

Resilience in the Face of Substance Misuse



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MATTHEW
PROJECT
Finding hope together

Overview:

- Resilience in YP substance use
- Why YP use?
- Motivation
- Lapse
- Triggers
- Protective Factors
- Parental Resilience
- Overview of CYP Drug and Alcohol Services



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Why do young people use substances?



Why do young people use substances?



Peer pressure, connection, boredom, excitement, enjoyment, coercion.



To take risks, curiosity, to rebel, ease social anxiety, to relax, to forget



Medical reasons i.e. pain relief but also px dependency to avoid withdrawals.



Media and mixed messages, Nitrous Ox, US, Music, Alcohol

Social expectancy/norms with alcohol and cigarettes



Financial advantages, community/upbringing/social norms.



To self-medicate, to forget trauma, to relax, to manage stress, manage anxiety, low mood, psychosis, "to feel".



Who defines it as problematic? The Young Person or people around them



Why Do Some Young People Not Use?



Protective factors



**Non-using
friends**

Attending school regularly

**Supportive
family**

Extra curricular activities

**Clear goals
& aspirations**

**Able to communicate
own feelings**

**Views drugs as
'not for me'**

Motivation Theory

David McClelland's motivation theory—often called the **Three Needs Theory**—suggests that human behavior is driven by three primary needs:

- **Need for Achievement** – Desire to accomplish goals, take responsibility, and seek feedback.
- **Need for Affiliation** – Desire for social relationships, belonging, and being liked.
- **Need for Power** – Desire to influence, control, or have authority over others.

How This Relates to Young People's Drug and Alcohol Issues?

How This Relates to Young People's Drug and Alcohol Issues:

- **Need for Affiliation**

Young people often have a strong need to belong to peer groups. If their social circle normalizes or encourages substance use, they may engage in drinking or drug use to maintain acceptance and avoid rejection. Peer pressure is a direct manifestation of this need.

- **Need for Achievement**

If a young person feels they cannot achieve success through conventional means (school, sports, work), they might turn to substances as a coping mechanism for stress or feelings of failure. Conversely, those with high achievement needs might avoid drugs to stay focused on goals.

- **Need for Power**

Some young people may use drugs or alcohol to assert dominance or gain status within a group. Substance use can sometimes be perceived as a way to appear “cool” or influential, fulfilling the power need in a social context.

