



Wellness News

Do You have a Family Member struggling with Drugs or Alcohol?

by Constance Brase, MA

Substance use disorders have become an epidemic with far-reaching consequences. You can see the effects on someone who misuses drugs or alcohol, or who becomes addicted, in every aspect of their lives. Family relationships disintegrate, school and jobs become unimportant, and overall health declines. When the drug takes control, the person becomes an empty shell with only one focus--getting the next high.

But there are other victims of this epidemic: Family members and close friends who watch their loved one on a path of self-destruction. It brings on feelings of hopelessness and helplessness. Standing by and watching the downhill slide of someone we love produces a roller coaster of emotions on a daily basis, from fear to guilt to anger to concern to regret and back around again. There is a constant barrage of questions: "What did I do wrong?" "What if I had given more.....or not given so much?" "Am I enabling?" "Do I get tougher?" "How much more can I take?"

Some people simply give up and move on, like girlfriends and boyfriends who don't want to invest in the relationship anymore. Sisters and brothers often feel ashamed



and try to turn their backs, but then feel guilty for having these feelings. Parents often feel responsible and either continue to enable or turn their adult child out, saying: "Don't come back until you get your act together." All the while feeling guilty.

So much emotional strain for so many people.

It's not easy managing your own emotions when someone you love is addicted to alcohol or drugs. Consider reaching out and getting some help and support for yourself. Certified addiction counselors, or mental health therapists with addiction training, can help families who are affected by the behaviors

and loss of control of their loved one. In counseling, you will learn the difference between enabling and helping, and how to set boundaries that keep a sense of balance in the family. You will learn how to manage the rollercoaster of emotions, and deal with the guilt and grief that are a normal part of the experience. You will feel support and understanding, and know that you are not alone.

Call Southeast Health Group today at 1-800-511-5446. Our caring and confidential counselors are ready to help you slow down the emotional roller coaster. Here's to your Mental Wellness!

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