

We've been there

Ph: 1300 660 068

W: [familydrughelp.org.au](http://familydrughelp.org.au)

E: [fdh@sharc.org.au](mailto:fdh@sharc.org.au)



Welcome to the Autumn edition of the Family Drug Help Newsletter, where we explore the A to Z of rehab.

Some alphabetical reflections:

**A**ccept that while you might be invested in the rehab and its potential benefits, you can't do the rehab, your family member has to.

**B**e open to other possibilities – rehab is not for everyone.

**C**all the Helpline for support – who is the rehab really for?

**D**o something different - if you keep on doing what you always did, you'll keep on getting what you have always got.

**E**ach person must navigate their own way - but sharing the burden and talking things through can make a big difference.

**F**amilies have needs too.

**G**enerously share your knowledge with others to give hope, encouragement and support.

**H**elpline volunteers have ventured this path – it's good to know you're not alone – call 1300 660 068.

**I**magine the future you want, and get the support you need to make it happen.

**J**ust keep going.

**K**eep in mind that while you hope for the best, you have no control over the outcome.

**L**ove is a mystery – we want the best for our loved ones,

but we must not lose sight of the need to love ourselves.

**M**anaging our expectations is really important.

**N**o quick fix exists, especially by just doing a detox or rehab.

**O**nly your loved one can make the decision to go to rehab – easier said than done.

**P**eople who can stick out rehab, and stay engaged in treatment, have better outcomes.

**Q**uiet reflection and mindfulness helps us to connect with where we're at, and step back to consider the ins and outs of rehab.

**R**ehab is not a silver bullet.

**S**tep down or step up care is so important – there is more than just the rehab to consider – what supports are in place before and after the admission?

**T**reatment is cumulative and can take many goes, but the learnings are not lost.

**U**nderstanding is always more helpful than judging.

**V**ery often change can occur when we least expect it.

**W**elcome the unknown.

**X**-factor as to why rehab is helpful to some and not others is perplexing to researchers and families alike.

**Y**ou have needs too, look after yourself.

**Z**ig-zagging goes with the territory - there is often no neat, linear path from A to Z.

For more helpful resources from our helpline, see our website.

From all of us at FDH.

Robert Campbell



**Call our helpline for enquiries or bookings for any of the programs, including counselling, or go to [familydrughelp.org.au](http://familydrughelp.org.au) for further information.**



**1300 660 068**

**One of the things we family members can find really frustrating is navigating treatment services on behalf of our loved ones. It can feel like we hit a lot of brick walls and hurdles.**

Here are a few tips that have helped me along the way that I hope can be helpful to others:

1. Learn about the different treatments and treatment systems. At first I was totally bamboozled by the options – there was public and private, accredited and non-accredited, all with prices ranging from free to completely unaffordable. Not to mention 12 step models, smart recovery, pharmacotherapy and everything else Google yielded for me. I didn't even realise that we had both a public and private treatment system, or what the difference was. I didn't know that some private treatments could be claimed through hospital cover, making them much more affordable. Nor did I understand that treatment through the public system was free. Once I understood the system a little more, I found it much less overwhelming to find support for my loved one.
2. Be prepared for frustration. Sometimes I would get really annoyed and flustered when I wasn't able to get the answer I wanted or I didn't find a particular worker very helpful. I was often told that my family member needed to call themselves, which I knew to be true but also found infuriating! Once I learned that lots of people feel this way, I felt more able to cope with the frustrations and more able to be patient and persistent. It helped to vent my frustrations with a friend or on the helpline. I then felt much calmer and ready to make a few more calls.
3. Accept that I don't get to choose the treatment. I often thought I knew what my family member should do to stop using drugs. I had big ideas about which doctors, counsellors and medications were going to solve their problem. This caused a lot of conflict as they frequently disagreed with me and felt I was interfering and being controlling. Over time I saw lots of people trying all kinds of treatment options – whatever was right for them at that time. Eventually I learned to accept that ultimately it wasn't my treatment to choose. This led to more harmony in the household as we stopped having 'I know best' arguments.

The treatment sector can be really tricky to traverse, as can relationships with people using substances. Having some knowledge, support and acceptance of my limits and my role in things has been really helpful in my journey.

*FDH staff member*

## InFocus

InFocus is a FREE six session education program for people affected by someone's drug or alcohol use.

