



Presented by:


Student Assistance Program
Supporting sound bodies, minds and choices
www.caron.org 800-678-2332

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Kids of Promise

Working with Children
Impacted by a Loved One's
Addiction


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Student Assistance Program

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Caron Quick Facts

- Over 60 years of behavioral health and addiction treatment
- Unparalleled innovation to advance Recovery for Life
- Powerful philanthropy to benefit Caron communities
- Student assistance services/prevention (26+ year history)



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Elephant in the Room

*What it feels like to
be a part of an
addicted family*



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Who is a COA?



- Children of Addiction (COA) refers to:
 - Children with an alcoholic parent
 - Children with parents addicted to other substances
 - Children impacted by any family member's alcohol or substance abuse/dependence
 - Caregiver
 - Grandparent
 - Step-parent
 - Sibling
 - Other member of the household
 - Individual may be living with child or absent from the home

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Why do these students need our help?



- At higher risk for emotional, physical, and learning problems.
- Higher prevalence of depression, anxiety, eating disorders, suicide attempts
- 3-4 times more likely to become addicts themselves
- 6 times more likely to witness domestic violence
- Higher risk of being re-victimized in future



(Children of Alcoholics Foundation)

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COA Family Portrait



What does a family dealing with addiction look like?



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The Children of the Opioid Crisis




- <https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-children-of-the-opioid-crisis-1481816178>

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Perfect vs Dysfunctional Family

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COA Family Portrait

Picture from the outside

- Successful to low socioeconomic status
- Close knit family - "The Cleaver's" to dysfunctional - "The Bundy's"
- Intact, divorced, single parent or remarried family
- White, Black, Hispanic, Asian, etc. All races and ethnicities
- Strong morals, various religious beliefs, diverse cultures

Addiction does not discriminate.

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COA Family Portrait

Reality on the Inside

- Chaotic & unpredictable
- Family rule - Don't talk, don't trust, don't feel (closed system)
- Enabling
- Domestic violence & child abuse/neglect
- Parentified children
- Shame-based/guilt
- Conflict, tension
- Fear, embarrassment
- Ineffective training and role modeling

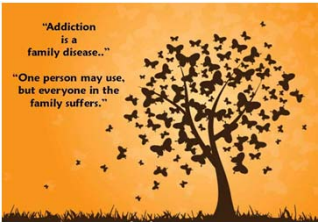


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Balloon Exercise



"Addiction is a family disease.."
"One person may use, but everyone in the family suffers."

What it feels like to be a part of an addicted family

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Addiction: A Family Disease

Traditional Way of Thinking


Addict's Family Survival Roles



New Way of Thinking

- Don't pigeonhole people
- COA's can demonstrate characteristics from multiple roles
- Family Systems Perspective/Attachment Theory


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COA's at Risk

Educational Consequences:

- Work below potential
- Unable to concentrate on school work because they are focused on their loved one - or being away from them
- More likely to have a learning disability
- More likely to be truant, repeat grades, transfer schools and be expelled




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COA's at Risk

Behavioral Issues:

- Internalizing behaviors
 - Withdrawn, sad, low self-esteem, shy
 - Tendency more in girls
 - Can often go unrecognized
- Externalizing behaviors
 - Low frustration tolerance, fighting, verbal aggression, talking back, bullying, disobeying rules, skipping school, substance abuse, illegal activities




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Observable Behaviors in the Classroom

- Absenteeism - erratic attendance or frequent absenteeism
- Tardiness - frequently late to school, miss bus
- Sleepy or sleeping during class
- Neglected physical appearance. May look disheveled, unkempt, inappropriate
- Poor grades, failing, or fluctuating performance


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Observable Behaviors in the Classroom

- Behavioral/emotional issues- outbursts, changing moods, fighting
- Sad affect
- Change in eating habits
- Parental concerns- parents do not return calls, miss scheduled appointments, older siblings take responsibility for younger siblings
- Peers may hint at problems
- Parents may come to meetings or appointments drunk or high

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Observable Behaviors in the Classroom



- Frequent trips to the nurse- unexplained headaches, backaches, stomachaches
- Quiet, loner, withdrawn
- Overly responsible, can't accept failure, high need for approval, "teacher's pet"
- Signs of neglect- clothing, hygiene, underweight
- Acting out in class using humor


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Observable Behaviors in the Classroom

- Sophisticated knowledge of drug use or drug paraphernalia
- Unable to concentrate during class
- Anxious when arriving to school and right before going home
- Change in behavior/mood on Mondays and Fridays- due to weekend events/supervision
- Unexplained burns, bruises, etc.- due to abuse or lack of supervision

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Do's and Don'ts

- **Do:**
 - Maintain list of referrals and resources
 - Follow through with help
 - Have cultural sensitivity
 - Share facts (not alone, not responsible, they are worthwhile)
- **Don't:**
 - Act embarrassed
 - Criticize parent's use
 - Be overly sympathetic
 - Share child's problems with others who don't need to know
 - Make promises you can't keep

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How Can I Help?

