

West Glamorgan Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse Ltd

Information for Family Members Affected by Substance Misuse

Substance Misuse and The Family

- ◆ For every person who misuses alcohol or drugs it is estimated that at least five other people are affected. These include partners, parents, children and friends.
- ◆ A very real part of substance misuse is the damaging effect it can have on individual family members and on the family as a whole.
- ◆ It can be very difficult for family members to live with and care about a person who misuses alcohol or drugs without sacrificing their own health and happiness.
- ◆ When coping with someone who misuses alcohol or drugs the rest of the family often have mixed feelings. These might include anxiety, anger, shame, guilt, isolation, inadequacy, despair and a sense of failure.
- ◆ The majority of family members first come forward for help with the aim of getting the person they are about to stop using alcohol and drugs.
- ◆ It can be difficult to accept the realisation that the only person who can end the alcohol or drug misuse is the person themselves.
- ◆ However this does not mean that the situation is hopeless. Family members can get help for themselves. Groups such as Al-anon and Families Anonymous offer support and a counselling service is available at any West Glamorgan Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse Ltd Centre.

The Need For Support

- ◆ Support can enable family members to regain some sense of peace and happiness in their own lives.
- ◆ Family members can become very concerned about their own feelings towards the substance misuser. Sharing these feelings can help to lessen them and can provide re-assurance that extreme and even violent feelings are common in situations of great stress.
- ◆ By speaking with people who have either been through similar experiences, or who have professional knowledge, family members can begin to see that they are not alone in the situation and others will understand what they are going through.
- ◆ Support can allow family members to explore different ways of coping and to develop practical solutions for dealing with certain situations.
- ◆ Also by learning new ways of behaving, family members can affect the behaviour and attitudes of the alcohol/drug user.
- ◆ Support can also be helpful once someone has stopped using alcohol and drugs. There might be changes in both behaviour and attitude which can be difficult for family members to adjust to.

What Help Is Available

- ◆ Help is for family members.
- ◆ Al-anon family groups are a fellowship of relatives and friends of problem drinkers who share their experience, strength and hope in order to solve their common problems. Meetings are held regularly and provide invaluable support to many friends and family of problem drinkers.

- ◆ Families Anonymous is a similar fellowship of self-help groups for those concerned about drug abuse or the related problems of a relative or friend.
- ◆ There is also a counselling service at the Alcohol and Drug Advice Centres in Swansea and Neath. Family members can receive help either individually or as a whole family.
- ◆ Family members can come in for a one off chat; for regular support, counselling or to work through a programme based on the first five steps of Alcoholics Anonymous.
- ◆ A specialist family counsellor is employed, funded by the City and County of Swansea.

If you feel you need advice, counselling or support then contact any of the Centres listed overleaf.

REFERRAL PATHWAYS

Probation
 Workplace Welfare Teams
 Social Services
 Women's Aid
 Hospitals
 South Wales Police
 (Domestic Violence Unit)
 General Practitioners
 Community Medical Teams
 Voluntary & Private Organisations
 WGCADA Staff
 Other Agencies

To Refer Someone Please Contact any of the below offices:-

WGCADA (Swansea) (Main Office)
 40 St James Crescent, Uplands, Swansea
 Telephone: 01792 472519
 Email wgcada@hotmail.com

WGCADA (Neath) (Abstinence)
 30 Victoria Gardens, Neath
 Telephone: 01639 620222

WGCADA (Neath) (Harm Reduction)
 15 Victoria Gardens, Neath
 Telephone: 01639 633630

WGCADA (Port Talbot) (Harm Reduction)
 37 Commercial Road, Taibach, Port Talbot
 Telephone: 01639 890863

WGCADA (Bridgend) (Abstinence/Harm Reduction)
 4 Gaylard Buildings, Court Road, Bridgend
 Telephone: 01656 667717