

Getting Help For My Loved One With Substance Abuse Who Won't Get Help Voluntarily

By Joseph M. Considine, P.A.



Substance abuse – When parents and other family members begin to understand the seriousness of their loved ones' addiction and all the talking, pleading with, and yelling, hasn't worked, the family experiences a great deal of fear and uncertainty as to what to do next.

The first thing to do is to realize there is little you can do.....on your own.....and then seek the guidance of a mental health professional and/or treatment professional . In Florida, more than likely you will be directed to the Marchman Act for help.

You may ask the court to intervene and get help for your loved one's substance abuse by using the Marchman Act. Chapter 397 of the Florida Statutes is known as the "Hal S. Marchman Alcohol and Other Drug Services Act of 1993." The Marchman Act provides for the involuntary or voluntary assessment, stabilization and treatment of a person abusing or addicted to drugs or alcohol.

The first step in using the Marchman Act is to ask the court to order your loved one to undergo a substance abuse assessment. After a short hearing, the Court may order your loved one to appear for the substance abuse assessment, which happens in a relatively short time after the hearing. A copy of the assessment goes to the Court.

If the assessment indicates treatment is needed, the second step is providing court ordered treatment under the Marchman Act for those loved ones who are still unwilling to get help voluntarily. The assessment will generally indicate the type of substance abuse treatment that is appropriate for your loved one.

Are there any assurances that a Marchman Act proceeding will get your loved one the help he or she needs? No, there are no assurances. That is the nature of the disease of addiction and substance abuse. But it will surely make him or her realize that the people who love him are serious about getting substance abuse help.

Usually, filing the petition is one of the steps the family needs to take to set boundaries with the loved one as well such as no more financial or other support if the loved one decides not to get help. Moreover, it will give the loved one a chance at recovery. The experience of various addiction and treatment professionals with whom I have consulted is that many times filing the petition for involuntary assessment is the first step which ultimately leads (albeit down a bumpy and scary road) to recovery.

If you are in need of assistance with your loved one's substance abuse addiction problems, call the office for a confidential Marchman Act consultation.

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