

Addictions

are you worried about someone's addiction?

VOCAL - Voice of Carers Across Lothian ● August 2013

This factsheet is for family members, partners and friends – carers – who are affected by someone else's drug or alcohol use.

You matter too!

Family members and carers of people affected by addiction say that, at times, they feel overwhelmed by all that is happening around them. The chaos of addiction does not just affect the individual but also those close to them. It can feel like being on a rollercoaster; there can be worry, stress and difficult decisions. You can lose sight of who you are as person and what you need, and you may not realise that there is support available.

VOCAL's Family Support Addictions provides this support – over the phone and face to face. It is your chance to talk through things from your point of view - offload concerns in a neutral space, discuss how the situation is affecting you or what you want to change.

Getting support for yourself, in your own right, is a step along the way to feeling less isolated, getting more balance in your life and thinking about the role you want to play.

More about Family Support Addictions

Family Support Addictions is a small team within VOCAL, and they are based at the Edinburgh Carers Centre. The team provide one to one support, and also run monthly support groups, courses, occasional workshops and de-stressing activities.

Some of the ways Family Support Addictions can help:

Emotional Support:

Opportunity to speak through your concerns (via email, telephone or face-to-face)

Information:

Information about addiction or other specialist services that can help you and/or your family members

Support groups:

Monthly groups for people who are interested in meeting with others

Training courses:

Free sessions over three weeks, exploring topics such as addictions, the impact on the family and coping strategies

Links to other VOCAL services:

For benefits advice, advocacy, counselling

Respite activities:

Occasional outings and de-stressing activities.

Some useful information

Do you know about the Alcohol Charter?

It has been developed by relatives, partners and friends to outline what people should expect when they are supporting someone with an alcohol addiction and working with services such as health and social care.

Pocket copies of the Charter are available by calling Family Support Addictions on 0131 622 6262.

What are your rights as a family member, partner or friend?

It is important the views of family and friends are considered and valued. Family members often have a detailed, day to day knowledge of the person with the addiction, and they can be affected by decisions about treatment for that person.

As a result NHS Lothian Carer Information Strategy states that carers should be recognised as a key partner in the provision of care and are also entitled to general information about the condition and medication, even if the person who is being cared for does not consent to specific personal information being shared.

Further information on carers' rights can be found in the factsheet 'Your rights as a carer'.

Have you been offered support?

Drug use or someone's drinking behaviour affects (at least) two other people in a significant way.

You have the right to be offered support for yourself in your own right and as a carer, in addition receiving relevant information about addiction and possible treatments.

'It's hard for me too' booklet

Family Support Addictions has produced a booklet called 'It's hard for me too' which is a self-help guide for family, partners and friends living with the effects of drug or alcohol use.

The booklet explores what is happening to them and the impact and influence they can have.

The booklet is available from VOCAL's website (www.vocal.org.uk/addictions.html) or by calling 0131 622 6262.