Parents' Insights - Research Results

From Surveys and Interviews with 154 Parents of Adult Addicts

By: Barbara Decker

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What is the hardest part for you about having a son or daughter who is an addict or an alcoholic?

- You worry all the time about how his or her safety and welfare and cannot focus on anything else.
- You are in constant pain and feel powerless to help your child.
- You struggle to decide which boundaries are right for you and your family in each moment ... and with how to set and hold those boundaries.
- You feel like a failure as a parent.
- You can no longer communicate in an effective way with your child.
- You no longer feel safe and secure in your own home and/or worry about the safety of others living in your home.
- You are unable to sleep, eat properly or care for your own needs.
- You don't have anyone you can talk to openly and honestly about what you're going through.

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What other aspects of having a son or daughter who is an addict or alcoholic are you struggling with?

You struggle to decide which boundaries are right for you and your family in each moment ... and with how to set and hold those boundaries.

You are in constant pain and feel powerless to help your child.

You worry all the time about how his or her safety and welfare and cannot focus on anything else.

You feel like a failure as a parent.

You can no longer communicate in an effective way with your child.

You are unable to sleep, eat properly or care for your own needs.

You don’t have anyone you can talk to openly and honestly about what you’re going through.

You no longer feel safe and secure in your own home and/or worry about the safety of others living in your home.

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How is having a child who is addicted or alcoholic affecting your own life?

My own emotional / mental health is declining.
It is interfering with my marriage / love life
I no longer enjoy my own life.
It is interfering with my relationship with the rest of my family and/or friends
My own health is deteriorating. I no longer sleep well, eat properly or take care of myself and my own needs.
My dreams for myself are on hold and I am filled with worries about my future.
My financial security is in jeopardy.
I find myself unable to do the things I need day to day in my work / job / career.

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How important is it to you to find strategies for yourself to improve your life even though your child is in addiction or alcoholism?

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Comments

- 26 year old son struggles with alcoholism and being bipolar 2 self medicated himself been to many rehab back at square one. Just want this to end. Loss his license to drive for 2 years will get back in April.
- When will the worrying end.
- Addicted child currently in Prison.:(..I KNEW MY EYES COULD CRY BUT WHAT I DID NOT KNOW WAZ THAT MY HEART COULD POUR BLOOD !!!!
- constantly worry about his fate always trying to get help he does not want. he is homeless
- For me it’s been 15 years and I went through all of the above. Now that he has been sober and clean for about 7 months, there are still concerns about his bi-polarity and mood swings.
- Hard time communicating with him. He is 31, with anxiety, depression and is self medicating with alcohol. He quit his job (7 months ago), broke up with girlfriend of 4 years and sold their house. He is either drinking or hung over. He has been living with me for 6 months. Won’t get help.
- He has been sober 14 months now after 3 stints in rehab
- I had everything of any value stolen I’m also raising my grandson and never know who might show up at my house looking for my AD who owes them money have had my house broken into multiple times
- I have 2 adult addict sons , My two other kids are getting help and my daughter been clean a year. But my youngest son has come over high and assaulted me and my older

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as come over not two long ago and attacked my boyfriend for no reason...Can no longer allow them if they continue to choose to keep using 😢😢😢

- I just need to know she's still alive.
- I turn my phone off at night. I don't sleep.. I moved and didn't give him my new address because I'm afraid of what he will steal
- I want the best for him. Want him to be safe. I pray 24/7 to get clean I worry constantly about his safety.
- I'd have to check off every one of these except the first one. It was a nightmare and pure torture in every way.
- I'm in recovery. 11 years clean. It's like watching your child die in front of you and there's nothing I can do to stop it.
- I'm worrying about getting that "call" and feel powerless to help her.
- I've had 2 die. One was murdered, other OD, third in prison for year but now sober. I was constantly afraid of exactly what happened. No long term resources to do any good.
- My 42 yr old Son has been taking drugs on and off since he was 20 . He is currently in jail awaiting sentencing for possession of meth . But on 2/1/2019 he will be drug free for 6 months . Praying he will get Drug treatment, which he wants .
- My adult step son has stolen from us and my parents so many times. Living normally with our doors unlocked we began licking everything till he was in jail or a program but the peace only latest till he returned. We are currently in one of those peace breaks

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• My son 32 yrs old has been incarcerated for 14 yrs on and off. The last time he was out on parole, 4 days later he overdosed on heroin. I could care less of what people think including my own family. Of that was a parole violation. He was selling drugs also, yes I am in constant fear for him.
• My son has been an addict for years and he seems to actually like his lifestyle. I worry about him and it breaks my heart.
• My son has been hospitalized with pancreatitis and liver damage due to his drinking. I fear for his life.
• My son has been sober six months after years of using. I visit him often, but we hardly talk. Everything I do is wrong and apparently I’m putting too much pressure on him. His two day visit for Christmas was awful.
• My son is 33 living at home jobless carless suffering from PTSD from the suicidal death of his partner
• My son is currently in prison, will be out sometime this year, am so worried, about what will happen once out? Is he going back to his way of life? Did he change any?
• My son is now clean and sober after years of addiction, but the pain, chaos, and fear of the addiction is still fresh in my mind and has changed me as a person in many ways My son lost his battle with opioid addiction in April of 2017. However the struggle we went through as a family is still fresh in my mind. I wanted to participate in this survey and maybe somehow help other families that are still struggling.

