

# The Enabling Worksheet

By Peggy L. Ferguson, Ph.D.

The Enabling Worksheet is an exercise designed to assist the concerned family member in identifying their history of enabling behaviors, their perceived motivation for the conduct, feelings associated with the enabling behavior, and the impact on their own life of their enabling. The goal of The Enabling Worksheet is to be able to connect one's behavior with the outcome.

Please identify examples of your own behavior that you think might have been enabling. Identify what you believe your motives or justification to have been at that time. Identify the feelings you were having at the time of your behavior. Think about and identify how this behavior may have hurt you or created more stress, chaos, and distress in your own life. When you have identified as many enabling behaviors as you can, look over your list and ask yourself whether that behavior had any lasting positive impact over your loved one's behavior or outcomes.

<b>My Enabling Behavior</b>	<b>My Motives/Thoughts</b>	<b>My Feelings at the Time</b>	<b>How This Behavior Hurt Me or Made My Life Unmanageable</b>
Example: I gave my son a job when he could not keep one.	If he has a job, he can have more self-confidence and less stress to drink/use over.	Fear, helpless	He was unreliable. My business suffered.
Example: I bailed my son out of jail after a drug related arrest.	Someone will hurt him in jail.	Fear, helpless	He got into a bar fight later that day and went back to jail. I'm mad at myself.
Example: I put a tracking app on my daughter's phone.	If something happens, I can go find her.	Fear, shame	My daughter discovered it and now won't speak to me.

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See also [“A List of Enabling Behaviors”](#)

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See also [\*\*"A List of Enabling Behaviors"\*\*](#)

Make additional copies of the worksheet as needed. You may refer to the [\*\*List of Enabling Behaviors\*\*](#) to help with this exercise. After you have identified the enabling behavior, with its motives, feelings, and impact, go back to your list and ask yourself whether that enabling behavior had any lasting positive impact over your loved one's drinking or using.