Helping break the stigma, the program offers practical support, relevant information, coping strategies and the opportunity for people to connect through their shared experiences.

The program is facilitated by professionals who have also been impacted by someone's drug and alcohol use.

**You don't have to  
do this alone –  
we've been there.**

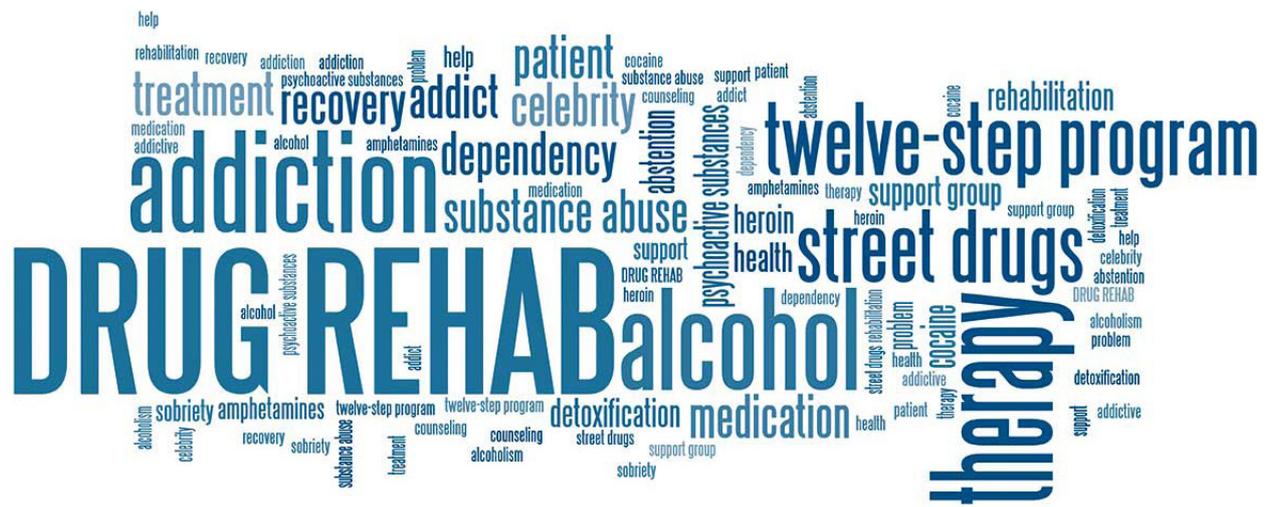


## YOU

*I know you,  
The you, you used to be...  
The you that laughed and smiled,  
The you that was helpful,  
energetic and loving.  
I also know the troubled you,  
the torn and lost you,  
The you that tried to run,  
the you that was scared.  
The you that showed fear in your eyes,  
the fearful you.  
The you that loved, the you that lost love.  
I know you, the you that you are now.  
The learning you, the growing you,  
The sad you,  
The wishing you,  
The trying you.  
I look forward to the new you,  
the one that is yet to come,  
The one who is the you,  
the ever changing, evolving you.  
My beautiful son, the you I love...*

*MUM xxxx*

*FDH volunteer*



*My heart filled with joy and elation as my son, after 25 years of drug use, decided to enter a drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre. Even after all the work I have done on myself, I became obsessed with his journey. I knew better, but was not able to act on it. I had to go through this myself. Two years down the track, I now totally get HIS rehabilitation is HIS journey not mine.*

*It was something I had to experience to totally get and understand. Just like him, I needed to reach this place myself. Rehabilitation is not the end of all the addiction and lifestyle devastation, not about a changed person after 28 days or 3 months. Rehabilitation is an ongoing journey through life of learning to live differently, trying new challenges, finding meaning and purpose and taking an inward look at ourselves, and reflect all of that into our daily lives. My relationship with my son is good and sustainable because of all I have learnt, and his journey continues.*

FDH staff member

"Is this the first detox he's done?"

"Pardon?! You mean people do this more than once?!"

Sad to say the answer for many people is yes. At the end of that first 7-day detox my 15 year old son looked and felt better than he had for years. However, he took a phone call on the way home and disappeared before we'd got his bag out of the car. After a few years of on and off counselling he did another 7-day detox and a 4 week Addictive Behaviour Programme as an inpatient at a psychiatric hospital.

