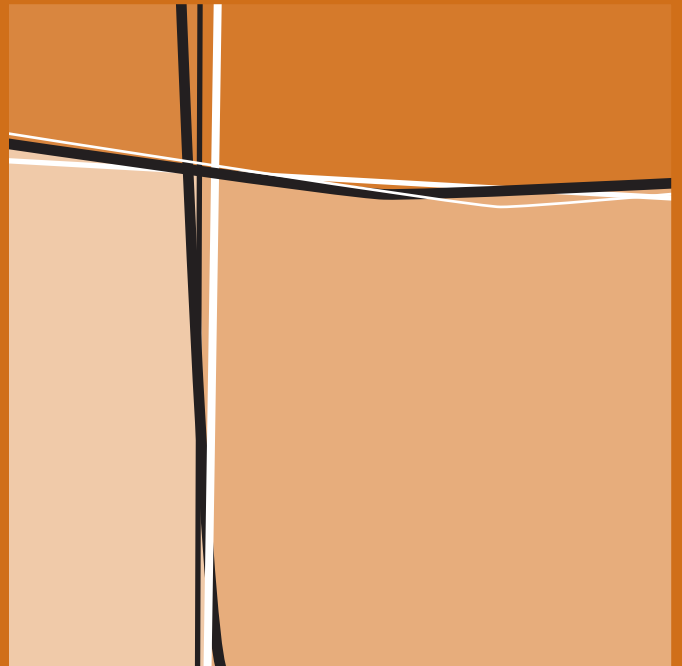


# Orientation manual

To the 'families and carers affected by the drug and alcohol use of someone close' resource



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## Purpose of this Orientation Manual

This manual provides an introduction, to the “*Families and Carers affected by the drug or alcohol use of someone close*” resource. It provides opportunities for self-reflection and an examination of attitudes towards working with families with drug and alcohol issues.

## 1. Working with Families

Take a few moments to reflect on any issues you think may be involved in working with families. Write them down:

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Some of the things you may have noted may have been:

- Families deal with drug issues differently
- There is no “one size fits all” approach to dealing with families
- Families may “self-cope” with drug issues

**Card 3** of the resource describes how to work with family members and carers.

## 2. Drugs and their effects

Often family members want information about drugs and alcohol and how they may be affecting their loved one/s.

Take a few moments to reflect on how you think family members may react if they find out their loved one is using drugs. Read the case study below. You are the parent. Write down how you might react.

**Case study:** Your seventeen-year-old daughter comes home late from a party. She seems to be hyper-agitated and the pupils in her eyes are very small. How would you react?

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You may have found that you reacted in some of the following ways:

- Panic
- Anger
- Blame

There are tips to help family members deal with loved ones using drugs. These are outlined on **card 4** of the “*Families and Carers affected by the drug or alcohol use of someone close*” resource. This card also includes a basic introduction to the three major categories of drugs:

**Depressants**, which slow down the nervous system (such as Heroin)  
**Stimulants**, that speed up the nervous system (such as Amphetamines)  
And **Hallucinogens**, that affect perception (such as LSD).

**Drug Use**

Family members will use drugs for different reasons. Take a few moments and jot down your thoughts on why family members may take drugs.

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The five stages of drug and alcohol use (non-use, experimental use, occasional use, regular use and dependence) are explained on **card 5**.

**Dependence on drugs and alcohol**

From your own experience, when would you consider a person is dependent on drugs and alcohol? Write down your thoughts and experiences.

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You may have come up with some of the following:

- The person has a persistent craving for the drug/alcohol
- The person spends a lot of time looking for the drug/alcohol
- The person keeps taking the drug/alcohol to avoid withdrawal symptoms

See **Card 5** for more information on dependence.

### 3. Treatment Options for families

What do you think is the goal of drug and alcohol treatment? What could a person expect from treatment?

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Goals of treatment could include:

- The reduction of harmful behaviour
- Quitting all drugs
- Achieving controlled, non-problematic drug use.

For further information refer to **Card 6** of the resource.

Take a moment now to reflect on your own experience and write down what you think may be some of the treatment options that are available to family members who are dependent on drugs.

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You may have come up with:

- Rehabilitation
- Alcoholics Anonymous

For a list and explanation of treatment options please refer to **Card 6** of the resource.

#### 4. Different stages of change

Matching a treatment option with a drug using family member depends upon the family member's readiness to change. Not all family members will be ready to change or even face their drug taking behaviour.

Take a moment now and reflect on what may affect a drug using family members readiness to change their behaviour. For instance, do they enjoy drug taking or has their drug taking lead to problems they would like to fix?

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How did you go?

- A model has been developed that outlines where people may be on a scale of 'readiness to change', this is called the "Stages of Change Model". This model is described on **Card 7** of the resource.