Young people

Many young people will experiment with drugs and alcohol – this is not unusual



Some young people will 'grow out' of their drug use



Drug use can take over people's lives and cause immense problems



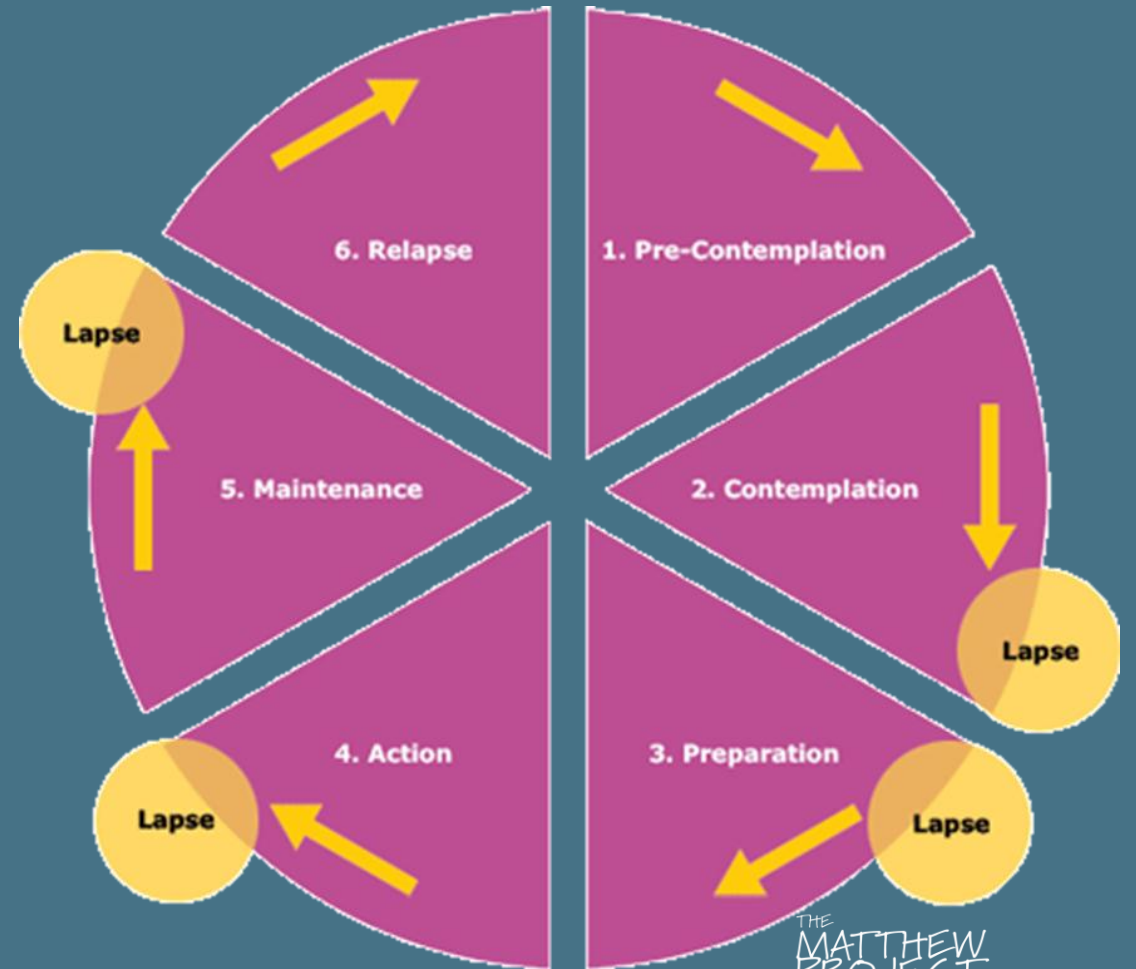
Some young people may use drugs recreationally for a relatively short time



When a young person makes these decisions, they are also thinking about their friends and the culture they are in.



**Cycle of Change – A Lapse
can take place at any stage!**



1. Emotional Triggers:

- **Stress or Anxiety** – Pressure from school, family issues, or life changes.
- **Depression or Low Mood** – Using substances as a coping mechanism.
- **Anger or Frustration** – Turning to drugs or alcohol to manage strong emotions.

2. Social Triggers:

- **Peer Pressure** – Friends encouraging or normalizing substance use.
- **Social Events** – Parties or gatherings where substances are available.
- **Fear of Rejection** – Feeling the need to fit in with a group that uses substances.

3. Environmental Triggers:

- **Places Associated with Use** – Hanging out in locations where they previously used.
- **Easy Access** – Substances being readily available at home or in the community.
- **Lack of Supervision** – Unstructured time without positive activities.

4. Cognitive Triggers:

- **Cravings and Urges** – Strong desire triggered by memories or cues.
- **Rationalization** – Thoughts like “Just one drink won’t hurt.”
- **Overconfidence** – Believing they can control use after stopping.

5. Physical Triggers:

- **Fatigue or Illness** – Using substances to feel better or cope.
- **Withdrawal Symptoms** – Physical discomfort leading to relapse.

Reducing The Risk

- Low and Slow: Trying something new? Go low and slow. Start with just a quarter of a hit until you know how it affects you. Remember every batch will be different, even if you get it from the same supplier.
- Never Use Alone: Always have someone you trust nearby. Make sure they've got a couple of Naloxone kits ready, just in case. They need to be prepared to call an ambulance if needed, you won't get into trouble for this.
- Test First: If you're with friends, only one person should try a small amount of the drug first to check how it feels before anyone else does. It may be a lot stronger than what you usually use.
- Don't Mix: Combining drugs, especially with alcohol, seriously increases your risk of overdose. Stick to one thing at a time.

Trigger Coping Checklist

1. Identify Your Triggers:

- Make a list of situations, places, or people that make you want to use drugs or alcohol.
- Recognize emotional triggers (stress, boredom, loneliness).
- Note physical triggers (smell, music, certain environments).

