

Safety First

Make sure you have a back-up plan for crises. Someone you can turn to help you.

It is ok to love the person but not like the problem

Don't lecture, especially when they have been drinking or using.

There may be calmer times when it is possible to talk about how their drinking or drug use is upsetting you.

The important thing to remember is that you are not alone. Help is available. You can talk to:

For adults:

- **Al Anon (Support for families and friends of alcoholics)**
Telephone No: 028 90 682368
- **The Samaritans**
Telephone No: 028 90 664422



For children and young people

- Contact Youth (Chill) 028 90 320092
- Opportunity Youth 028 90 435810
- Chill has a Youthline service at 0808 8088000
- Childline 0800 1111
- Your school counsellor or pastoral care teacher



The *Taking the Lid Off Workbook*, a resource book is available from the person who gave you this leaflet. It discusses how family members are affected and what helps in more detail.

For more information for local help visit www.edact.org

Other useful websites are www.al-anon.org and www.drugsalcohol.info



Taking the Lid Off



For people living with someone's alcohol and drug misuse

The information in this leaflet is for you if someone you care about is misusing alcohol or other drugs. It will give you ideas that will help in what can be an extremely difficult situation.

When someone has a problem with alcohol or drugs it affects everyone around them. The people most affected then are those closest to that person. If you are living with this level of stress, it is probably having an effect on you. It is common that you see what is going on as "normal" and don't realise the impact it is having on you.

One of the most destructive things about living with alcohol or drug misuse is that you never know what's coming next.

If one of your parents or other family members has a problem with alcohol or other drugs you may ...

As a young person

- Feel panicky, confused, mixed up
- Bottle up what you are feeling
- Try to hide it from your friends
- Feel angry and upset at the drinkers way of behaving, especially when you have been let down or have promises broken
- Feel helpless and angry at yourself because you can't change things
- Try to take on their responsibilities
- Feel guilty that somehow you are to blame. You are not to blame!



As an adult

- Pretend the problem will go away or that it doesn't exist.
- Try to keep things going at home by trying to keep things "normal"
- Protect the person drinking or using other drugs by hiding it from relatives, neighbours or work.
- Never be sure what to expect next
- Become convinced that you can get them to change



So many people living with addiction feel so alone and isolated. If 4 million people across the UK and Ireland are dependent on alcohol or other drugs, you can be sure you are not alone. There is someone else in your class, community or church who is living with this problem.

So what can you do?

An important issue is that you can't make them change.
You can only change how you respond.

You didn't cause it
You can't control it
You can not cure it
But... you can cope



There are things you can do that help with all the stress and worry.

It helps to talk.

Talking about it may not change them, but it can change you

These include:

- Take the lid off it! Talking it through with someone you trust and who understands alcohol and drug issues can help you make sense of what you are going through.
- Building the supports you can use.
- Looking at the ways in which you are coping and learn ways of coping that work for you.

- Learning about addiction and drug use.
- Remembering you are never to blame for your parent's or family member's drinking or drug use.
- Looking after yourself. How? By...
 - Valuing yourself
 - Talking about your feelings
 - Keeping in touch with friends and loved ones
 - Learning new skills
 - Taking a break
 - Doing something enjoyable
 - Keeping physically active
 - Eating well
- **Everyone needs support from others sometimes. It is ok to ask for help. If things get hard, reach out to others you know will be helpful.**

