

Adults are expected to act responsibly, develop common sense and gain wisdom. They have an awareness of behavioral consequences - both positive and negative. Actions of our addicted loved-ones, however, are not those of responsible adults. They appear to live according to their emotional age, not their actual age. A common cause of this **Delayed Emotional Growth** is the abuse of alcohol or drugs during a person's developmental years (childhood through early twenties).

Suffering from Addiction and Delayed Emotional Growth at the same time can lead a person to feel hopeless. "I may never be able to change." Addictions and delayed emotional growth create resistance to change. Although addiction can eventually be diagnosed, delayed emotional growth is challenging to identify.

**Traits of Delayed Emotional Growth**

Check traits you recognize in your loved one

**1. Morals of Convenience**

- Lies
- Steals
- Breaks promises

**2. Immature Self-Centeredness**

- Resents "authority"
- Wants instant gratification
- Takes "no" too personally
- Excessively controlling
- Excessively angry (not always obvious)
- Refuses to accept full responsibility for own decisions
- Excessively selfish and excessively unselfish (lack of boundaries)

**3. Never "Left Home" (emotionally)**

- Afraid to live in sober environment where it's difficult to manipulate
- Someone always there to rescue (parent, spouse, relative, friend, etc.)
- May feel incapable of living adult life without alcohol or drugs

**ABC's of Addiction  
and Delayed Emotional Growth**

A \_\_\_\_\_ B \_\_\_\_\_ C \_\_\_\_\_

*Hope comes from the willingness to make genuine changes as they work on both problems at the same time.*

**Developing Adult Abilities**

Check traits you recognize in your loved one

**1. Healthy Morals**

- Honesty
- Earning money (legally)
- Keeping commitments

**2. Less Self-Centered and More Tolerant**

- Submits to authority (when beneficial)
- Patiently delays gratification (when necessary)
- Accepting "no" without taking it personally
- Giving up control when it's best to do so
- Managing anger
- Taking full responsibility for decisions
- Limiting selfishness (boundaries with self)
- Limiting unselfishness (boundaries with others)

**3. Leaving Home & Becoming Own Person**

- Living in a sober environment that is not so easy to manipulate

**ABC's of Recovery from both  
Addiction and Delayed Emotional Growth**

A \_\_\_ for H \_\_\_

Be W \_\_\_\_\_ to L \_\_\_\_\_

C \_\_\_\_\_ to do what is S \_\_\_\_\_

*As a result of developing these abilities, one becomes hopeful and gains the possibility of living a successful life without substances.*

**Change is Painful**

Change involves challenging what is familiar to us and daring to question our traditional needs for safety, comfort and control. It's often a painful experience.

**C = A + NA**

**Change equals an Awareness of the problem combined with the practice of New Actions over the course of time.**

**How long will this take?**