 pm**  
**Multi-Family**  
**Coping With the Possibility of Relapse**
- October 28<sup>th</sup>—6:00 pm-8:00 pm  
Anger Management



- November 4<sup>th</sup>—6:00 pm-8:00 pm  
Rebuilding Trust
- November 11<sup>th</sup>—6:00 pm-8:30 pm**  
**Multi-Family**  
**Living with Addiction**
- November 18<sup>th</sup>—6:00 pm-8:00 pm  
Triggers & Cravings
- November 25<sup>th</sup>—6:00 pm-8:00 pm  
Healthy Boundaries  
*(Additional Thanksgiving Elements)*



- December 2<sup>nd</sup>—6:00 pm-8:30 pm**  
**Multi-Family**  
**Panel Discussion**
- December 9<sup>th</sup>—6:00 pm-8:00 pm  
Families in Recovery
- December 16<sup>th</sup>—6:00 pm-8:00pm  
12-Step Panel
- December 23<sup>rd</sup>—6:00 pm-8:30 pm**  
**Multi-Family**  
**Coping with the Possibility of Relapse**  
*(Additional Holiday Celebration with Pizza/Chicken provided by OHI)*
- December 30<sup>th</sup>—6:00 pm-8:00 pm  
Anger Management  
*(Additional New Year Elements)*

### Now in Recovery, Family No Longer Dreads the Holidays

Patricia used to approach the holidays with an overwhelming sense of dread, because she never knew what her alcoholic brother might do to ruin them. As Thanksgiving floral arrangements gave way to sparkling Christmas ornaments and the drone of holiday music, her stomach would clench more each day and her mood would grow darker.

"Some years were just awful," she recalls. "So often my brother would show up drunk and make a scene at family gatherings. He'd scare his kids, embarrass his wife, and break my mother's heart over and over again. One year he got arrested a week before Christmas for driving under the influence and for disorderly conduct. I remember that we called the judge to ask if they could keep him in jail until after the holidays. We all breathed a collective sigh of relief when they did just that. We could finally relax and enjoy ourselves knowing he was safe but unable to spoil things for everyone.

Thankfully, those painful memories are distant ones now because Patricia's brother—after 25 years as a practicing alcoholic—stopped drinking 20 years ago. "But it took me several years after he went into treatment to trust him and his recovery," she says. "For a long time, I still prepared myself for the worst, half expecting another midnight phone call saying he had been in an accident.

The holiday scene Patricia described today, however, is right out of a Norman Rockwell painting. "My brother is a grandfather now, and he is like an excited little boy, eagerly watching his grandkids open the gifts he laboriously and lovingly picked out for each of them. I'm so grateful that my parents got to experience his sobriety and witness the profound changes he made in his life before they died." Patricia says her own involvement in the Twelve Step program of Al-Anon has helped her understand that addiction is truly a disease that affects the entire family. She says recovery has allowed her to unearth the meaning of the holiday season and reclaim it as the joyous and contemplative occasion it was meant to be.

Patricia describes herself as a spiritual person who sees Christmas as another opportunity for deep reflection. "To me, Christmas is about love, acceptance and expectancy—a symbol of birth and hope," she says. "I try to carry through with the 'attitude of gratitude' that I learned about in Twelve Step recovery, and use Christmas as a time to help others."

"Recovery has been transformative for me, for my brother, and for my whole family," she says. "Twenty years ago, I hated the holidays and feared what my brother would do. But then he sobered up and I got my big brother back. Along the way, I discovered the Twelve Steps. I guess miracles really do happen. Isn't that what the holidays are all about?"

Edited from:  
<http://www.hazelden.org/web/public/holidayfamilynodreads.page>

### SMALL GROUPS IN AKRON

You are invited to attend our Small Discussion Groups from 8:15 pm—9:15 pm following *single* Family Matters. Space is limited to the first 7 people who register. Sign up is available upon arrival at Family Matters.