- **Listen**
- **Observe**
- **Validate**
- **Educate**
- **Empower**

(Taken from "Teachers Can Make a Tremendous Difference" by Jerry Moe)


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How Can I Help?


- Provide accurate and age appropriate information about alcohol, drugs, and addiction
- Help them develop life skills that will help them cope with the many challenges they face
- Children can gain bonding and attachment in healthy relationships with others
- Teach children the 7 C's to help them understand that they are not responsible for their parent's problem

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Helping COA's

- Take interest in students. Be available to talk. One significant adult relationships greatly increases resiliency in a child
- Refer students to school's Student Assistance Program
- Educate self regarding the disease of addiction and issues surrounding COA's
- Become familiar with the 7 C's
- Be aware of personal bias and process if needed (Attitudes Survey).
- Beware of burn out!




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Three basic facts that all children affected by addiction should know:

- They are not alone
- They are not responsible for the problem and can not control the parent's behaviors
- They are a valuable and worthwhile individual




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Support Groups

- Helps normalize child's experience (i.e. not alone)
- Examples of Activities
 - Bubblegum Family
 - Inside Out
 - Pour Out Your Feelings
 - Farmer and the Donkey
 - Wheel of Misfortune

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Kids of Promise in their own words.....

"I do not know what treatment means... Where are they? Why am I not involved in the counseling?"

- Parents often do not include children in the counseling or tell them where there loved one is as a way to protect the child and the addict
- Children will try to figure out what is going on and blame themselves for the behaviors of their loved one

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Kids of Promise in their own words.....

"I had to raise myself. I don't know where to begin to continue my education, schedule homework, make appointments, find a job."

- They need positive role model/mentors to help them with basic life skills

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Kids of Promise in their own words.....

"Before I was in this group I thought I was the only one in this kind of situation. Now I realize that a lot of kids are having the same experience I am having."

- It feels really good to be able to talk about this with other people.
- Group provides the support of an adult as well as peers

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Kids of Promise

in their own words.....

"I don't get to spend time with my loved one. They are always at "meetings". They were away for a long time now they are home but I do not matter to them anymore. Things are different but not good."

- Let children know what to expect when their loved one comes home from treatment
- Explain what AA meetings are
- Communicate that change can be difficult and scary. Make sure they have an adult they can turn to for support

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Kids of Promise

in their own words.....

"I cannot trust anyone. People always say things are going to change but they never do. Why would things change now that my Mom has been to treatment."

- Involving children on the change process is very important
- It is important to let them know there will be good days and bad days but they are now allowed to talk about the bad days
- Purposefully teach children healthy coping skills

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NACoA

VOICE FOR THE CHILDREN

1 in 4 children lives in a family with a parent addicted to drugs or alcohol.

That translates into 18.25 million children who need your help.

<https://nacoa.org/>

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Sample of Resources from NACoA



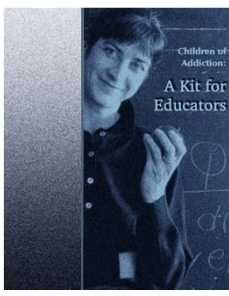
The image displays a collection of educational resources from NACoA. It includes a 'Kit for KIDS' booklet, a 'People Who Can Help Me' form with fields for Name, Phone #, and Address, a '12 STEPS for KIDS' poster, a 'Kit for Early Childhood Professionals' booklet, and a 'Kit for Parents' booklet. A cartoon character named 'Seven Cs' is also featured, with text indicating it's about making healthy choices and avoiding bad ones.

<https://nacoa.org/resources/>

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Kit for Educators



The image shows the cover of the 'Kit for Educators' booklet, which features a photograph of a smiling man and the text 'Children of Addiction: A Kit for Educators'.


<https://nacoa.org/resource/kit-for-educators/>

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Resources

An Elephant in the Living Room
The Children's Book
Jill M. Hastings, M.S.
Marian H. Typo, Ph.D.



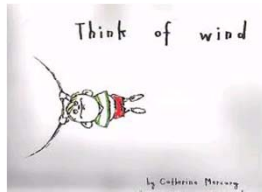
The image shows the cover of the children's book 'An Elephant in the Living Room', which features a cartoon illustration of a large elephant sitting in a living room.

An Elephant in the Living Room
By: Jill M. Hastings & Marian H. Typo

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Resources



Think of Wind
By: Catherine Mercury

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Resources



Understanding the Fall
By: Susan McMartin

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Resources



- National Association for Children of Alcoholics (NACOA) www.nacoa.org
Download the "Children of Alcoholics: A Kit for Educators" publication from this site.
- Center on Addiction and the Family (COAF) www.coaf.org
- Council on Chemical Abuse (COCA) www.councilonchemicalabuse.org
- Al-Anon <http://www.al-anon.alateen.org>
- A list of links related to COA <http://www.coaf.org/organization/links.htm>
- Ackerman, Robert J. – *Children of Alcoholics: A Guidebook for Educators, Therapists and Parents*, Florida: Learning Publications, Inc., 1983.
- Ellen Morehouse, 1982.
- Robert J. Ackerman, 1984.
- Sharon Wegscheider-Cruse, 1976.

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