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• My youngest child a son whom is 30 years old. He doesn’t believe his drinking is problematic. Passes out. In very dangerous places e.g. outside.
• Son 37. He has 3 kids. We have permanent custody of his 2 1/3 year old and temporary custody of his 7 and 10 year olds.
• Son is in and out of homelessness and incarceration. Leaves a wife and 5 year old son behind. He’s kind, doesn’t assume victim posture, but I’m sure after jail stunts and brief sobriety feels he could stay sober if we let him move in. He’s not demonstrated a commitment to recovery by my standards, but not sure my standards are right. Definitely don’t believe my husband would allow it anyway. Hard to balance
• The hardest part is watching him suffer. I don’t worry I pray for him. It’s really all I can do.
• When he is in jail or treatment I do not worry as much. It’s when he’s out on the streets or in the shelter.
• He is completely in denial and refuses to talk about it
• I have gotten help with many of these now through therapy and belonging to Naranon
• Unfortunately it’s a mixed bag of not knowing if he will be able to lend a hand when needed or keep a promise. I also find that his inability to take care of his own finances has in some ways impacted me. I don’t care for how he speaks to me sometimes. He is often like a petulant child. He can be very negative
• It’s embarrassing for me
• I am raising her 2 daughters

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• I feel helpless and struggle to feel joy
• Mainly I'm very sad for my son how much it has sidetracked his life "Curious to know why overdose packs are available for drug users(I am glad it is available for them)
• But naltrexone is only available with a prescription? Cost is not cheap " He makes me no longer care about life
• I have a better grip on things now. It's been 11 years dealing with all of this. I'm mostly frustrated with the system of trying to find adequate housing and jobs when he completes the programs. He gets released to shelter and then the vicious cycle starts all over. Thank you
• I have joined a few online groups for support. My daughter is in recovery now but I still need to heal.
• I need all help I can get to help deal with my sons ITS LIKE THEY WANNA PUSH ME TO USE OR DRINK😭😭😭 they are grown but geeze help me please
• It has taken a toll on my life in every sense of the word including financially. But I'm coping. I'm resilient.
• It is amazing how much of your time is spent worrying about your adult child
• Just interested in seeing survey results. Thank you.
• My child also has been diagnosed with Bipolar 1 and Borderline Personality Disorder.
• My middle child got hurt, falling from a roof scaffolding at an RV plant, I believe that may be where it all started. My son took pain pills for his injury, it seemed like he was taking stronger and stronger things, and it ruined his marriage, from there it only got worse, before we knew it,
he was shooting heroin, he lost a cousin and 2 best friends in six months, we thought it would make him want to stop, but it didn't. I was so worried he would be next. Something finally snapped for him and he wanted to get clean. A good friend paid for him to fly to California to get a fresh start, he has been writing music for years, and performing at rap shows, but had let his dream go because of the drugs. Here is 5 months later and he has completely turned his life around, he holds down a full time job, volunteer coaches 2 pee wee football teams, and is back in the studio, he has done 2 songs and a music video. I'm so proud of the changes in my boy.

- My son overdosed on August 26, 2017. I found him and tried CPR on my dead son and could not save his life. Now I am trying to get his death certificate corrected. It says he had green eyes and he has blue eyes, the said he had false teeth and they are real, they said he had brown hair and he has blonde hair, one side says they did an autopsy and the other side says they didn’t, they said they cannot change a death certificate! I am very sad!

- My son was just 17 when his Dad died of cancer - to that point we had a wonderful family life - dad, mom sister and brother, private school, church each week, family vacations. I remember telling him that at some point who his dad was to him in his life would be the reason for doing the right thing and what happened to his dad would stop being the reason for doing the wrong things. I think 10 years later we are close to that point.

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● My son went to rehab he got clean and then stayed clean for 9 months just as I started to trust and be able to breathe again he started using again 😰 Other people don't understand. I can't be honest with friends and family. I have constant fear of something bad happening. I am unable to set boundaries or say no and if I do say no I'm afraid something bad will happen. I have. Constant anxiety and fear.

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What’s Next?

Join me on my free, confidential workshop, *How To Encourage Your Child’s Recovery While You Reclaim Your Own Life Using My Breakthrough Love Another Way Formula*

Save Your Seat

Looking forward to "meeting" you soon & helping you with this important issue.

Barbara