2. Healthy Alternatives:

- Go for a walk, run, or do a quick workout.
- Practice deep breathing or mindfulness for 5 minutes.
- Listen to music that uplifts you.
- Write down your thoughts in a journal.
- Engage in a creative hobby (art, music, DIY).

3. Social Support:

- Call or text a trusted friend or family member.
- Join a support group or online community.
- Spend time with people who support your goals.

4. Distraction Techniques:

- Watch a movie or read a book.
- Play a game or do a puzzle.
- Volunteer or help someone else.

5. Emergency Plan:

- Have a list of 3 people you can contact immediately.
- Keep a positive affirmation card or note handy.
- Know a safe place you can go if you feel overwhelmed

Remember Protective factors!



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stigma

/ˈstɪgmə/

noun

1. a mark of disgrace associated with a particular circumstance, quality, or person.

"the stigma of having gone to prison will always be with me"

Similar:

shame

disgrace

dishonour

stain

taint

blot



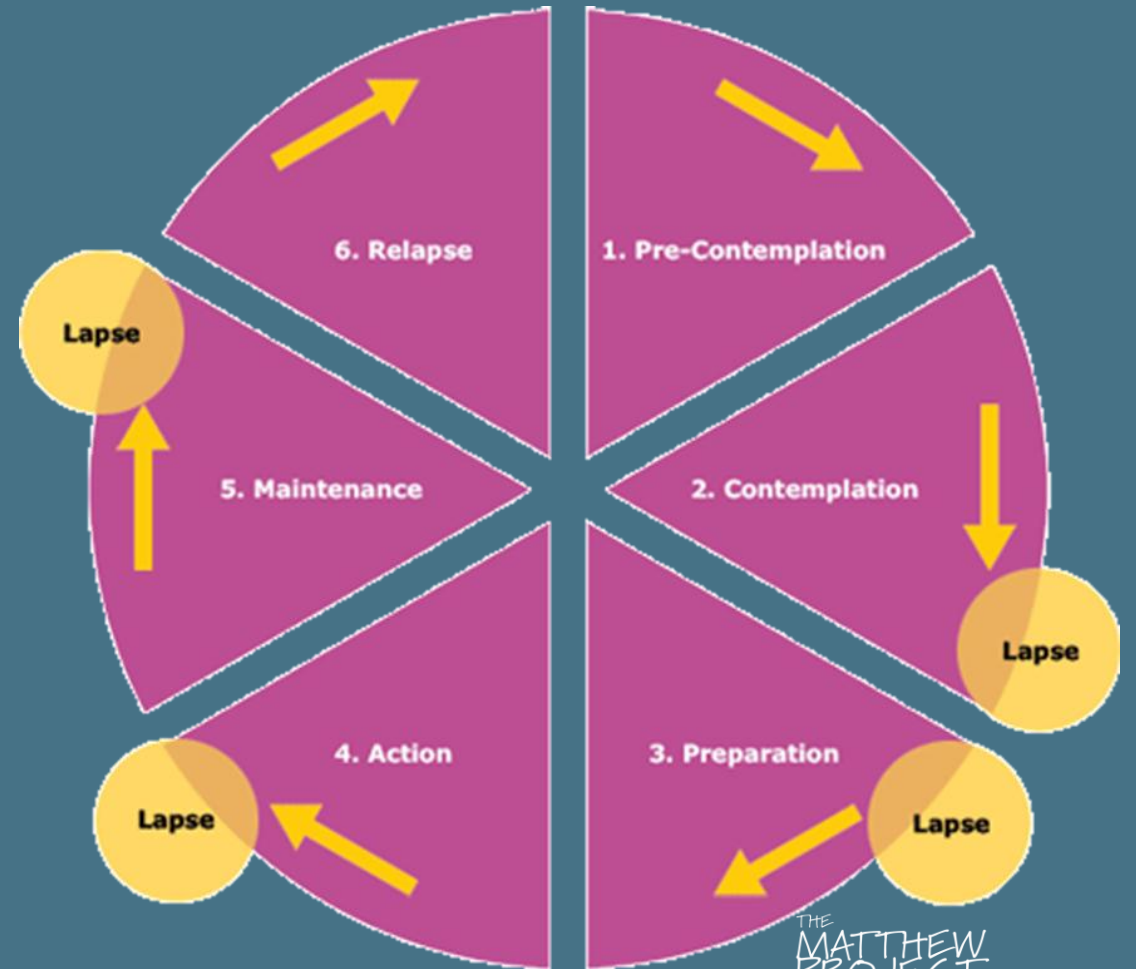
What kind of stigma do people with substance use difficulties face?

