

Those Affected by Someone Else's Substance Use During Covid-19 Pandemic

Canolfan Gymraeg am Weithredu ar Ddibyniaeth

WCADA

Welsh Centre for Action on Dependency and Addiction

Inspiring Change  Achieving Potential



Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, social distancing measures are in place to reduce social interaction between people in order to reduce the transmission of the virus. You may have to provide support for someone who can usually look after themselves but because they are at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19, they have been advised to "shield". Staying at home with family members for significant periods of time can lead to feelings of boredom, worry and frustration. However, if you are living with or caring for someone who uses substances, this can be a particularly challenging time. WCADA provide support and advice to those affected by someone else's substance use, if you would like to access this support, please contact your local WCADA agency.

The Impact on Family and Carers

Substance dependence can be all consuming for a person and cause them to lose sight of their priorities, responsibilities and role within the family. Their behaviour can be unpredictable and abusive. This can leave other family members feeling: shame, fear, guilt, grief, loneliness and powerless. There has been a growing recognition of the physical, mental, emotional, financial and social impact that an individual's substance use can have on their family.

As a family member or carer it can sometimes seem as if all services are geared towards supporting the user, leaving loved ones feeling left out, lonely and isolated. These feelings could be compounded during this pandemic. The user may be experiencing frustrations due to not having access to their substance of choice, being short of money or having limited supplies. They may be experiencing symptoms of withdrawal and feelings of desperation. It can be worrying and scary to watch a loved one go through this.



Fact Sheet

Ways to Help Yourself

There is no quick fix to reduce some of the emotions associated with someone else's substance use. However, there are some things you can do which may make things a bit easier for you:

- **If you are at immediate risk of abuse or harm, ring 999:** Abuse or harm comes in many forms including: physical, sexual, financial, emotional or neglect. You have the right to be safe in your home.
- **Look after you:** Making time for your own space where you can read, listen to music, watch TV or exercise, is important. Creating a routine and sticking to it can help you feel more productive and make the days seem to go quicker.
- **Set your boundaries and stick to them:** Boundaries are key to creating healthy relationships. If you are unsure about whether to set a boundary regarding a specific behaviour, consider whether you would accept the behaviour if your loved one was not using alcohol and/or drugs. If the answer is "no", a boundary will help you to be clear on what you are and are not willing to allow. Setting solid boundaries can help you to regain a sense of control over your life which may have been lost due to living with the unpredictable behaviour from your loved one.



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- **Utilise your support:** Keep in regular contact with your friends and family. Make time to chat with them about how you are feeling. Find out about support available to you in the wider community (we have included some contacts at the end of this fact sheet). Even though there are currently restrictions on some services due to social distancing, many are still offering telephone and online support.
- **Educate yourself:** Learning about substance use and dependency, and the effects on the family, can help you to make well-informed decisions.
- **It is not your fault:** No matter what is said, someone's substance problem is not your fault and you do not have to accept blame for it.

Always remember, you are not alone! Here are some professional services that you can contact for support:

Support available from WCADA

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have had to reduce face-to-face contact with members of the public. However, we are still facilitating Needle Exchange and providing telephone support during temporarily reduced opening times:

Monday - Friday: 10am - 3pm

You can contact our agencies on the below numbers:

Swansea WCADA: 01792 472519

Neath WCADA: 01639 633630

Port Talbot WCADA: 01639 890863

Bridgend WCADA: 01656 667717

If you require support outside of these hours, please contact



**Wales Drug and Alcohol Helpline
DAN 24/7
Telephone 0808 808 2234 Or
Text DAN to 81066**

Dan 24/7 is a free and confidential drugs helpline. Calls from public telephone boxes are free of charge: calls from a mobile phone may incur a charge from your network.

Dan 24/7 telephone number will NOT appear on your home itemised bill

Support from other Organisations

**Cymorth i Ferched Cymru
Welsh Women's Aid**

 0808 80 10 800
 info@livefearfreehelpline.wales
 www.welshwomensaid.org.uk

Women's Aid provide support and advice to women affected by domestic abuse. They have a 24/7 helpline, useful information on their website and, if you are worried about being caught on the phone, you can e-mail them for support.

**Nacoo**

 0800 358 3456
 helpline@Nacoo.org.uk
 www.nacoo.org.uk

The National Association for Children of Alcoholics provides support to children/young people growing up in families where one or both parents suffer from alcoholism or a similar addictive problem. They have a website with helpful resources and a free and confidential helpline (the helpline number will not show up on the phone bill).

**AL-ANON
FAMILY GROUPS
UK & EIRE**

 0800 0086 811
 helpline@al-anonuk.org.uk
 www.al-anonuk.org.uk

Al-Anon are currently providing over the phone support and online meetings for family members affected by a loved ones alcohol use. Visit their website to find what online support is available in your area.

**Adfam**
Families, drugs and alcohol

 020 3817 9410
 admin@adfam.org.uk
 www.adfam.org.uk

Adfam provide support and information to families affected by a loved ones drug and/or alcohol use. They are currently providing online support through their internet forum, visit their website for details.

**carers
WALES**

 0808 808 7777
 advice@carersuk.org
 www.carersuk.org

Carers Wales provide information and guidance to unpaid carers. Their website has a suite of useful resources and they have a helpline that you can call for advice and support.