

Supporting Family,
Friends and Carers
dealing with the
impact of another
person's drug and/or
alcohol use

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**I'm not a
Carer.....
Am I?**

**Caring for someone
who struggles with
substance misuse can
be incredibly difficult
and isolating due to
stigma around the
substance.**

**Hidden carers are
people who provide
unpaid care for a
family member,
partner, or friend but
do not recognise
themselves as a
"carer"**

It has been well documented that relatives and close family members of people with drug and alcohol problems suffer stress-related physical and psychological symptoms that can be severe and long-lasting and as a result, make more use of medical services . In relation to this, drug and alcohol-related harms associated with health disorders and disease, poor quality of life, financial struggles, impact on family relationships and friendships apply to both the caregiver and the person being cared for.



Impact on family, friends and carers

Impact

Anxiety
and
Stress

Exhaustion
and
fatigue

Guilt
and
shame

Feeling
invisible

Needs

What are they
carrying...

What have they
put on hold...

What do they
need now...

Compassionate Conversations

**The Initial
Contact:
Overcoming
Stigma and
Fear**

**Understanding
what is
happening**

**Listen for
the Hidden
Needs**

*As a professional, your
primary goal when
approaching family
members and carers is to
shift from viewing them as a
barrier to treating them as a
vital partner*



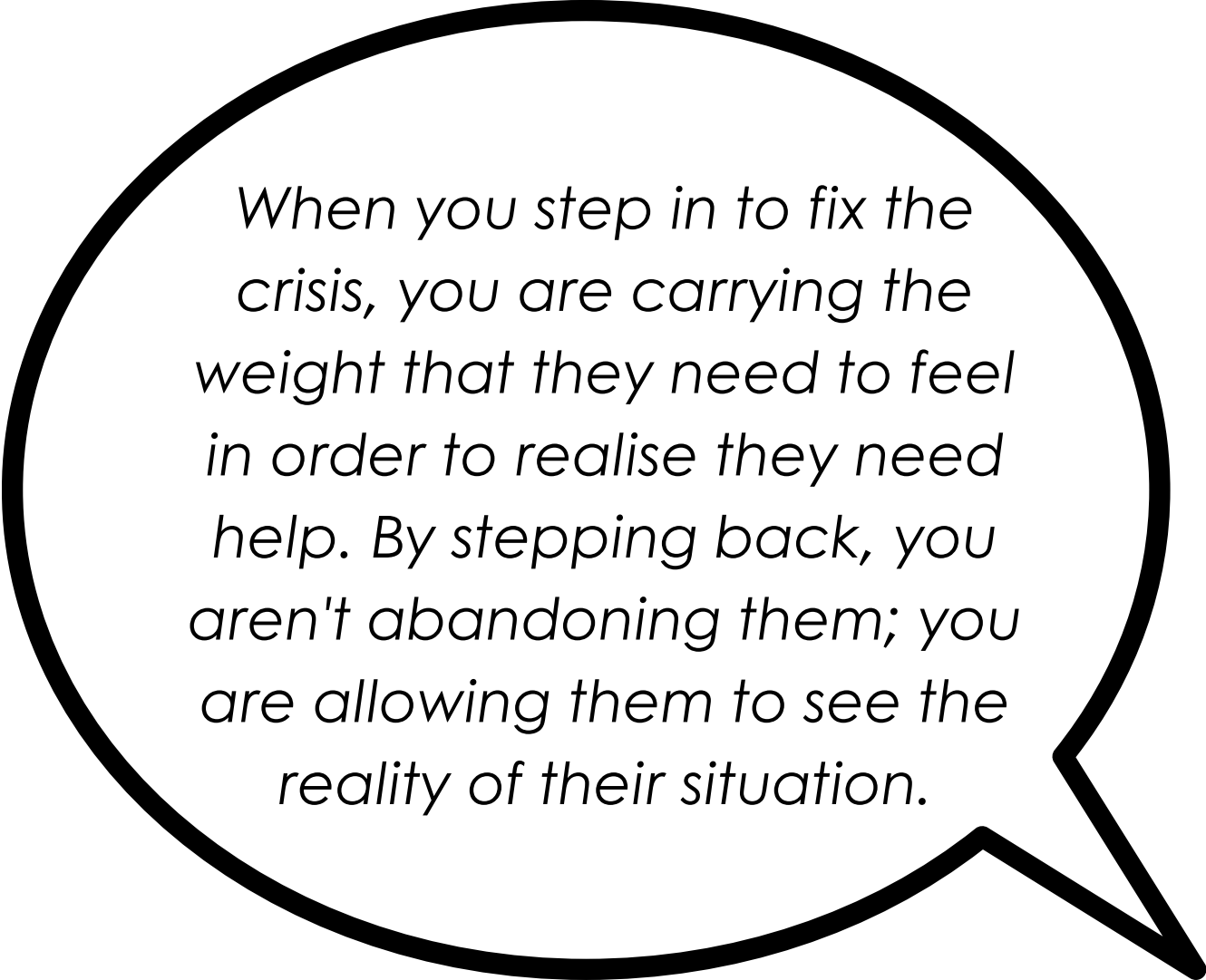
Carers of individuals with substance use disorders often experience profound isolation, guilt, and institutional trauma from feeling blamed or ignored by services.