How might this affect their engagement and help?

What may we need to do differently?



Cycle of Change – Where are they?



Questions to consider

What are you using?

Do other people
around
you think it is a
problem?

Do you find it
difficult
to stop using?

Has your use of
substances
stopped you doing
something you
wanted to do?

And / or very open
questions, "tell me
about your substance
use". "How would you
describe your use of
substances"

Other perspectives: If
your friend / parent
were here what might
they say?

Screening Tool

Drug and alcohol support for young people under 19 in Norfolk

Purpose of a screening tool

This screening tool is for any professional working with children and young people in Norfolk. It will help professionals to identify if a child or young person has a substance misuse problem and understand the level of intervention they may benefit from. If no substance misuse issue is identified, the child or young person may still be affected by a family member's substance use. To find out more about our affected others service, visit our website and go to the [YouCan](#) service.

What substance means

A substance is any non-medical use of substances i.e. but not limited to: alcohol, cannabis (weed), solvents (i.e. cans), Benzos (Valium etc.), stimulants (cocaine, speed etc.), ketamine, hallucinogens and opiates and prescribed or over-the-counter drugs that are used more than prescribed.

Our support

We provide free confidential support and advice to under 19's living in Norfolk who are finding that their drug or alcohol use is impacting them and others around them.

- You can do a [referral](#) for a young person.
- We can offer you as a professional, advice and guidance on how to best support the young person.
- You can direct the young person to our [Live Chat](#).
- You can look at our resources page.

Website

Visit our website to learn more about our service and see how we can support you and the young person you are working with.



Young Person's Substance Use Screening Tool

What substance(s) are you using?

Alcohol ☐ Cannabis ☐ Cocaine ☐ Ketamine ☐ NOS (Balloons) ☐
Benzos ☐ Ecstasy/MDMA ☐ Heroin ☐ Other

Screening Questions

Go through the questions below and tick the appropriate box for the young person's score.
0 = Never, 1 = Not in the past month, 2 = Once a week or less, 3 = 2 to 6 days a week, 4 = Daily

How often are you using the substance(s)?

0 1 2 3 4

Have you used substances as a way of coping?

0 1 2 3 4

Have you used a substance when you were alone?

0 1 2 3 4

Have substances affected the way you see or hear things?

0 1 2 3 4

Have friends or family told you that they are worried about your substance use?

0 1 2 3 4

Have you tried to reduce or stop your substance use without succeeding?

0 1 2 3 4

Have you had arguments, money worries, work/education issues or regrets because of your substance use?

0 1 2 3 4

Scoring

Score	Next Steps
3-4	If you score 3 or 4 on any of the questions, we recommend you make a referral. Please visit the professionals page on the website for our Unity referral form .
1-2	If you score 1 or 2 on any of the questions, we recommend you contact us for advice and guidance. A brief intervention may be required.

Understanding the Child's Experience



Use a Non-Judgemental Approach

Avoid stigma and assumptions.
Be mindful of language used when discussing substance misuse and family dynamics.



Provide Stability and Consistency

Children value reliable, predictable relationships with professionals. Book visits in advance, follow through on promises, and prepare children for transitions.



Be Professional and Trustworthy

Avoid interrogating children about their parent's substance use. Be transparent about information sharing and confidentiality.



Listen and Respect the Child

Offer flexible communication styles.
Create safe spaces where children can simply "be," even without talking.

Understanding the Child's Experience



Acknowledge the Child's Expertise



Children often have coping strategies in place - some helpful, some harmful.



Build on protective strategies where appropriate.

01

Support from
School.

02

Close safe
relationship with an
adult/family
member.

03

Support from
appropriate
services.

