

How to Organize an Intervention

Although interventions are commonly associated with drug or alcohol addiction, they are a powerful tool for confronting any type of destructive behavior. Many people who eventually recover cite an intervention as a turning point.

Instructions

1. Enlist the services of a professional substance abuse counselor. People who are affected by the addict's negative behavior are often angry and confused. Without the help of a skilled professional, an intervention can leave the addict feeling defensive and alienated.
2. Educate yourself about the dysfunction. As you learn more about the particular problem, you will be better able to help a loved one who is struggling. Then, with the help of the professional, identify appropriate treatment options.
3. Identify the participants in the intervention. Who should be involved in the process? What will each person contribute? This will involve several telephone calls or meetings. The professional can also help in this process.
4. Plan the intervention. Determine the date and time for the event. In some cases, it is helpful for people to rehearse their "lines" or to write down what they are going to say.
5. Try to have a treatment option in place. In many cases, the person who is being confronted will be willing to accept help immediately; his/her feelings might change if the process is delayed. Find out what programs are available and what their success rates are. Since treatment is expensive, you will probably want to find out about insurance coverage. Most insurance companies require preauthorization for mental health or addiction treatment.

Tips & Warnings

- Many people wonder if they can conduct an intervention without the help of a professional. Although this can be done, most families can benefit from the services of a professional. A family can waste a great deal of time and effort trying to organize an intervention alone; often it is so difficult that the intervention never takes place at all. In some cases, the intervention takes on a negative tone and a great deal of harm can be done.
- Maintain a positive outlook. Although we are hearing more about interventions in recent years, people have been conducting them for decades. When they are properly organized, most interventions are successful.
- As much as possible, prepare yourself emotionally for some resistance. Addicts and alcoholics are skilled at avoidance, and they might not give in easily. They might blame you for the problem or turn the tables and try to discuss your problems. If you are prepared there is a better chance that you will not back down.

For assistance in planning an intervention, please contact Providence Kodiak Island Counseling Center, (907) 481-2400 or Kodiak Area Native Association, (907) 486-9800.