

REHAB

Drug and alcohol **rehabilitation** or treatment is not something to be scared of. It helps people deal with their addiction.

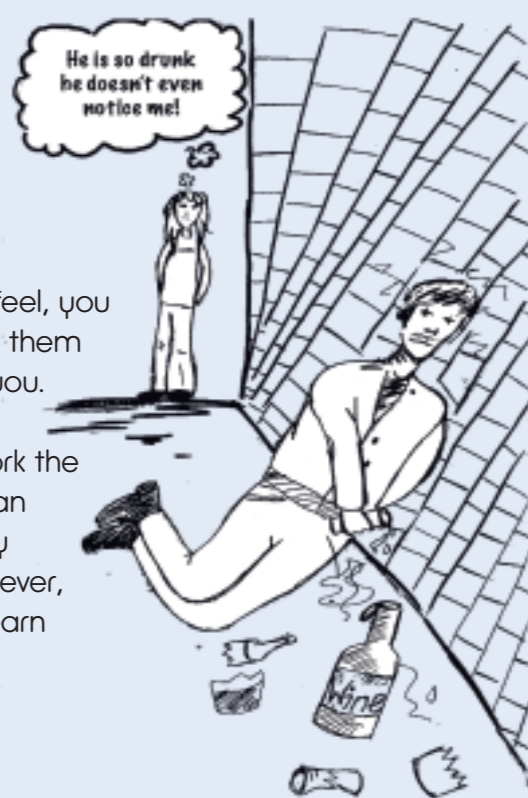
Treatment may involve seeing a professional or being involved with a self help group like Alcoholics Anonymous. Sometimes it means they have to go away for a little while in order to get the help they need. While a person is in **treatment** they may take medication to reduce their cravings and talk to people that are trained to help with problems.

If your family member decides to go into treatment, it's a **good** sign that they are taking the steps to becoming drug or alcohol free.

All you can do is **support** them in their efforts. You might have been used to looking after them and it may be hard to let go of that role and let them look after themselves.

If your mum or dad asks how you feel, you should probably be **honest** and tell them how their behaviour has affected you.

Sometimes treatment does not work the first, second or even third time. It can be very **disheartening** if your family member begins to use again. However, this is an opportunity for them to learn from their mistakes



PLANNING FOR AN EMERGENCY 999

It is important to be prepared for an emergency in case you ever find yourself in an uncomfortable situation.

1. Make sure you know how to call an ambulance, the doctor or the fire brigade. Other people in your house should know how to do this too.
2. Make sure you know your address and postcode. This is important if you ever have to ring the emergency services.
3. Keep a little bit of money aside in case you have to make an urgent phone call. If you have a mobile phone, make sure you always have it charged.
4. Make a list of people you can call. Maybe a grandparent, aunt, uncle, neighbour or older brother or sister. Try to memorise their phone numbers so that you can contact them in an emergency.
5. If you want to talk to your parent about the drugs or alcohol, make sure you pick a safe time, when they are not drunk or high.
6. If you need to study or just a quiet space, ask a friend or relative if you can spend time in their house.

What would you do if...?

You find your family member unconscious and you're not sure what they have taken?

Ring 999 immediately and ask for an ambulance. They will tell you what to do until the ambulance arrives. If there are any pills or alcohol near by, show them to the ambulance crew.

We hope you never find yourself in an emergency situation, but it is always useful to have a plan just in case.

YOU ARE NOT ALONE!

There are lots of people and places that can help you:

Childline - 0800 1111

Lifeline - 0808 808 8000

Your school counsellor or pastoral care teacher will also be able to help.

For local services contact your local Drugs and Alcohol Coordination Team or visit www.drugsandalcohol.info

Northern Team - 028 2531 1111

Southern Team - 028 3741 4557

Western Team 028 8225 3950

Eastern Team - 028 9027 9398

If you want to read more about addiction, how it affects families and what helps, the booklet *Taking the Lid Off*, A Resource for Adults and Young People can be downloaded from www.edact.org in the local resource section.

