

KE MOJA

I'M FINE WITHOUT DRUGS

The road may seem long. Respect your parents but make healthy choices and value yourself.

Youngsters whose parents take drugs.

The use of drugs can have an adverse effect on any family-not only on the health and behaviour of the children. The tragedy of families led by parents who are more in love with drugs is such that many children suffer terribly without realizing their predicaments.

Each child is affected differently, some do well in spite of problems, and others develop more problems. But one of the most serious outcomes of all this is children grow up not respecting parents and authority figure.

Parents on drugs

Studies have shown that generally addicted mothers cared for their children in the same ways as non-addicted mothers. But there are exceptions.

Some of those may be

- Forgetting to provide meals for the children.
- Leaving them unattended or not properly supervised.
- Extreme mood swings and erratic behaviour which the children find difficult to cope with.

What a child can do if a parent is on drugs?

1. Value yourself, make healthy choices.
Keep yourself safe; it is your parents' responsibility to keep themselves safe-you should never feel responsible for their burdens as well.
This does not mean children should not be caring and supporting but they need to understand that it is important to put their safety and well being first.
Take more opportunities to be an active contributor at your school. Connect on a spiritual level for tranquillity and guidance.
2. Do what is right for you.
Together families, schools and communities can reduce the risks and increase these protective factors in young people.

Remember

You don't have to cope on your own.

Talk to an adult you can trust, such as grandparents, teacher, church minister or sports coach. It should be someone you feel comfortable and safe with, whom you trust and who cares about you.

Even if it is a “secret” in your house it is important for you to have support for yourself, this is not breaking trust.

Talk to someone who has professional skills.

3. Get responsible help

The family may need to get outside help, either to counsel, or to help the children of the family member on drugs. The stigma of addiction can continue long after the addiction has been overcome so be careful and selective about whom you talk to. Some people who you can talk to include:

- Other family members
- The family doctor
- Teachers
- Police
- A professional drug counsellor

Some people feel they do not have the knowledge or skills to support family member using drugs.

1. Families differ

What is right for one may not be right for another, there are no magic formulas. It is most important not to panic. If you keep calm it will be much easier to discuss the problem and find a solution.

2. Learn all you can

Check out the facts about the drug and its effects and consequences. Be honest about your feelings and seek expert advice. You will be much better able to help if you are well informed.

3. Support the children

Often parents who are on alcohol or drugs break arrangements with children and leave them feeling disappointed and angry.

Remember you are not alone

There are other children out there who have the same questions you do, such as:

Q: Is my mom or dad sick?

A: At first you are worried about your parents drinking or drug use, they might have a disease - alcoholism or a drug addiction. If this is the case your parent is not a bad person; these diseases can cause a loss of control. If they have this disease, they might say or do something that hurts you, which they wouldn't do if they didn't drink or do drugs.

Q: Why don't they go to hospital?

A: At first, they don't even know that they are ill. Sometimes it's very hard for people to admit that they have a problem – they are in denial. But even when they become aware that something is wrong, they might not believe that drugs or alcohol are the problem.

Q: Will it happen to me too?

A: Addiction to drugs and alcohol tends to run in families, and genetic factors partially explain this pattern. A person's environment, including their friends, how much work they have to do, and the ease of getting alcohol or drugs, also may influence how much someone drinks, too much does not mean you will automatically develop alcoholism or drug dependence. Other things, such as being involved in sports, dance, music, writing and other after school activities, may help to protect even high risk people from drug and alcohol problems.

Q: Is it my fault?

A: No! They might blame things on other people, like you, or they might blame their job, the car, or whatever else is convenient. It's important to remember you can't control your mom or dad. Their alcoholism or drug addiction can be caused by many different things. Don't try to hide bottles or be perfect; you can't do anything about it. You did not cause the disease.

Q: Are there other children with the same problems?

A: Yes. You are not alone. There are lots of children just like you. There are probably other children in your class at school whose parents do drugs or drink too much – children you would never think of might have a parent like yours. Maybe you know some of them because you've been to their house.

For more enquiries

Please contact the DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, Free State

Mr C Botes,

3rd floor Liberty Life Building, St Andrews Street, BLOEMFONTEIN or call 051 409 0571
(office hours)

CONTACT DETAILS

Motheo District

Bloemfontein office:

051-403 2200

Botshabelo office:

051-531 0700/720

Thaba Nchu office:

051-873 9200

Lejweleputswa district office:

057-916 8700

Thabo Mofutsanyane district

Qwaqwa office:

058-718 6300

Bethlehem office:

058-307 7500

Fezile Dabi District

Sasolburg office:

016-970 9700

Kroonstad office:

056-216 8000

Xhariep district

Koffiefontein office:

053-205 9860

Jagersfontein office:

051-724 0013

Smithfield office:

051-683 1125

ISSUED BY :

The Department of Social Development

Private Bag X20616

BLOEMFONTEIN

9300

Tel no.: 051-400 0302

Fax no.: 051-400 0211