A person's readiness to change may affect the family in different ways. In the table below write down how you think the family member's comments may affect the family.

Drug User's comments	Your thoughts on how the family might react
"I'm perfectly happy using drugs. I don't have a problem"	
"I've reached the end of the line. I've got to stop using."	
"Yeah, I know I've got some problems, but I still love taking drugs."	

An outline of what family members can do at the different stages of change can be found on **Card 7** of the resource.

**5. What happens to families when a family member is taking drugs?**

What happens when someone close (doesn't take in family but is consistent with the resource?) is using drugs or alcohol? Take a moment to reflect on what you think may happen in these families. Jot your thoughts down.

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You may have come up with the following:

- Families feel they have to be able to deal with the problem
- Families may believe that one round of treatment is enough
- Families may want to solve the problem as quickly as possible.

**Card 8** of the “*Families and Carers affected by the drug or alcohol use of someone close*” resource, outlines what happens to families and some of the common ways family members may respond.

Families response to drug use may be seen as a process. This process is outlined on **Card 8** of the resource. It includes:

- Suspicion of drug use
- Confrontation and confirmation of drug use
- Initial coping strategies
- Self-treatment for user within the family
- Formal help, withdrawal maintenance
- Cycles of treatment for the user (relapse/distress)
- Family support

Pause for a moment to jot down what you think some of the initial coping strategies for families may be.

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How do you think families self-treat the drug user?

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Below is a table that outlines the key needs of family members through the response process. It may prove helpful to refer to this table as you are reading **Card 8** of the resource.

Response for family members	Key needs of family members at this phase
Suspicion:	Understand about drugs and alcohol  Decide if there is an issue and how serious it is  Address issues early
Confrontation and Confirmation	Understanding of user's patterns of behaviour  Family member able to face the issues openly/honestly  Communication skills so that family member and user can talk about issues
Initial coping and action	Looking for solutions within the family  Seek formal help
Cycles of treatment	Family learning to cope with the issues over time

**6. Issues for different family members**

Different members of the family will respond to drug issues in different ways. Take a moment to examine your own beliefs about how family members may respond to a family member using drugs. Write down your thoughts for each of the following family members:

**Parents:** Parents respond to drug use by:

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**Partners:** Partners respond to drug use by:

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**Siblings:** Siblings respond to drug use by:

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**Children:** Children respond to drug use by:

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**Grandparents:** Grandparents respond to drug use by:

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**Card 9** of the resource discusses how different family members respond to drug use.

**7. What families can do**

What do you think are some of the things families can do to look after themselves and care for each other if they have a family member using drugs? For instance, families may get specialist help or try to understand the treatment options available. Write down your thoughts now:

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Examples of what families can do to look after themselves are provided on **Card 10** of the resource. A checklist for families and carers is also provided.

## 8. Getting help

Whilst families may be aware of services available for treatment of drug-affected people, they may not be aware that there are services available to support families.

Reflect on this for a moment. From your own experience try to jot down any services you may be aware of that can support families.

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How did you go? You may have come up with some of the following:

- The Salvation Army
- Lifeline
- Kids Help Line

The different kinds of services available to families are outlined on **Card 11 and Card 13** of the resource.

## 9. Referral

You may currently refer clients as part of your job or you may not. When working with families with drug-affected members you will most probably have to refer clients on.

In the following case study, write down some of your thoughts on the referral protocols involved.

The sibling of a drug-affected person comes to you and is suffering anxiety attacks because they are worried about their sister's drug taking. You feel she needs to be referred on to a specialist counselling service. How might you go about this?

An explanation of referral and the protocols involved is provided on **Card 12** of the resource.

**Card 14** provides details of drug and alcohol information services that are available.

**Card 15** provides a list of the different types of drug and alcohol treatment services available. Before you view this card, you may like to quickly reflect on what drug and alcohol treatment services are available. Take a moment and write down what you know:

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How did you go? Compare your thoughts with **Card 15** of the resource.

**Cards 16 and 17** provides a glossary of terms that are commonly used in the drug and alcohol field. Some you may be familiar with, some you may not have heard before.

**Card 18** outlines the recommended reading around families and drug use. One particular reading that may prove helpful is the “Family and Carers Training (FACT) Project Research Report (2003). Copies are available from the Better Health Centre Publications Warehouse on 02 9816 0452.

**The Families and Friends Booklet**

This booklet is designed for families and friends to take away with them. It provides a simple to follow condensed version of the information in the *Families and Carers affected by the drug or alcohol use of someone close* resource. For more copies of this booklet please contact the Better Health Centre Publications Warehouse on 02 9816 0452.

**The Poster**

The poster has been designed to draw families’ attention to available help. By posting it in your venue, families and friends may feel more comfortable talking to you about their concerns.