This leaflet was developed by the Taking the Lid Off Partnership and The Hope Centre, Ballymena.

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HSC Public Health Agency

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Taking The Lid Off



**HELP FOR YOUNG PEOPLE
LIVING WITH SOMEONE'S
DRINKING, DRUG USE
OR ADDICTION.**

WHEN YOUR MUM, DAD OR OTHER FAMILY MEMBER DRINKS OR TAKES DRUGS, DO YOU FEEL...

Upset? Frustrated? Lonely?
Alone? Ashamed? Anxious? Sad?
Angry? Scared? Confused? Unhappy?
Tearful? Guilty? Embarrassed?
Annoyed Worried?

THEN THIS LEAFLET MAY HELP!

We know how hard it is to cope when you live with someone who abuses drugs or alcohol.

- You're never sure what to expect.
- Arguments.
- You might feel like you have to look after them,

It's ok to have these feelings and to ask for help.

YOU ARE NOT ALONE!

You probably have a friend with the same problem. You just don't know about it because it's so hard to talk about!

WHAT IS ADDICTION?

Addiction is when someone continues doing something, like drinking or taking drugs, despite the harm it is doing to them and the hurt it is causing their family. Their mind or body becomes dependent on the drug or alcohol and stopping is very difficult.

No one really knows why a person develops an addiction but there are some reasons why they keep doing it.

- Feel happy and relaxed
- Forget about their problems
- Forget painful memories
- Feel more confident



BUT! If a person continues to use drugs or alcohol, it is very **damaging** to their body and brain. This damage can make stopping very difficult.

There is nothing you can do to stop your parent or family member from drinking or taking drugs. You can empty alcohol bottles and flush drugs down the toilet but they will just go out and buy more.

If your mum or dad doesn't stop it does not mean that they don't love you and care about you. It means they have a serious problem and may need to get help.

4 million people are addicted to drugs and alcohol in the UK. So you can imagine how many children and young people are in your position.

THE EFFECTS ON YOUNG PEOPLE

Living with someone's addiction is hard. You may:

- Bottle up what you are feeling.
- Try to hide it from your friends.
- Feel panicky, confused and mixed up.
- Feel angry with the person and the way they behave, especially when they let you down and break promises.
- Struggle at school if you are worried or tired
- Feel annoyed at yourself or helpless because you can't change things.

How do people cope? You may find that you:

There is no rule book for living with someone's addiction, but people often follow these unhelpful rules:

- Don't talk.
- Don't feel.
- Don't trust.
- Pretend that everything is ok - there is no problem.
- Stay away from home as much as you can.
- Try to keep things 'normal' at home, doing the housework and looking after your brothers and sisters.
- Hide the problem from the rest of your family. You want to protect the person that is drinking or taking drugs by keeping it a secret.

Which one could you be?



WHAT CAN YOU DO?

The most important thing is that you look after yourself. There are things you can do to keep yourself safe and help with all the worry and stress.

- Remember it is not your fault. Everyone makes choices and you are not responsible for anyone but yourself.
- Don't bottle your feelings up. It is hard at the beginning, but once you open up and talk about your problems you will feel a whole lot better!
- Everyone needs help sometimes! If things get tough ask for help. Sometimes it is easier to speak to someone that is not in your family. There are some telephone numbers and websites on the back page that may be useful to you.
- If you are told to keep secrets about something you think is wrong, tell a responsible adult.
- Have fun! Remember you are young. Get involved with activities outside your home like youth club or sports. Do things that other young people do.
- Choose a time to talk to your family member when they are not drinking or using drugs. Explain how their addiction is affecting you.

- Addiction... You didn't cause it, you can't cure it, you certainly cannot control it. But you CAN take care of yourself!

Looking after yourself

You often hear this advice to people under stress: look after yourself. There are things you can do to improve your sense of wellbeing. Eat well, exercise, do enjoyable things. Most of all value and look after yourself.