04

Somewhere safe to
escape, to be alone or
with friends.

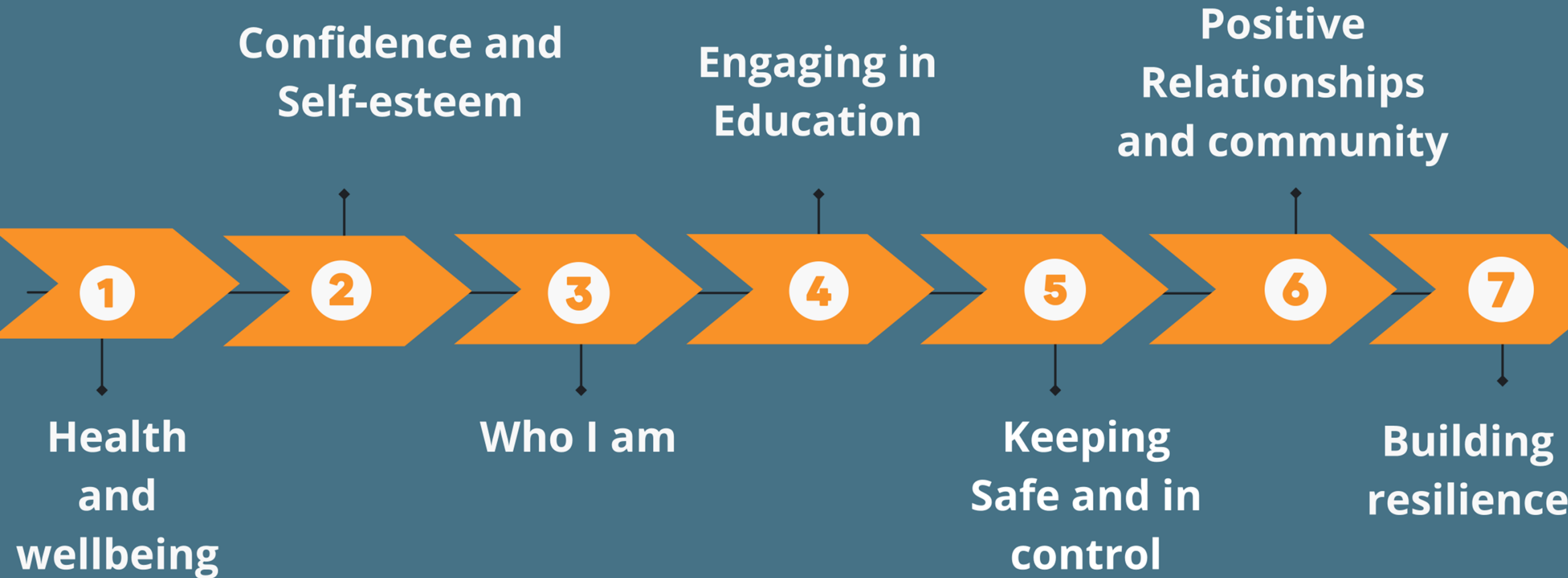
05

Identifying goals and
dreams.

06

Feelings of control
and choices, success
and achievement

Working Towards



Resilience for Parents & Young People when Substance Use Is Involved

What does Resilience mean in this context?

Resilience isn't about being "strong" or pretending everything is fine. It's about supporting parents and young people to :

- cope with stress
- recover after setbacks
- stay connected
- make safer choices
- maintain hope and stability

Resilience grows over time through small, consistent protective factors.

Parental Resilience

Emotional Resilience

Parents build resilience when they can:

- recognise their own feelings (fear, guilt, anger, worry)
- understand that these feelings are **normal**
- access supportive spaces without judgement
- avoid blaming themselves

What could help ?

- peer support /counselling
- giving themselves permission to rest
- understanding substance use patterns
- knowing they **cannot** control their child but can influence safety

Parents

→ Discovery – this came as a shock to parents, maybe denial.

→ Blame – Dealing with the drug use, looking for blame, searching for reasons.

→ Some parents may blame their children, but many more blame themselves.

