There are lots of people and places that can help you:

Childline - 0800 1111
Lifeline - 0808 808 8000
Your school counsellor or pastoral care teacher will also be able to help.

For local services contact your local Drugs and Alcohol Coordination Team or visit www.drugsandalcohol.info

Northern Team - 028 2531 1111
Southern Team - 028 3741 4557
Western Team 028 8225 3950
Eastern Team - 028 9027 9398

If you want to read more about addiction, how it affects families and what helps, the booklet Taking the Lid Off, A Resource for Adults and Young People can be downloaded from www.edact.org in the local resource section.

This leaflet was developed by the Taking the Lid Off Partnership and The Hope Centre, Ballymena.

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It is important to be prepared for an emergency in case you ever find yourself in an uncomfortable situation.

1. Make sure you know how to call an ambulance, the doctor or the fire brigade. Other people in your house should know how to do this too.
2. Make sure you know your address and postcode. This is important if you ever have to ring the emergency services.
3. Keep a little bit of money aside in case you have to make an urgent phone call. If you have a mobile phone, make sure you always have it charged.
4. Make a list of people you can call. Maybe a grandparent, aunt, uncle, neighbour or older brother or sister. Try to memorise their phone numbers so that you can contact them in an emergency.
5. If you want to talk to your parent about the drugs or alcohol, make sure you pick a safe time, when they are not drunk or high.
6. If you need to study or just a quiet space, ask a friend or relative if you can spend time in their house.

What would you do if...?
You find your family member unconscious and you're not sure what they have taken?
Ring 999 immediately and ask for an ambulance. They will tell you what to do until the ambulance arrives. If there are any pills or alcohol near by, show them to the ambulance crew.

We hope you never find yourself in an emergency situation, but it is always useful to have a plan just in case.
When your Mum, Dad or other family member drinks or takes drugs, do you feel...


Then this leaflet may help!

We know how hard it is to cope when you live with someone who abuses drugs or alcohol.

• You've never known what to expect.
• Arguments.
• You might feel like you have to look after them.

It's ok to have these feelings and to ask for help.

You are not alone!

You probably have a friend with the same problem. You just don't know which one could you be?

DO YOU FEEL...

• Frustrated?
• Frustrated?
• Upset?
• Scared?
• Embarrassed?
• Tearful?
• Guilty?

• Worried?

4 million people are addicted to drugs and alcohol in the UK. So you can imagine how many children and young people are in your position.

What is addiction?

Addiction is when someone continues doing something, like drinking or taking drugs, despite the harm it is doing to them and the hurt it is causing their family. Their mood or body becomes dependent on the drug or alcohol and stopping is very difficult.

No one really knows why a person develops an addiction, but there are some reasons why they keep doing it:

• Feel happy and relaxed
• Forget about their problems
• Forget painful memories
• Feel more confident

But if a person continues to use drugs or alcohol, it is very damaging to their body and brain. This damage can make stopping very difficult.

There is nothing you can do to stop your parent or family member from drinking or taking drugs. You can empty alcohol bottles and flush drugs down the toilet but they will just go out and buy more.

If your mum or dad doesn't stop it does not mean that they don't love you and care about you. It means they have a serious problem and may need to get help.

The effects on young people

Living with someone's addiction is hard. You may:

• Bottle up what you are feeling.
• Try to hide it from your friends.
• Feel paranoid, confused and mixed up.
• Feel angry with the person and the way they behave, especially when they let you down and break promises.
• Struggle at school and at work.
• Feel annoyed at yourself or helpless because you can't change things.

How do people cope? You may find that you:

There is no rule book for living with someone's addiction, but people often follow these unhelpful rules:

• Don't talk.
• Don't feel.
• Don't trust.
• Pretend that everything is ok - there is no problem.
• Stay away from home as much as you can.
• Try to keep things normal at home, doing the housework and looking after your brothers and sisters.
• Hide the problem from the rest of your family.
• You want to protect the person that is drinking or taking drugs by keeping it a secret.

Which one could you be?

The most important thing is that you look after yourself. There are things you can do to keep yourself safe and help with all the worry and stress.

• Remember it is not your fault. Everyone makes choices and you are not responsible for anyone but yourself.
• Don't bottle up your feelings up. It is hard at the beginning, but once you open up and talk about your problems you will feel a whole lot better!
• Everyone needs help sometimes! If things get tough ask for help. Sometimes it is easier to speak to someone that is not in your family. There are some telephone numbers and websites on the back page that may be useful to you.
• If you are told to keep secrets about something you think is wrong, tell a responsible adult.
• How far? Remember you are young. Get involved with activities outside your home like youth club or sports. Do things that other young people do.
• Choose a time to talk to your family member when they are not drinking or using drugs. Explain how their addiction is affecting you.
• Addiction. You didn't cause it, you can't cure it, you certainly cannot control it but you CAN take care of yourself!

Looking after yourself.

You often hear this advice to people under stress: look after yourself.

These are things you can do to improve your sense of well-being. Eat well, exercise, do enjoyable things. Most of all value and look after yourself.

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