

7 Point Letter

These seven points are guidelines for writing a good intervention letter. Each point represents a section of the letter. Some points, like the first, are brief, while others are longer. Together they provide a comprehensive template.

1. Identification: A brief statement of love and concern that specifically states the nature of your relationship (e.g. older brother, employer, friend).
2. Love: The longest part of the letter. Detailed reasons why you love and care about the person, remembering when you were proud of them, when they were there for you, etc. Somewhat like a eulogy, it can often include humor.
3. Reframing: State your understanding of the disease of chemical dependency. Differentiate it from a character/willpower issue. Talk about the need for professional treatment. Brief.
4. Facts: Specific, first-hand examples of the problem. Consequences, both for the alcoholic and for you. No judgmental or angry language. Let the facts speak for themselves. If you have no first-hand knowledge, talk about feelings of concern, worry or other observations (e.g.: what it's doing to the children). Two to four facts, each described in no more than a sentence or two.
5. Commitment: Make a personal commitment to stand by the alcoholic and to help him or her in any way possible and appropriate. Brief.
6. Ask: Make a direct request for the alcoholic to accept the treatment program being offered. Be specific about the name of the treatment center, it's location, length of stay, etc. Ask that the alcoholic make a commitment to go today and follow through 100%.
7. Affirmation: End on a positive note, showing faith in the alcoholic to follow through, perhaps harkening back to section two. A real pep talk.

It will take approximately 30 minutes to write this letter. Take your time, and write from the heart. The 7 points are drawn from the book [Love First: A family's guide to intervention](#), by Jeff Jay and Debra Jay (Hazelden, 2008).