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|-------------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| Oct. 7 <sup>th</sup> Family Roles   |  | Nov. 25 <sup>th</sup> Self-Care    |
| Oct. 14 <sup>th</sup> Self-Care     |   | Dec. 9 <sup>th</sup> Co-Dependency |
| Oct. 28 <sup>th</sup> Co Dependency |   | Dec. 16 <sup>th</sup> Boundaries   |
| Nov. 4 <sup>th</sup> Boundaries     |   | Dec. 30 <sup>th</sup> Family Roles |
| Nov. 18 <sup>th</sup> Family Roles  |   |                                    |

### Addiction and Recovery Resources

Clark, D. (2013). *Addiction Recovery*:

*A Family's Journey*. CreateSpace Publishing.

Beattie, M. (2009). *The New Codependency*:

*Help and Guidance for Today's Generation*. New York, NY. Simon & Schuster.

*Anonymous, J.C. (2014). Coping with An Addict*:

*How to Deal with a Drug Addict Friend or Family Member*. [Kindle Version]. Retrieved from: <http://amazon.com>.



## Living in Recovery and Avoiding Relapse during the Holidays

The holiday season can be a joyous time, but for those in recovery, it can also be a minefield. High expectations, over commitment, and fatigue can lead to heightened emotions and mood swings. Busy schedules increase stress. You might be away from your support network and routines, enhancing a feeling of isolation. Holiday customs, memories, and events associated with alcohol or other drug use may tug at you. But there are ways to prepare for this high-risk season and safeguard the greatest gift you ever gave yourself and those you love: your sobriety.

### 1. Plan your support system ahead of time.

Prepare a plan to support and protect your sobriety ahead of key holiday events. This may mean going to a Twelve Step meeting before or after the event, attending the occasion with your sponsor or a friend in recovery, and making sure you can leave at any time and are not dependent on someone else for transportation. You can also “bookend” the event with planned before-and-after telephone calls to someone in recovery. Limit time in stressful situations or around difficult people and always have an escape plan.

### 2. Understand the Emotional Complexity of the Holidays.

Talk with your sponsor, a friend, or a professional counselor about the emotions and expectations you have wrapped up in the holidays. This is called “calculating reality.” Everybody will be tired and stressed, possibly depressed. Know this. Awareness will help you lower expectations and be

forgiving of yourself and others. Instead of entering a holiday event on the defensive, orient your thinking to be on the offensive: *What is the next right thing for me to do in this situation?* It’s also important to be aware that some people are most vulnerable after the holidays. The stress and resentments that may come up over the holidays can lead to convince ourselves we’re entitled to drink or use.

### 3. Focus on Others

The holidays offer a spiritual opportunity to practice focusing on others with gratitude and joy. Adopting this perspective can take tremendous courage. Because you are in recovery, you have already demonstrated the capacity for tremendous courage and change. Look for ways to think about others. Serve a meal at a homeless shelter. Reach out to a newcomer. Go sledding with children. Spend time with a neighbor who is confined.

### 4. Keep Track of What You are Drinking and Steer Clear of Rationalizations.

At social gatherings, it’s generally helpful to have something to drink in your hand so people aren’t constantly offering you a drink. Be proactive! Get your own beverage, watch how it is being made, and keep track of it. If you accidentally pick up the wrong drink and swallow some alcohol, this doesn’t mean you will relapse but watch out for rationalizations, which could creep in: *Hmm, I guess I can handle this after all. Perhaps my period of abstinence taught me how to control my drinking.* No. Tell someone who is supportive of recovery about it as soon as possible. A mistake is not a relapse-but it

can lead to one if kept a secret.

### 5. Avoid Vulnerable Situations.

If you know Aunt Lucy is going to criticize your hair and shoes, avoid her. If Uncle Bob will try to mix you a stiff drink, stay away from him. If you know the office New Year’s party is all about alcohol and other new drugs, make a brief appearance or don’t attend. Step One of the Twelve Steps is: You don’t have the power. Alone we use. Ask for help.

### 6. Remember Self-Care

Celebrate the holiday season by taking time for yourself. Proper nutrition and physical movement can be extremely helpful. The better you feel physically, the stronger you will be emotionally. Maintain your spirituality. The holidays are a time for reflection and connection with those you love. It is critical to take some quiet time each day for relaxation and meditation, no matter how busy your are.

### 7. If You Need Treatment, Consider Getting it During the Holidays

Many families mistakenly think the holidays are an inappropriate time for treatment, when actually it’s the best time. Their logic is that holidays are a happy time when everyone should be together, even if in reality this is not the case. Addiction generally ramps up over the holidays. Treatment initiated during the holidays could be the best gift you give to your family. Your recovery is the true and beautiful gift that keeps on giving.

