



Interventions for the family

Grant Sugden and Maura Daly
Circle

Background

- Previously part of UK charity Family Service Units (FSU)
- Independent Scottish charity since 2006
- Supporting vulnerable children and families in Scotland since 1974
- Focus on whole family support

What we will cover

- Scale of the problem
- Impact on the family
- How do we keep children safe?
- How do we support adult family members?
- How do we promote recovery for users?

Scale of the problem

- 80-100,000 children affected by parental alcohol use in Scotland (SHAAP 2009)
- 780,000-1.3m children in UK affected by parental alcohol use (ENCARE 2010)
- 40-60,000 children affected by parental drug use in Scotland (Scottish Government 2008)

Scale of the problem – adult relatives

- Nearly 1.5 million adults will be significantly affected by a relative's drug use
- Cost of the harms they experience amounts to £1.8 billion per year
- The support they provide would cost the NHS or local authorities about £750m to provide if it were not available

(UK Drug Policy Commission, 2009)

Impact on children

- Loss of childhood
- Caring for parents and siblings
- Impact on social, emotional and physical well-being
- Disruption to schooling
- Increased risk of problem substance use in later life
- Increased risk of abuse and neglect

Impact on adult family members

- Psychological distress which can also result in both mental and physical ill-health
- Harm resulting from domestic violence
- Negative financial impact resulting from supporting drug users or being victims of acquisitive crime
- Impact on employment, either as a result of stress or the need to provide care or support to the drug user or their children
- Strain on family relationships
- Negative impact on social life and increasing isolation

How do we keep children safe?

- Effective treatment of parents is key
- Recognition needed of the additional impact of substance use on children
- Links to poverty and social exclusion
- Early intervention
- Early referral from prescribing agencies
- Better informed professionals
- Overcoming stigma

How do we support family members?

- Recognition of impact on family members
- Better information and signposting to sources of help
- Dedicated family services providing support to family members in their own right
- Need for services that support users and recognise families potential role in promoting recovery
- Financial, practical and emotional support to kinship carers

Policy

- The need to support drug users towards recovery
- The need to involve family members in recovery
- The role that family members can play in promoting recovery
- The need to intervene early to support children
(The Road to Recovery (2008))
- Reducing alcohol related harm a key public health priority

How can we promote recovery?

- Increase specialist services such as behavioural couples therapy
- More intensive family based therapy
- Greater emphasis on promoting social networks
- Refocusing resources away from criminal justice to a social model that supports families
- Shift from child protection to family support

Key Messages

- Early referral and intervention
- Recognising families as a means of support
- Sharing information with due respect to confidentiality
- Shared input between prescribing and support agencies
- Wider range of services that require service users to engage in treatment

Further Reading

ACMD (2003), *Hidden Harm*, London: Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs

Barnard, M (2007), *Drug Addiction and Families*, London, Jessica Kingsley

Manning V et al (2009), New estimates of the number of children living with substance misusing parents: results from UK national household surveys, *BMC Public Health* 9, 377

Scottish Government (2008), *The Road to Recovery*

SHAAP (2009), *Untold Damage, children's accounts of living with harmful parental drinking*

UKDPC (2009), *Adult family members and carers of dependent drug users: prevalence, social cost, resource savings and treatment responses*



- Maura Daly
maura.daly@circlescotland.org
- Grant Sugden
grant.sugden@circlescotland.org
