

Glossary

Use: Alcohol, drugs, gambling, or screen/Internet use.
Loved one: Person experiencing difficulties with use.
Concerned significant others (CSO): People (e.g., parents, spouse, grandparents, children, or friends) whose loved one is struggling with use.

1 WHY EXPLORE CSO'S COPING STRATEGIES?

- On a daily basis, CSO actively try various strategies to help their loved one and cope with the situation.
- Through these strategies, CSO have great power to act. However, some of their strategies may negatively impact their personal well-being and their loved one's recovery.
- Although CSO may feel discouraged, desperate, and sometimes resistant to trying new strategies, they care deeply about their loved one and want to avoid damaging the relationship. They want to know which actions to prioritize to feel better equipped and to make different choices in how they respond.

2 A BIT OF THEORY

CSO'S COPING STRATEGIES

Experiencing a buildup of stress due to their loved one's use, **CSO try to maintain their balance and avoid negative impacts** on their well-being by using different coping strategies. These strategies vary based on their individual characteristics, environmental factors, and past experiences. **Driven by deep affection for their loved one, CSO do the best they can under the circumstances** and with the support available to them to help and protect their loved one. However, since most CSO learn to navigate difficult situations related to use as they occur, **they may sometimes adopt strategies that inadvertently help maintain or even increase their loved one's use, rather than reducing it.**

The diagram on the reverse side illustrates how some strategies employed by CSO can help reduce their loved one's use, while others may help maintain or increase it.

3 WHEN WORKING WITH CSO

ADDRESSING CSO'S COPING STRATEGIES

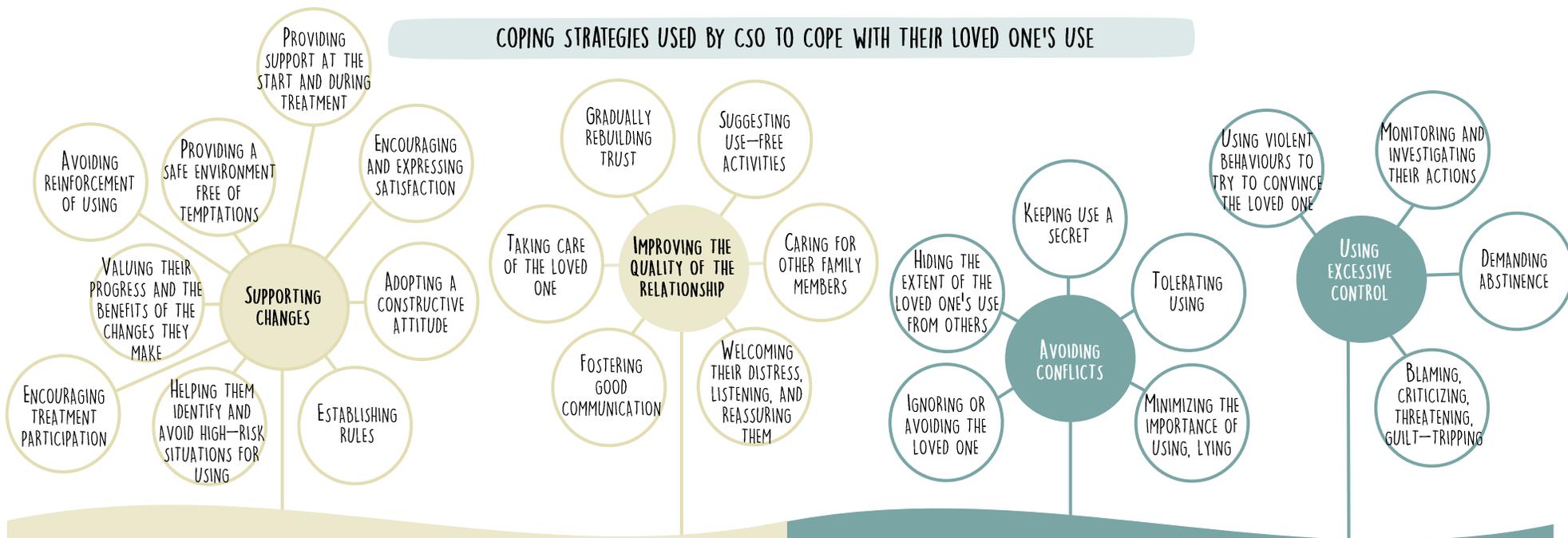
CSO often struggle with guilt and shame. They feel inadequate in their role. Show them empathy and remain attentive to their reactions. Reassure them that you see the **good intentions** behind the strategies they use to support their loved one and normalize them. **No strategy is inherently good or bad.** Each situation is unique, and every approach comes with potential benefits and drawbacks.