Edited from: <https://www.hazelden.org/web/public/holiday-articles>.



## From Our Family To Yours

“I know I’ve learned a lot while coming to Family Matters—slowing down my brain is number 1. There is so much more, but I guess what I liked the most is hearing Barb say at every meeting, “This is a place of healing.” It truly is and I am glad to have had the opportunity to attend.” —Anonymous

“Family Matters has shown me that I need to slow down and think. Also, think about what they are saying. Learn to recognize my feelings. Learn how to communicate. Just being able to talk and hear other people’s situation, which helps in our situation.”

—Linda

“I have learned that we’re not alone. A lot of people’s families have the same situations.” —Anonymous

“I have a better understanding of my son’s problem and what he is going through. I see myself in a new light—my mistakes, how I can be a better father and helper through the change into a clean life.” —Chuck

“I feel very scared that I am going to lose my son. I feel very confused right now; this class is helping me to learn skills—to help me to try to ask God for help and to continue to try to help me to be better. I love my son and don’t want him to die from drugs.”

—Anonymous

“Going over skills is helpful to me. Facing the challenges with others as a group is helpful to me to feel that we are not alone. I think Barb and JoEllen are very informed about addiction and not at all judgmental. I would suggest anyone with a family member or friend of an addict to attend.” —Anonymous

“Family Matters has been really helpful to me by providing me with support, tools, and more appropriate ways to handle situations that may arise while supporting my loved one through a tough and challenging recovery.” —Rodney

“I love to hear the stories. Listening to other families’ stories and telling mine and feeling that others in group care, and relate, and also give feedback (loving advice). Learning tools to help with situations and feelings that may and come up.” —Anonymous

“Family Matters has helped me with being able to help my loved one understand what my addiction is and how to manage it.” —Anonymous, in recovery

“Family Matters has helped me to learn skills to get over my addiction.”

—Anonymous, in recovery

## Fun Family Holiday Activities

**Volunteer**—Volunteering at local missions, food banks, or with community organizations gives us that warm feeling of helping others and teaches children to give back in service to the community. Salvation Army, United Way, and Red Cross are just a few community organizations that could use your help during the holiday season.

**Leaves of Gratitude**—Head out in the backyard with your little ones to find the perfect branch for a tree that will show your appreciation all season. Write down your messages of gratitude to hang from the branches and design the ornaments to your liking. And if you have young children, no worries! Simply let them draw, color or paint what they are grateful for this year.

**Turkey Trot**—Perfect for the entire family, the Turkey Trot is a 5k jog, walk or run that takes place in many local communities. Check local listings and websites to see what’s available in your area. If there is nothing available, then crate your own! Gobble, gobble!

**Holiday Reading**—Catch up on your holiday classics each night with the family until Santa finally makes his annual journey down the chimney. Take a trip to the library and gather up all of your Christmas favorites or save these timeless tales in a special place, specifically for the holiday season. Imagine cozying up together to read *How the Grinch Stole Christmas!*, *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*, or last but not least, *The Night Before Christmas*.

**Celebrate the Season of Light**—Plan a family candle-lit dinner, stargaze in the backyard or create your own luminarias to line your porch, sidewalks or front steps with their lovely glowing light. Luminarias are decorative paper bags or plastic jugs which are traditionally filled with sand and a small candle or flashlight.

**Find the Perfect Tree**—Whether you stop at a local lot in the city or travel to a U-pick farm out of town, picking out the perfect Christmas tree has long been a popular family tradition. It’s a great way to spend the day outside and bundled up with your family, a GREAT excuse to drink an extra cup of hot chocolate and not to mention the very best part...The Christmas tree decorating party that awaits you once you get home!

—adapted from *15 Meaningful Holiday Traditions & Fun Family Activities* by Jen Beterly at [parentmap.com](http://parentmap.com)

## 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.

## 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, a quote, or a saying that helps you, etc., and you want to be considered for the next quarterly newsletter, email me at [JenniferLChiarello@orianahouse.org](mailto:JenniferLChiarello@orianahouse.org).

It comes quicker than seems possible! Thank you.