“

‘Its my fault’

”

“

‘I don’t understand’

”

“

‘I should have been a better parent’

”

“

‘I’ve let my child down’

”



Impact

Parents Supporting a YP who Is Using Drugs:

1. Emotional Impact on Parents

Parents often experience:

- **Fear** (for their child's safety and future)
- **Guilt or self-blame** "What did I do wrong?"
- **Shame or stigma** (worrying what others think)
- **Exhaustion and overwhelm** from trying to manage crisis situations regularly

Impact – continued

Substance misuse can affect the whole family network . Parents may struggle with:

- **Not knowing how to respond**

Parents can go between:

- being **strict**
- being **lenient**
- trying to **fix everything**
- stepping back
All while worrying that any approach could make things worse.

Impact- continued

- **Dealing with unpredictable behaviour**

Young people using substances can:

- withdraw or hide things
- become irritable or volatile
- take risks
- struggle with school, friends or mental health

Impact – continued

- **Holding boundaries**

Boundaries are essential—but they're hard to keep when:

- parents fear the YP will run away, harm themselves, or escalate
- they feel guilty
- conflict in the home is already high

- **Balancing consequences and support**

Parents want to protect their child but also need to encourage responsibility. This can be an emotionally complex balance.

Strategies for building resilience for parents

What can help Parents Cope?

Parents often need **practical guidance and emotional support**, for example:

- **Psychoeducation**

This includes – Understanding the following

- how addiction works
- why drug use affects behaviour
- what realistic expectations look like

- **Communication strategies**

- approaching conversations calmly
 - avoiding threats they can't enforce
 - listening without reacting in anger
- These reduce conflict and keep the relationship intact.

Support :

Support for themselves

Counselling, parent support groups, or simply someone within the family network that can help them feel less isolated.

•Setting realistic boundaries

Clear, consistent rules that protect the household and the parent's wellbeing, while still offering support, work better than rigid punishments.

Agreed household rules

Consequences that are proportionate and maintain safety for all

• Working with professionals including :

Substance misuse services (Unity/YouCan/CGL) , schools, and mental health teams can share the burden and reduce parental stress.

What Parents want?

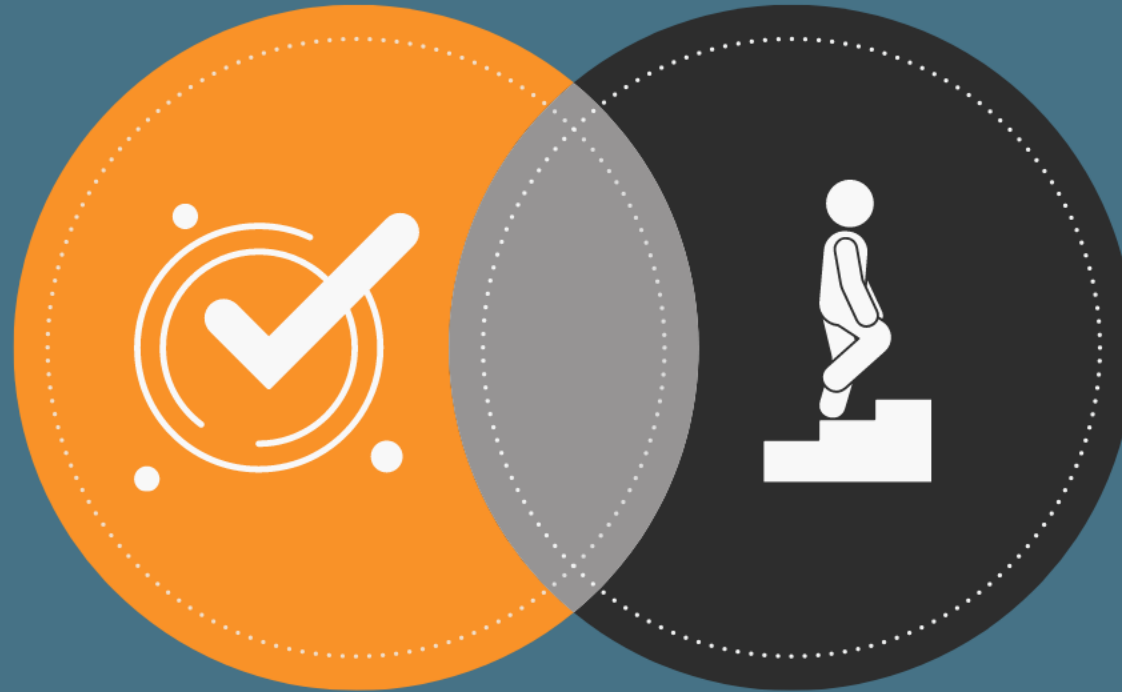
- Peer support from other parents that have been through the same situation
- Consistency of staff members at group, building a rapport and relationship
- Just being at a group with Other people who are going through the same thing helps
- input from other agencies such as police but the main point of the group is getting together and talking about how things are- learning from other parents and things like that
- More than once a month would be helpful – don't have to store stuff up.
- Mentioned "walk/talks – specifically for fathers /coffee groups for mums
- Activities ie pairing up with menscraft to support – one father talked about doing activities in our workshop – opportunity to talk or not but just a space to be.
- Talk from a YP who has "come out the other side"

