

EDITION 74 - SPRING 2019

NEWSLETTER

BY FAMILIES, FOR FAMILIES



We've been there



If winter comes, can spring be far behind?

Welcome to the spring edition of the Family Drug Help newsletter. Spring is a time of growth and renewal, and we thought it timely to reflect on Family Drug Help, and to highlight the different ways in which we are able to support friends and families grappling with the impact of substance use in their lives.

***The deep roots never
doubt spring will come.***

Marty Rubin

At its core, Family Drug Help is a service by families for families, which, founded in 2001, has been a passionate source of support and connection – the key message is that you are not alone, and that others have walked or are walking your path. From the immediacy of speaking to our trained Helpline volunteers through to our counselling, support groups and psycho-education programs, there is always a point of contact where you can be heard, take stock, and move forward in your life. Like spring, FDH embodies hope and renewal.

In the spirit of renewal, I'd like to welcome our new team members Ange Anderson, as the new Family Drug Helpline coordinator; Fiona Anderson, as the new Support Group Coordinator and Nikki Scarlett, who joins the BreakThrough team as Facilitator.

I also would like to thank Marney Phillips, Glenda Nettleton and Anne Iversen for their wonderful work and dedication as they venture on from FDH.

However cold the winter, there is always spring. From all of us at FDH, enjoy the blossom, light and warmth of the new season.

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

Robert Campbell
Programme Manager - FDH



Photo by Mario Purisic on Unsplash

Separation

I watched you grow,

Take your first step.

Have your first fall.

I picked you up,

I helped you heal.

We laughed together.

We shared joyful times.

When something hurt you, brought you tears,

I would hold you tight.

This was our life as it should be,

to love my child was the world for me.

As years rolled on, there is less need.

A young man to become,

was the future for both you and me.

Then something came along and you gave it a try.

The consequence so big.

I sit here and cry.

A mother raising her son,

has many hopes and dreams.

An independent man,

with few struggles of normalcy.

A man in control, full of life and future goals,

Is all a mother wishes her child to be.

As 30 rolls around, I still sit with tears.

THAT thing that came along.

THAT thing you had to try.

THAT thing that brings pain.

THAT thing makes many cry.

THAT thing I wish you could see.

Is the one thing that separates your life from me.

THAT destructive thing, I've grown to hate,

Can never take my love from you, for that one

thing, LOVE my heart has no debate.

FDH Volunteer

Call our helpline for enquiries or bookings for any of the programs, including counselling, or go to www.familydrughelp.org.au for further information.



1300 660 068



Interpreter service available



fdh@sharc.org.au

FDH Programs

InFocus

Addiction is a complex issue that affects individuals, their families and the wider community. Personal relationships are strained, families become disconnected and the family unit can suffer through desperate attempts to be free from addiction.

InFocus is a program developed for families and friends affected by a loved one's substance misuse. The program was established by FDH through the lens of the family experience to provide you with relevant information on the issues affecting you and your family, as well as providing strategies to manage your relationship with your loved one and reconnect with yourself.

'We would like to say thank you for your words of wisdom!

This class has helped us more than I could ever imagine, so thank you again.'

InFocus participant

The program is facilitated by professionals who also share with you the common experience of being affected by a loved one's substance use.

At Family Drug Help we aim to raise awareness, offer support and provide hope. So far this year we have delivered this program to over 170 participants in 7 different locations in Victoria, including Geelong and Shepparton.

'This program has helped me refocus my energy from what is unhelpful, to what can really help. I've learned to identify my role, what I can control and what I can't. I have learned that by refusing to change my own behaviour, I was keeping myself in a devastating situation. I've learned that change isn't as scary as feeling trapped by someone's addiction is. I can't thank the facilitators enough for paving the way so supportively. This program works.'

InFocus participant

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

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. Facilitated by a professional grief counsellor, it provides members with support, mutual learning and an opportunity for people to connect through their shared experience.

'The best thing about the Supper Club is being with others like myself. The thing that provides me with some healing is having a friendship with these really decent, good people who are continuing to do their best to overcome and cope with our shared lifelong loss.'

Supper Club participant

Many of our members felt they didn't fit in so called "normal" bereavement groups due to the stigma attached to substance use. They sometimes felt judged as parents or partners of someone who was misusing drugs or alcohol. With the Supper Club, we aim to reduce that stigma and isolation, helping you gain the sense that you are not alone and that your grief responses are shared by others.

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

Family Counselling

Our free counselling service provides professional and confidential support to families and friends impacted by someone's drug and alcohol use. Our family-focused approach offers a supportive environment to identify your needs and explore some of the challenges you may be facing while working together to overcome them.

'The counselling has helped me process my emotions and provided me with practical tools. I believe these sessions saved me, empowering and supporting me through this terrible time.'

FDH counselling client

We offer specialist individual and family counselling providing you with the opportunity to redevelop and move forward in your relationships, drawing upon the skills and strengths you already possess.

'This service has made a huge difference in the way we could approach our son's addiction. In her genuine and caring way, our counsellor listened and guided us to step back and delve deeper. We have implemented all of her guidelines.'

FDH counselling client

The BreakThrough program was developed by Family Drug Help (Self Help Addiction Resource Centre), Turning Point, and the Bouverie Centre, funded through the Victorian Ice Action Plan, commencing in 2015. It is delivered across Victoria by Family Drug Help and Turning Point facilitators, who provide both clinical and lived experience perspectives.

