

## **HOW TO COPE WITH YOUR SPOUSE'S DRUG ADDICTION**

An Interview with Therapist Dr. Anita Gadhia-Smith by Associated Content, September 2010

Are you feeling stressed and frustrated because your spouse is addicted to drugs? Are you unsure on how to deal with your spouse's drug addiction? To help understand how you can cope with you spouse's drug addiction and where you can get help, I have interviewed therapist Dr. Anita Gadhia-Smith.

### **Tell me a little bit about yourself.**

"I am a psychotherapist in Washington, D.C., specializing in alcoholism and addictions treatment, in individual, couple, and family modalities. I am also the author of a best-selling book entitled "From Addiction to Recovery." I have been working in private practice for over 20 years. I have been working in the field of addiction for over 10 years. I speak locally and internationally on television, radio, and film."

### **What type of impact can a spouse's drug addiction have on the marriage?**

"A spouse's drug addiction can have detrimental effects on a marriage relationally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. An addicted spouse can keep an addiction hidden for some time, but eventually, the truth usually comes out. An addicted spouse may be physically present, but emotionally absent. Thus, the burden of family care often falls on the nonaddicted spouse. In other cases, an addicted spouse may be unable to function professionally, jeopardizing the family's financial well-being. The expected conflicts that arise in any intimate relationship are difficult to overcome with an addicted spouse, whose primary relationship is with his/her substance."

### **What can someone do to cope with his or her spouse's drug addiction?**

"To cope with a spouse's addiction, a person can seek individual or group psychotherapy services from a psychotherapist who has expertise in treating addictions. In addition, Al-Anon (a 12-step self-help group) is very helpful. The nonaddicted spouse must seek his/her own help, as addiction is a family disease and indirectly impacts all members of the family."

### **Is there anything someone can do to help his or her spouse recover from his or her drug addiction?**

"Encouraging the addicted spouse to seek treatment from a qualified professional or from a 12-step group is very helpful in assisting someone to recover from his or her addiction. The family member can neither cause the spouse to recover nor to stay in the addiction. Ultimately, it must be the choice of the addicted person to seek help. In some cases, an intervention will accelerate the desire to seek help."

**What last advice would you like to leave for someone who has a spouse with a drug addiction?**

"Try to get help for both of you. If your addicted spouse refuses to seek help, get help for yourself."

Thank you Dr. Smith for doing the interview on how to cope with your spouse's drug addiction. For more information on Dr. Smith you can check out her website on [fromaddictiontorecovery.com](http://fromaddictiontorecovery.com).