

It's OK to feel...

Hi there, it's Matt again from the Centre for Addiction Treatment Studies. Thanks for turning up for my second session.



Now in this slot I'm going to look at the many feelings you may have around the adult in your life who is misusing alcohol or drugs.

Using alcohol and drugs doesn't make sense when you look at what happens to the family and the pain it causes everyone. You can try to make sense of it but that can be impossible and can leave you feeling frustrated confused and tired.

You might be thinking that if you 'work out' why someone uses then you may be able to fix the problem and make things better. Sadly it doesn't work like that.

It can feel that alcohol and drugs becomes the number one priority for that adult, especially if it's your mum or dad that is using. In this case it can send a big message to you that something is being chosen over what you need and that's sad. The truth is people don't live their life thinking "I am going to use alcohol and drugs until I hurt all the people around me and I lose everything".

The adult in your life might have promised to change and not to drink alcohol or take drugs ever again....only to break their promises. So you feel let down and lied to. You can start not to believe anything they say even though you desperately might want to. All this is completely natural...it's what happens! When people become desperate to use substances they tend to break promises and not to tell the truth.

It may feel like people are judging your family because of the alcohol or drug use. Feeling judged can lead to isolating; spending time on your own and not doing the things you would like to do. For example not inviting mates around to your home because you are worried your mum or dad are going to be drunk and might act in a way that's inappropriate and embarrassing. You might avoid people just in case they ask difficult questions that might break your family up or make the problem worse.

You may feel split...you love the person who uses alcohol or drugs but also dislike them at the same time as well. This could lead you to feeling guilty or ashamed.

Feeling angry, responsible, frightened are all completely natural and normal. When someone uses in a family these feelings seem to always be around! It's important to remember all your feelings are completely natural. Feelings are kind of the body's way of telling you what you need to do in different situations - sort of like an early warning system or an alarm bell. It can be really difficult if you are being bombarded with those feelings 24/7 but if you start to ignore them you can sort of become cut off from yourself and end up numb.

In my experience night times can be hard when feelings are around. When you are trying to go to sleep it can be more difficult to distract yourself and you start to really think about things. In fact in other parts of your home you may be able to hear people drinking, shouting, arguing, slamming doors all sorts of commotions and shenanigans going on. Remember and this is where I get a bit 'therapisty' if that's a word....if it's not it should be! What we think affects how we feel and how we feel affects how we act.....it's all linked.

In my first blog the message was 'you are not alone'

In this my second blog it's mainly about the fact that it is ok to feel and all feelings are normal, natural and ok. It's what you do with

feelings that counts and can make the difference between just surviving or living your life, enjoying yourself and being happy.

Now on the mention of 'what to do with feelings' the subject of my next chat is going to be how to cope with all these feelings and what can help you to look after yourself.

Hopefully you will join me, once again take care, see you soon, bye.

Matt 😊