

## Understanding the Concept of “Bottom Lines”

Intervention team members are encouraged to develop “bottom lines” that can create the critical leverage to help the person who is resistant choose to accept treatment. Bottom lines are:

- Your choice in response to your loved one’s choice to decline the opportunity for treatment. Even if they feel like threats, they are choices you make in response to his/her choice.
- Your choices are intended to both avoid further enabling AND to take care of yourself.
- Bottom lines should be strong enough to help motivate.
- Bottom lines MUST be things that you are certain that you are prepared and willing to act on if the person does not choose treatment.
- Different relationships warrant different kinds of bottom lines but are only to be carried out in the event that the person does not choose treatment and recovery.

Please note the inclusion of the word “recovery” in the previous statement. Remember:

- Treatment is not like a jail sentence with a clear start, clear end and option to resume “normal life” upon “release.”
- Treatment should be the beginning of a lifetime of recovery.
- The person you love/care about who is encouraged to accept help will not likely be able to see that right now, but that’s the treatment center counselor’s job to clarify.
- For now, you just need to know that your bottom lines are just as important AFTER treatment as during the intervention. The goal here is to make choices in the event that continued abstinence and recovery are not observable.

Below are some examples of bottom lines used by others in the past. Some are much more extreme than others. Please only consider those that you KNOW you’d be willing to implement. For family members and some friends, all bottom lines should be prefaced with the following words:

**“I will never stop loving you, and because I love you and myself (and if applicable, “our/your children”), I will choose the following if you are not actively abstaining and working a program of recovery:**

Because I believe you need treatment more than you need college right now, I will begin saving for your treatment needs rather than for college.

We believe that you should go to college if you are able to focus on school instead of partying and using substances. You may not know that drug-related criminal convictions interfere with financial aid for college. If you continue to refuse treatment now or later and are at risk for losing your financial aid because of drug charges, I will not advocate for you in any way.

We believe that you should go to college if you are able to focus on school instead of partying and using substances. But we are not in favor of spending large sums of money for you to feed a mental health or substance abuse problem. We are not willing to assist with college applications or college tuition until you have achieved and sustained emotional stability and abstinence from cannabis and all other substances.

We believe that your use of substances is both dangerous and illegal. Unless you are able to reconsider treatment and begin getting help to maintain a drug-free life, we have to assume that you intend to keep using. We have confiscated the following items and do not want them in our home or vehicle. We will be leaving here immediately to take them to the police station. They may or may not charge you with a crime.

In the event that we find any illegal substance, paraphernalia or implement of drug use in our home (ie. Butane torch), we will take them to the police station every single time. They may or may not charge you with a crime.

If I suspect you have been using drugs or alcohol, I will tell you immediately that I notice and am very concerned.

If I suspect you are using illegal drugs in our home, I will insist that you leave our home for 24 hours. I will call you a cab so that you can leave safely.

If you become verbally or physically aggressive enough that anyone in our home feels threatened, I will call a mobile mental health team (which includes a law enforcement officer) to our home to assess you. If they recommend hospitalization, I will agree.

If you become verbally or physically aggressive or damage property, I will call the police. When they ask if I want to press charges, I will say yes.

Certainly I am legally responsible for providing for you, but I am not required to provide for you in our home. If you elect to not accept that ours is a drug-free and hostile-free home, I will make arrangements for you to have shelter and food through The Children's Home on Reynolda Road.

If you engage in vulgar name calling of any member of our family, I will insist that you leave our home for 24 hours. Unless you are under the influence, I will not call you a cab.

If you elect to pursue legal emancipation because you believe you are adult-enough to make all your own decisions, I will not interfere. If asked by a judge whether or not you are capable of taking care of yourself, I will inform the judge that I believe that you have mental health and/or drug issues and that you have repeatedly refused residential treatment that has been recommended.

If you are arrested again, I will come visit you in jail and will assist you with a loan for an attorney, but I will not post bail or pay your legal fees myself.

When you are scheduled to appear in court on \_\_\_\_\_, I will accompany you for support but will not defend you in any way. If asked questions by the judge, I will inform the judge that I believe that you have mental health and/or drug issues and that you have repeatedly refused residential treatment that has been recommended.

If you are charged with a crime and appear before a judge, I will attend the court hearing and ask to be heard. I will inform the judge that I believe that your behavior is related to mental health and/or drug issues and that I request a court order for you to get residential treatment in lieu of criminal prosecution.

If you are arrested, I will advise others not to bail you out.

Because we are concerned about your safety and the safety of others, we will not allow you to drive and will not pay any car insurance premiums. If you drive a vehicle titled in my name after I have disallowed it, I will report it stolen.

I see your cell phone as a tool for asking for help and a tool for contacting drug users and drug dealers. So I am providing you with an alternate phone but am confiscating your old phone. If necessary, I will disconnect the service.

If you skip school or skip class, I will not send a note to excuse your absence unless I know with certainty that you were sick (vomiting or running a fever).

I will notify the school principal, guidance counselor and school resource officer that I believe that you are involved with drugs and need help but have refused it. I will ask them to give you a chance to accept help before they punish/arrest you if there is an incident at school. But if you decline the help, I accept that they will need to proceed with whatever disciplinary action is needed.

If you are charged with a crime and appear before a judge, I will attend the court hearing and ask to be heard. I will inform the judge that I believe that your behavior is related to mental health and/or drug issues and that I request a court order for you to get residential treatment in lieu of criminal prosecution.

If you are court ordered for treatment but disregard professional recommendations, I will notify the court that you are in violation of the order. This typically leads to arrest.

Because it is clear that you no longer recognize my authority as your parent, I will leave here and go immediately to Juvenile Services to file a petition requesting their assistance. I understand that, if they agree that you do not honor our authority as your parents, a judge is authorized to assign a probation officer to you to monitor that you are drug- and alcohol-free, going to school every day, honoring a 9pm curfew, not associating with known negative influences and obeying our household rules. Juvenile probation officers visit the school to verify attendance, visit our home to verify that you are honoring our rules, and drug testing you regularly. Violations can result in short-term secure custody in a juvenile detention center.

I will no longer keep secret from others that I am worried about your drug/alcohol use and/or your mental health. When your grandparents or other family members ask how you are doing, I will share that I am very worried about you and eager for you to get help.

I will not allow you to be alone with any member of our family who is younger and unable to drive, since they would not be able to leave on their own if they feel threatened or uncomfortable with your behavior.

You will not be allowed to be in our home alone since I cannot feel confident that you will abstain from using drugs or alcohol if not supervised.

If you have friends in our home who I suspect are using drugs, I will immediately arrange for them to leave our home by calling their parents or a cab to transport them safely.