



“I’m tired
of
walking
on
eggshells”

LIVING WITH ADDICTION

“You learn to live in a state of anxiety. Nothing is for sure.”

ROBERT SUBBY

Psychologist and son of an addicted parent



It doesn't matter what the addiction is (alcohol, drugs, gambling or any other self-destructive behavior), the effect on friends and family is the same. That's because a family circle is like a mobile that hangs in a window or over a baby's crib. All the members act together to maintain a balance. When one member is addicted, all the others are affected. They are forced to act differently to maintain a balance.

Maintaining a balance is tough to do because you never know what the addicted person might do next. For many it is difficult to cope without help. Every family of an addicted person is in distress.

“After a time of driving without brakes, (addicted) people and their families learn to be very careful and try to seek out level, straight, emotionless roads at all costs.”

KAY MARIE PORTERFIELD, author of
Keeping Promises;
The Challenge of a Sober Parent

CONFUSION. At first, you may not recognize that addiction is the issue. You may not understand your own feelings and think something else is wrong. When you finally understand the reason for your confusion, you can see how the addiction is affecting the whole family.

STRESS. Confusion can lead to stress. Family members argue a lot and try to control the addiction. This rarely works. As a family member, you may feel rejected, frustrated and alone. Not knowing where to turn, you may start avoiding outside contact.

EXHAUSTION. When the stress begins to take its toll physically and emotionally, exhaustion may result. You may feel trapped, helpless and overwhelmed. You could actually become physically ill.

“I talked; I didn’t talk; I tried to help;

You’re Not Crazy

Individual reactions to hardship and pressures are understandable and normal. It’s healthy to feel, but some feelings can be damaging. Because no two people are alike and no two families are alike, we react differently to situations. You may doubt your sanity, but it’s unlikely you’ve lost it.

“I was drained and I felt myself getting sick again. I felt myself becoming emotionally numb. And I felt a growing sense of dread.”

*SHARON WEGSCHEIDER CRUSE,
author, daughter of addicted parent*



“If nothing changes, nothing changes . . . unless, of course, it gets, worse.”

BARB, wife of an alcoholic

You're Not To Blame

Feeling guilty is common amongst family members living with addiction. You may think somehow you're responsible for the addiction. At the very least, you feel guilty because you can't stop it. You may feel guilty about your anger.

People with an addiction are very good at laying the blame on others. They try to use guilt to get the support they need. Friends and family are not to blame. The addicted person is responsible for his or her own actions.

I stayed out of the way. It didn't matter what I did,

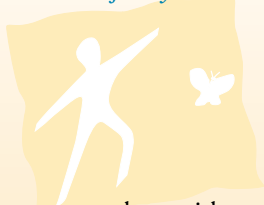
You're Not Alone

It seems logical to think that curing the addiction will restore the family balance. Not necessarily. The addicted person must take responsibility for their addiction. And regardless of when or if that happens, family members have to take care of themselves and deal with their own issues.

But you don't have to do it alone. Help is available from the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba. It is certainly not a sign of weakness to ask for help. Nor does it take superhuman strength. Individuals or families receive help that is confidential, accepting and professional in an atmosphere that is caring and safe!

“Pain is a part of life. Suffering is optional.”

HELENA, family counselor



Change may seem scary, but, without change things will only get worse. It may seem as if your options have been taken away from you, but you do have a choice. You can change things for the better. The addicted person may never seek help, but friends and family can learn the skills to cope. The chance to improve the quality of your life is just a phone call away.

I was always wrong.”

*CHERYL
wife of an
addicted husband*

For more information or for someone to talk to, call the local office of the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba or a regional office listed in this brochure.

WINNIPEG REGION944-6229
WESTERN REGION (Brandon)1-866-767-3838
NORTHERN REGION (Thompson)1-866-291-7774
LIBRARY/RESOURCE CENTRE (Winnipeg)944-6233

www.afm.mb.ca

This brochure is one of a series of three.

Leading the way to an addiction free society.



**ADDICTIONS
FOUNDATION
OF MANITOBA**