Helping Carers Differentiate: Enabling vs. Supporting

Carers often confuse enabling with helping because both come from a place of love. Professionals must gently help them identify the difference:

Supporting: Doing things for the person that they genuinely cannot do for themselves (e.g., driving them to a detox clinic, helping them navigate medical paperwork).

Enabling: Doing things for the person that they can and should do for themselves, or shielding them from the natural consequences of their substance use (e.g., paying their rent).



When you step in to fix the crisis, you are carrying the weight that they need to feel in order to realise they need help. By stepping back, you aren't abandoning them; you are allowing them to see the reality of their situation.

RISE: Family and Carers Service



Our service offers one-to-one sessions for Family and Carers of individuals affected by substance misuse. These consist of 8–12 sessions (depending on need), delivered either in person, via Teams, or by telephone (we ask that the first session be face-to-face). The sessions focus on providing coping strategies, well-being practices, healthy boundaries, education, and resources relevant to family/carers' emotional, mental, and physical needs.

Inclusion criteria:

- >F&C Resident in Borough of Ealing
- >Out of Borough F&C whose loved one is known to RISE by an active or prior treatment episode

Exclusion criteria:

- >Out of borough F&C whose loved one is not known to RISE (even if they are a resident in Ealing)

Referrals:

All referrals can be made by the online form on our website using the 'family and carers option' (see below). These can be self-referrals or referred by a professional, family/friend or other. If you are making a referral for a family member or carer of someone you are working with, please ensure you have obtained consent for us to contact them.





Confidentiality and sharing information

When someone you care about is accessing our services, it's natural to want to be kept updated. However, we need to ensure that people using our services are able to do so confidentially if they wish.

This leaflet explains how confidentiality works, when treatment information can be shared with you, and how you can stay involved.



What is confidentiality?

Confidentiality means protecting someone's personal information.

It applies when information is given on the understanding it will be kept private – such as when you give information about your health to your GP.

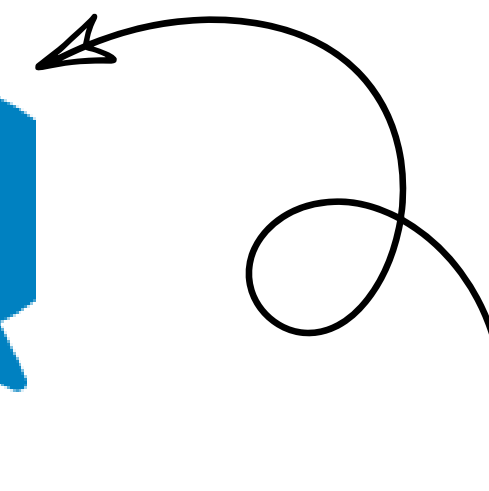
When someone engages with Change Grow Live's services and tells us about themselves, **we keep that information private unless there's a very important reason not to.**

When might information be shared?

The most common way we're able to share information is with the agreement of the person using our services. This is called 'consent'.

It is really important that people engaging with us can decide when and how we can share information with those supporting them. Not only is this the right position legally, it also helps us build stronger relationships and trust with the people we support.

In limited circumstances, we might share information with you without the consent of the person using our services.



**RISE Family
and Carer
Resources**

Support for Family & Carers

Adfam

Offering one to one support for people affected by a loved one's drug and alcohol use or gambling.

You can also join the Adfam Forum.

<https://adfam.org.uk/>



SMART Friends and Family

The F & F programme explores ways participants can look after themselves better; even in difficult and stressful circumstances, and establish healthier relationships with their Loved One.

https://smartrecovery.org.uk/smart_family_friends/



Al-Anon

Al-Anon Family Groups UK is for anyone whose life is or has been affected by someone else's drinking. You can find your local group on the below website.

<https://al-anonuk.org.uk/about-us/>