Parents

Acceptance

There is a problem,
how to deal with
impact of this for the
child and the family.

Positive moments
can feel negative –
when their child
seeks support from
others, they may feel
'rejected' or 'out of
the loop'.



Moving on

Moving forward
together – accessing
own support.

Parents will need to
manage their own
feelings, attitudes,
coping strategies.

Recognising the change
in relationships,
adapting to the
situation

Family Resilience

1

Absence of DA.

2

**Effective management
of any parental mental
health problems.**

3

**Structured family
activities.**

4

**High parental
self-esteem.**

5

**Adequate
economic status.**

6

**Treatment for
substance misuse.**

7

**Openness and good
communication between
parents and children.**

8

**Acknowledgment of the
substance misuse
problem and its effects
in the home.**

9

**Strategies/action to
minimise impact of
substance misuse on
children.**

10

**Putting children and
young people first.**

Ways forward

- Bring together expertise
- Coordinated working together is essential for better outcomes
- Early identification
- Joint care planning and risk assessing/taking
- Abstinence may not always be possible. Harm minimisation
- Flexibility and consideration to the needs of client group (change phones, unreliable carers, no internet access, poor education)
- Optimism and compassion, hope and persistence
- Progress can be slow
- Offering health education (strengths based), assessing motivation and harm minimisation.
- Working with families and significant others

TMP Parents Group

Held once per month – 1st Thursday of the month @
Oak Street

Opportunity for open discussions and bite size
educational sessions

Email Unity@matthewproject.org for details and a
referral form

Resilience From Conception

Withdrawal Symptoms



High Pitch Cry, irritability and restlessness



Tremors



Feeding Difficulties (often keen to feed but can struggle to suck and swallow properly)



Sleeping difficulties (cannot settle or sleep after feed)



Vomiting and/or diarrhoea



Fever



A sore bottom



Weight Loss



Occasionally babies may have more severe symptoms

FASD



Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is the leading known preventable intellectual disability and is only caused by prenatal alcohol exposure.

FASD refers to a set of physical, mental and neurobehavioral disorders which are a direct result of maternal alcohol consumption during pregnancy. International studies have suggested that between 1% and 5% of people may have this condition.

<http://www.redballoontraining.co.uk>



FASD



<https://youtu.be/b7zDpufe1XE?feature=shared>

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Affects on Young People

Source: NSPCC Childrens Voices Living with Parental Substance Misuse

GROUP WORK - Verbal feedback

Impact on Family



While it is not always the case, substance misuse can have a negative affect on an individual's ability to parent effectively, therefore impacting young people

Family, social relationships & identity.

Unsafe environment, toxic substances in the home.

Poverty, deprivation & inadequate accommodation.



Education and cognitive ability.

Emotional & behavioural development.

Physical & emotional abuse or neglect.

