

The Effects of Growing up with an Alcoholic Parent

The effects of growing up with an alcoholic parent are not always visible. In some cases it can be very clear from a child's behaviour that there is something wrong somewhere. It may not always be clear what the problem is though as young people will go to great lengths to protect their parents from being exposed. In some situations the true effects of living in an addicted family may not appear until the child reaches adulthood.

The effects of alcoholism within the family is considered to be one of the 10 main adverse experiences that a child can be exposed to. These experiences range alongside having the same impact as experiencing childhood sexual abuse, emotional neglect and witnessing domestic violence. They can lead to a child growing up to have an addiction of their own such as substance addiction or behavioural addictions such as gambling or sex addiction. It is often a variable in those suffering from eating disorders or those who find it hard to regulate their emotions and act out violently.

When a child grows up with alcoholism they grow up with unpredictability. They will develop a hyper sensitivity to dynamics and often feel fearful and non-trusting of people and situations. They have often learnt to live on their wits in order to survive. If mum or dad has been drinking and is prone to becoming violent then a child may learn to be conciliatory to try and diffuse a situation. If a parent is emotionally unavailable due to their addiction they may well have learnt ways to numb out their own needs by acting out in self-defeating ways such as risky sexual activities or other risk taking behaviours.

We have created partnerships with organisations such as ACOA -Adult Children of Alcoholics to deliver a 12 step recovery program for those that identify themselves as having grown up with an alcoholic parent/caregiver. Although we do not work directly with the addict but if they are in stable on-going recovery or in specialised treatment elsewhere they can join the family in counselling.

We also provide weekly support groups for those who are affected by a loved ones misuse of substances. The group is a drop in and runs every Wednesday at the Altrincham centre at 7pm. There is no need to book. We also provide a structured course for those struggling with a loved ones misuse of substances. This is an 8 week group that looks at topics such as enabling behaviour, learning to detach with love, co-dependency, communication and the isolation and stigma the family often faces.

Alongside this we provide a bespoke counselling service dedicated to working with that same client group helping them to improve their emotional wellbeing and cope more effectively with the stresses that living with an 'addict' often causes. Individual family members or the whole family can attend for counselling.

To arrange an assessment, you can call us on: **0161 941 7754** or email us at appointments@thecfc.org.uk