

## Take care of yourself...

Hi there it's Matt again from The Centre for Addiction Treatment Studies. This is my third and final blog in this series. It's going to be about the all-important 'How to look after yourself and keep yourself safe' - the 'what to do and when'.



Many different people have lots of different ideas about why people misuse substances and become addicted. For example, some people think it's a disease or an illness, others think it is behaviour that has been learnt.

It doesn't matter what the Addiction is, whether it's substance misuse, gambling, whatever, the effects on the family and individuals in that family are very similar and I have been through some of these in earlier blogs.

There isn't much agreement or definite answers to the problem..... except most people agree:

- The behaviour of someone with an addiction, like to alcohol or drugs effects everyone around them.....and not in a good way
- People can change and get better
- Talking to someone about what they are going through can really make a positive difference.

If you are full of feelings, for example feeling angry and let down, find a healthy way to let it out before it turns into rage. That could be screaming into a pillow, writing down your frustrations in a diary, going for a run. Find something healthy that works for you. It may be doing something that you enjoy but.....and this is an important

bit **don't keep those feelings in and to yourself.....**let them out and express them!

At this point it might be helpful to remember that it is not the person with the addiction you dislike it's the way they are behaving!

Ok... I can clearly tell you and this is 100% guaranteed.....hand on heart.....**it's not your fault.....**even though, for example the person who has a substance misuse problem may have told you it was while they were drunk or using drugs.

**You can't cure it, you can't control it.....**but you can **take care of yourself by talking about how you are feeling and what is going on for you and making healthy choices.** You kind of need to celebrate **you!**

On the talking front find someone you trust.....that could be a mate, a neighbour, another member of your family, a teacher at school, a counsellor but find someone - **you don't have to keep it all to yourself!**

Now you have a right to be safe. If you feel really scared and unsafe and are in danger or someone you know is in danger tell an adult you trust or call the police.

Currently the country is going through a lockdown. This is probably making things even harder for you. Trapped at home and unable to get a release or relief. Some of you will be really worried about the adults in in your life who have an addiction as their behaviour may be even more unreasonable and unpredictable.

Try and think about the **people and numbers you can call for help.** Also focus on something you enjoy doing. Drawing, listening to music, exercise - whatever! You might even need to find a safe space in your home just to keep out of the way for a bit!

**Remember if in danger make the call you need to make!**

I really hope something I've said over these blogs has made sense to you or even helped you in some way.

**Remember you are not alone!**

**Remember all feelings are ok and it's ok to feel!**

**And talk to someone about what is going on - you are worth listening to!**

Take care and stay safe

Matt 😊