This had a dramatic effect on his body and mind. But still, over the next 6 months, he gradually slid towards a serious lapse. This time though, he recognised it after 2 weeks and sought help himself. He did this with the knowledge that he had done it before and could therefore do it again.

Every time he's engaged with detox or rehab services he's gained a bit more understanding about himself and the coping strategies that work for him. He still has a way to go in his recovery but says that every positive thing he's done has changed him in some way such that he can never go back to his starting point. For him, treatment may be cumulative and take time but the steps are always forwards.

FDH helpline volunteer

### the supper club

The Supper Club is a place you can come to gain support and talk openly about a loved one who has passed away as a result of substance use.

The group meets on the second Tuesday of each month, 5.45pm - 7.45pm, at SHARC, 140 Grange Road. A light meal is provided.

### Support Groups News

Our support groups are an opportunity to connect with others who are having similar experiences.

All of our support groups are all back for 2019 We now support or refer to 20 groups across Victoria. We are also starting an online group.

We also have a number of guest speakers and presenters lined up for the groups this year.

Check our website for the details (dates, times, locations) and our Facebook page for the weekly details, including any guests.

*'I was stuck and unable to tackle his addiction. Now I feel positive and empowered to use the framework learned in the course to navigate my way through the challenges.'*

Breakthrough attendee

BreakThrough offers workshops to families and friends who have been impacted by someone's ice use. It supports you to get the facts, develop strategies and find out where to access help and support.

### *Gambling Family Support*

A first of its kind in Australia, InFocus Gambling is delivered through a peer support framework, facilitated by professionals who have also been impacted by gambling.

The program's purpose is to reduce gambling harm and stigma for families and friends, with the opportunity for people to connect through their shared experiences. We also run monthly support groups.



All of us at Family Drug Help, both staff and volunteers, have lived the experience of addiction within our families. Whether it's our children, partners, parents, or siblings we know how difficult it can be. But we also know that recovery is possible, for both you and your loved ones. And we want to help you and your loved ones.

Whether it's on the helpline, in a support group or one of our structured programs, you will always be dealing with people who know what it's like because we've been there. Family Drug Help - by families, for families.

### **We'd like to hear from you**

**We want to know how you would prefer to receive this newsletter. And we'd love you to let us know by completing a short survey. Just go to [familydrughelp.org.au](http://familydrughelp.org.au) and click on the survey link.**

*Many years ago, when my daughter was abusing alcohol and suffering serious mental health issues, I thought that a stint in rehab would be the magic wand that would make it all go away. Not so! Obviously! Today my daughter is drug and alcohol free, and living a 'clean and sober' life. NA's words, not mine. So what part did hospital rehab have to play in this?*

*Over 3 years ago, my daughter's addiction to ICE and other drugs was completely out of control, but when she decided it was time to make a dramatic change, she refused to attend a rehab. She had after all gone to hospital rehab 6 times, largely on my insistence, duly completing her 4 weeks (except the last one – 2 nights followed by a major relapse!) At the time she was angry and said they didn't work, but now I believe that with every relapse, and every rehab, she learnt a little more, about herself, and how she could make positive steps towards recovery. Now hospital rehab in the private sector is expensive education, and perhaps one that could be just as easily learnt by attending NA meetings or SMART sessions. I continued to pay my daughter's private health insurance over the years. Otherwise hospital admissions would not have been possible – or worthwhile, given the high rate of relapse. I believe that the public system does just as good a job as the private. My daughter did a detox at least 3 times in the public system, but a four month wait to get into a long term public rehab was just TOO long! Her last detox was done at home (not an experience I would recommend, but we got through it!) while her partner attended a private 4 week program. Neither has relapsed since.*

*So what worked this time? The detox was essential (but better supervised in a hospital if the major addiction is alcohol or prescription drugs). But for both my daughter and her partner, what was important was what happened after!! It was the support of peers and professionals that saw them through. On the hospital's advice my daughter's partner did 90 meetings in 90 days (by 2) with NA, while she accessed mental health treatment for her illness. Both were also given the support of their loving families and friends who never gave up on them, but who also set boundaries and made it clear that assistance was conditional on them taking positive action. Both have been regular NA attendees for over 3 years, finding new and supportive friends who understand their journey, and they have 'given back' by supporting others struggling in the early stages of recovery.*

*I feel absolutely blessed that I have my daughter, and my son-in-law, back!!*

FDH helpline volunteer/support group peer leader