Help CSO **assess the effectiveness of their coping strategies** by considering their impact on their loved one's use and their relationship with them. Encourage them **to modify or set aside strategies that seem ineffective.** A strategy is effective if it helps in managing the situation or reducing its consequences. Invite CSO to ask their loved one what kind of support would be helpful versus what feels counterproductive. Foster hope and **motivate them to try new strategies**, as this can have a positive impact on both their personal well-being and their loved one's use.

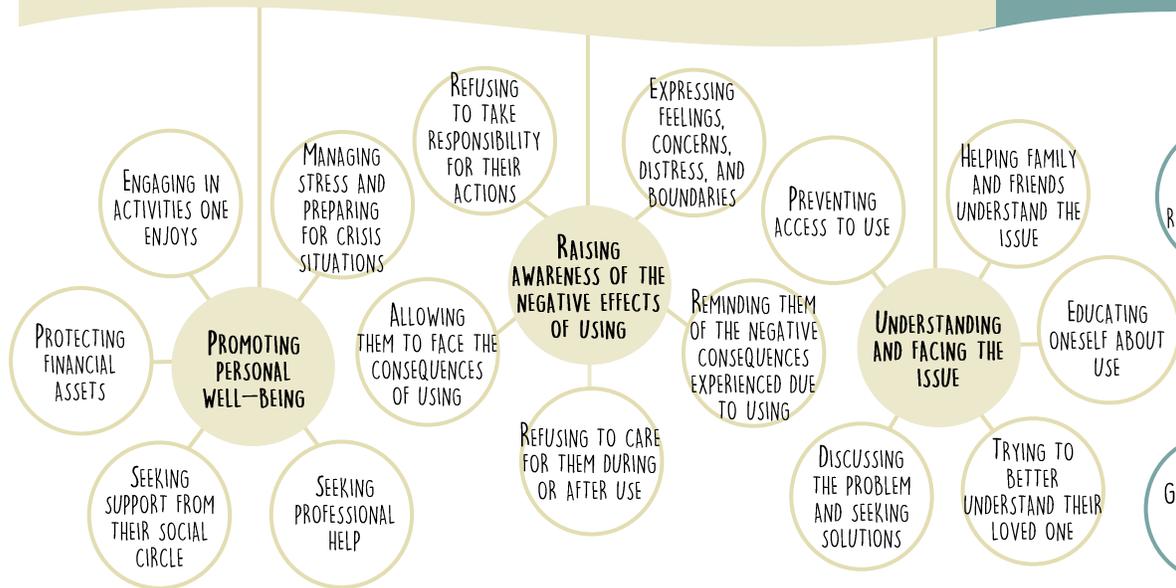
Be careful: there is no magic formula! Implementing new strategies does not guarantee an immediate decrease in use or a significant improvement in the relationship. **Every new strategy requires time, energy, and consistency in its application.** Without consistency, the strategy may not have the desired effect.

From one meeting to the next, **follow up** on the CSO's implementation of new strategies and assess their impact on both their loved one and themselves. Support them through challenges and acknowledge their successes. Even when their loved one achieves abstinence or reaches their goals, CSO should continue using these strategies to help sustain progress.

COPING STRATEGIES USED BY CSO TO COPE WITH THEIR LOVED ONE'S USE



STRATEGIES THAT PROMOTE A DECREASE IN USING



STRATEGIES THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THE MAINTENANCE OR INCREASE OF USE