Continued.... Poor Outcomes



More likely to experience difficulties at school



Anti-Social Behaviour



Develop substance misuse problems themselves

Young People's Voices

Talking and Listening

- *"They listen and give you good feedback and don't try to pretend that things are ok but actually have a human conversation and you feel like you're actually being listened to."*
- *"Knowing I could talk to her and she would understand and help."*
- *"It feels better having someone who visits to talk to."*
- *Been listening too and finally having someone to talk to about my dad, it has given me reassurance, and I feel like I'm now confident in myself*

Understanding Addiction

- *"My ways of thinking about alcohol addiction and how it effects other and to not always think about it in a negative way."*
- *"I have a better understanding of my mum and her drinking habits."*
- *"I feel like its made me worry a little less because i understand what mummy does a bit more."*
- *"Better understanding of why family member is doing what they're doing."*

Non-Judgemental Approach

- *"That I have someone to talk to who won't judge me, plus it's always fun."*

Confidentiality

- *"You listen and don't tell people what we talk about."*

Trust

- *"Having someone you can trust completely who is wants and is prepared to listen and help."*

Understanding the Impact

- *"I feel like i understand how it affects me. She made me realise how well I can cope with it and if needed I can message her. Now I feel comfortable with talking to my dad about his alcohol abuse knowing [worker] has comforted me with it and given me advice on how to deal with the affect it has on me."*

Not Just Me

- *"Understanding my family better and that it wasn't me who was going crazy and I wasn't the only one who had it rough."*

Time for Themselves

- *"She Helped me out soooooo much by talking and distracting me from my worries."*
- *"The opportunities to do new things with new people."*
- *"doing fun things and drawing"*

REFERRAL CRITERIA

- Aged under 19 and lives in Norfolk
- Wants to reduce their own drug/alcohol use or affected by a family members use.
- Parent/carer consent for under 13 years
- Consent from the young person



UNITY/YouCan TEAM AT THE MATTHEW PROJECT

DRUG AND ALCOHOL SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE UNDER 19 IN NORFOLK



Substance Misuse and YouCan

Struggling with drug/alcohol use that either they are using or have a family member who is using.



1-2-1 with a worker

Providing regular support, information, and safety advice.



Location

Meeting face to face where the child or young person feels safe and comfortable.



Contact

Being flexible with how we contact a child or young person. This can be via phone calls, text or emails.

SUBSTANCE MISUSE

DRUG AND ALCOHOL SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WITH ISSUES AROUND SUBSTANCE MISUSE



Motivational
techniques to
facilitate reduction
or abstinence.



Education around
substances and
their impact



Harm reduction
techniques &
Relapse
Prevention



Sexual health advice,
C-Card services &
BBV + Hep B
Screening

Unity

Our priority is to reduce the harm and prevent relapse and this also forms the main element of the aftercare program. This includes:

- Triggers
- Support networks
- Healthy coping strategies
- Substance risk update where appropriate (eg Nitazines)

Where appropriate, be involved in participation. The aftercare program will also enable us to see if there has been changes in their substance use and whether a re-referral is needed into specialist support.

YouCan

SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AFFECTED BY A FAMILY MEMBERS SUBSTANCE MISUSE



**Tailored 1-2-1
support with a
worker to meet
their needs**



**Access to positive
activities to build
confidence and
self-esteem**



**Offer a space to
talk and aid
understanding of
their experiences**



**Working closely
with other agencies
like Children's
Services to build
support**

YouCan

Our priority is to sustain resilience they have built during structured support.

- Coping skills
- Stress management,
- Safety Plans
- Problem solving
- Access to other support services
- Community groups.

CYP will have continued access to the skills program and any other future groups, including advisory groups/participation. CYP will also have the opportunity to be part of the peer-to-peer support. With the YouCan aftercare support we will establish if there has been any changes in their care givers SM and whether the CYP needs a referral into getting more help.

PROFESSIONALS NEWSLETTER

**Link for Professionals Newsletter for the latest
news from the Unity team:**



PROFESSIONALS

- A collaborative approach working closely with other organisations supporting the young person.
- We can offer training, awareness sessions, support and consultation to professionals.
- Collaboration with the adult substance misuse service CGL, to deliver any prescribing needs e.g., alcohol detoxification or opiate substitute therapy.
- Interventions offered: Education around substances and their impact, harm reduction, motivational techniques to facilitate reduction or abstinence, relapse prevention.
- Sexual health advice alongside C Card services, BBV screening and Hepatitis B immunisations.



Questions?