Breakthrough has also been adapted and presented to a number of diverse community groups, including Aboriginal, Sudanese, Muslim and LGBTIQ communities, as well as women's groups, schools, universities and to professional workers.

I can't recommend this short program highly enough. It supports families to know that there is hope for ourselves and our loved ones – something we can lose track of in the turmoil."

BreakThrough Participant

Over 98% of participants stated they would recommend the workshop to others in the same position.

The ongoing success of the program has just seen it being refunded for another 4 years, and it continues to be in demand across Victoria. The program is now being reviewed to include a broader family-focused drug education program that applies to all drugs of dependence. The program will continue with a specific focus on families and strategies for managing difficult relationships and seeking help for all members of the family.

Family Drug Helpline 1300 660 068

Our helpline is 24/7 with trained volunteers with lived experience providing help Monday to Friday 9-5. It's a confidential service providing support, information, strategies and referrals to family member's affected by a loved one's drug use. Our wonderful volunteers answer about 100 calls a week. If you would like to be a volunteer, please check out the details on our website.

'Volunteering on the Family Drug Helpline has helped me so much in my own journey. It has reinforced my understanding of 'Letting go' and 'Letting be' and that natural consequences of our loved ones actions are so important for them to start taking responsibility for the choices they make. It has also reminded me of how important it is to look after ourselves so we are in a position to help our loved ones when they are ready to make a change and take action. No longer do I feel I have to make things right and 'fix' my loved ones problems, and this applies not only when they are in the midst of their addiction, but also in their everyday life.

It is wonderful to be able to share my experience and knowledge to help others who are gripped with fear and anxiety just like I was, and to know that I can offer support and hope.

Helpline volunteer

Family Support Groups

We are really proud of the impact our network of support groups have on families struggling with the trauma of a loved one with substance misuse or problematic gambling. Through our peer led model and sharing opportunities, our support group members gain the knowledge and strength to make changes in their own lives, which hopefully facilitate a change in their family member.

"During a recent crisis where my son was bailed to a 90 day residential rehabilitation treatment centre,

I was able to reflect on how far I have come with not living in constant fear and being totally obsessed by the life of my loved one"

Support Group member

We host over 20 support groups across Victoria, with many having guest speakers and presenters as well as special topics. Check our website for the details (dates, times, locations) and our Facebook page for guests and topics at each group.

'This group has made me a stronger person and been able to face challenging issues I am confident and brave with the support of this group'.

Support Group member



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.

Thanks FDH

One of my family members was captured by that disease we commonly refer to as “drug addiction”.

We were totally unprepared for all that entails.

“How could this happen to my daughter?” I asked myself. “Right under my nose, too.”

When the reality set in, I realised that nothing in my life prepared me for what had happened, and therefore what to do about it.

Of course I loved my daughter, and I felt pretty sure that she also loved me along with her mum, brothers, and sister. But it was clear that her decision-making was impaired (I'd prefer to say “stuffed” but I don't want to put you off with my down-to-earth language).

My daughter had lost control and it felt like it was my job to fix the problem. After all that's what we parents are supposed to do isn't it? I'm the man of the house – fix the issue, and quickly mate!

Where do I start?

***Dr Google was my first port of call. I landed, in quite quick time,
with the Family Drug Helpline - 1300 660 068***

That was a great start, but only a start.

The person on the Helpline suggested I attend a support group – there are about twenty of them run around Victoria, and my nearest one was in Ashburton. Twice a month parents with loved ones caught up in various addictions meet up and share what works for them in dealing with the problems with their loved ones for which nobody else has prepared them.

Wow... this is where the realisation hit me. This scourge is a family disease – it's not only my afflicted daughter that needs help, the whole family needs to recover.

The Ashburton support group spends the first hour delivering on an education topic about addiction. There is a lot to learn, indeed. The second hour is used to allow those attending to share their experiences should they wish to divulge theirs.

Both parts were essential for my family's recovery.

Fast forward a year and I'm just so happy to tell you that my daughter has been returned to her gorgeous self. This was mainly as a result of a lot of hard work she did on herself, but a huge piece of the puzzle was having her family behind her and understanding the road ahead, and a huge piece of that puzzle was having Family Drug Help behind us.

Thanks FDH.

FDH Helpline caller

Family Gambling Help

Is someone you care about a gambler?

It's estimated that for every person who has a problem with gambling, another five to 10 people are negatively affected.

Gambling is a complex issue that affects individuals, their families and the wider community. Personal relationships are strained, families become disconnected and the family unit can suffer through desperate attempts to be free from the problem.

'It's the lying that's the worst, the dishonesty and always being on edge... I live in constant fear I never know what's going to happen next.'

Partner of a gambler

Part of SHARC's family services, Family Gambling Help (FGH) runs support groups, Gambling InFocus programs, and will soon provide an online forum for families affected by gambling to connect with each other. SHARC is hosting a Gambling Harm Awareness Week lunch and presentation including the launch of the new interactive website and forum for affected family members. To register please call Angela Ireland - 9573 1706.



Photo by Priscilla Du Preez on Unsplash

Call our helpline for enquiries or bookings for any of the programs, including counselling, or go to www.familydrughelp.org.au for further information.

 1300 660 068



Interpreter service available

 fdh@sharc.org.au