



Family Health Team

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A Primary Care Service Response for Families of Substance-Using Persons

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Hamilton Family Health Team



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Presentation Outline



- Rationale and perceived need for the Family Support Group
- Support from research literature
- Clinical model
- Co-leadership issues
- Client feedback & follow-up
- Future directions

Family Support Group – Rationale & Perceived Need



- Initially, no professional supports for families struggling with substance use issues in Hamilton area
- Hamilton FHT counselors identify significant number of patients who struggle with the substance use of a family member
- Hamilton FHT’s support for group modalities
- Availability of a substance use partner agency to support group development and service delivery
- Group offered in a neutral setting with reduced stigma. A “health/wellness” approach in primary care.

Family Support Group – Literature Review



- Addiction impacts one in every four families (Hoffman & Froemke, 2007)
- Many Canadians harmed by others' substance misuse (Adlaf et al, 2005)
- Most treatment resources neglect the needs of partners, family members/friends (Csiernik, 2002, Howells & Orford, 2006) except to help engage the patient in treatment
- Spouses who received counseling to improve coping, safety, relationship skills, problem solving, & emotion management showed decreases in psychiatric symptoms 12 months post treatment (Howells & Orford, 2006)

Family Support Group – Clinical Model



- Modeled after CAMH’s “Families Care” program – specific modules adapted for a one day seminar format
- Combined CBT, Families Systems, and Support components
- An educational/treatment focus with one month post group follow-up. Group process/interaction considered important.
- Two facilitators, one from addictions specific community agency and one FHT mental health counselor. Self-referrals accepted from both agencies
- Guidelines for participation but no screening for group



“
In each family a story is playing itself out, and each family's story embodies its hope and despair...

Auguste Napier

If all my friends were to jump off a bridge, I wouldn't follow. I'd be at the bottom to catch them when they fall.

Anon



FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP

The Hamilton Family Health Team, in partnership with ADGS is pleased to introduce an educational/support group for adult family and friends of persons experiencing substance abuse/addiction issues.

WHO IS THIS GROUP FOR?

This group is for adult family members and friends of people experiencing substance misuse or addiction issues who are patients of the Hamilton Family Health Team.

GROUP FORMAT

The group follows a one-day seminar format providing information and discussion in a supportive environment.

WHAT WILL THIS GROUP OFFER?

Topics covered will educate participants on the basic aspects of substance use and dependence, recovery and treatment resources, as well as strategies for self care and healthy interpersonal functioning within the family. While participating in the group you will:

- ❖ Identify Issues
- ❖ Learn Coping Techniques
- ❖ Share Experiences
- ❖ Receive Mutual Support

HOW DO I SIGN UP?

Interested persons may self-refer by contacting Kathy Shorer at 905-667-4852 or kathy.shorer@HamiltonFHT.ca

I NEED MORE INFORMATION

For more information, or if you are not sure this group is right for you, please call John at (905) 547-0508 Extension 260

NEXT GROUP: April 30, 2010

9:30 am to 4:00 pm
10 George Street, 3rd Floor

Please contact Kathy Shorer for more information or to sign up
905-667-4852 or
kathy.shorer@HamiltonFHT.ca



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Group Program Outline



Part 1:

Understanding Substance Use

- Continuum of Use
- Substance Misuse: Challenges for the family
- Ways of Coping
- Stages of Change
- Treatment options for your family member

Part 2:

Boundaries, Self Care, and Strategies

- What can you do and what can you control?
- Taking care of yourself
- Setting your own Boundaries and Limits
- Communication Strategies
- Treatment options for Family

Substance Misuse: Challenges For the Family



- Sadness
- Anxiety and fear
- Anger
- Guilt and shame
- Stigma
- Secrecy/Isolation
- Stress
- Poor Communication
- Financial Difficulties
- Unpredictability
- Safety concerns
- Relational Conflict

Impact Of Substance Abuse on Family Members



In the Early Stage:

- Denial
- Arguments
- Believing excuses as reasons
- Confusion and ambivalence
- Anxiety and concern
- Rescuing, protecting, covering up for family member

In the Middle Stage:

- Vague, unclear communication
- “Don’t Trust. Don’t Talk. Don’t Feel”
- Unresolved conflict – deterioration of relationship
- Gradual shift in role and responsibility
- Decreased sociability
- ATTEMPT TO CONTROL
- Nagging, threatening
- Reporting on use and user
- Counting drinks, marking bottles, checking on amount of drugs consumed

In the Late Stage:

- Attempts to control the user or the use become more extreme until... Eventually:
- Self neglect – physical, social and emotional
- May increase own use of drugs or alcohol
- Anger, rage
- Depression
- Burnout

Less Helpful Ways of Coping

Family Members

Try.....

- Nagging
- Controlling
- Investigating
- Fixing
- Protecting

Some suggested responses

Instead of.....

Nagging: speak to family member when he/she is sober/straight to set limits & consequences and follow through – try to avoid being repetitive

Controlling: try to let go, and give the responsibility for recovery over to the substance abuser

Investigating: identify what you are & aren't responsible for; set limits

Fixing: allow family member to fix their own issues/problems

Protecting: Allow family member to experience the consequences of drinking/using

All of these behaviours take time to understand and learn, so be patient

Tasks of Each Stage Of Change



Tasks for User:	Tasks for Family Member:
Precontemplation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge the existence of a problem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education about substance use • Allow the family member to experience the consequences of his/her use
Contemplation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resolve ambivalence about behaviour • Weigh the pros and cons of behaviour • Realize need to change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support family member when leaning towards change • Support any engagement with the treatment system
Determination/Preparation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn about recovery • Develop action plan to change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support realistic expectations and goals • Support non-using behavior • Practice self-care throughout

Tasks of Each Stage Of Change



Tasks for User:	Tasks for Family Member:
Action	
<p>Prevent relapses and deal with lapses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn about triggers • Resist urges • Develop new ways of behaving /coping <p>Take steps toward goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • View lapses as opportunities for learning • Get back on track quickly after lapses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforce positive steps • Support User's efforts to care for self • Express understanding of the difficulty of the process • Encourage person to get support if a lapse happens
Maintenance	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to do what works • Prevent relapses and deal with lapses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforce healthy behavior • Support and encourage regular attention to goals set for recovery – are you both on track?

Recovery: Challenges For the Family



During recovery of a loved one, family members:

- May experience their loved one as unavailable emotionally.
- May witness their loved one as having more difficulties coping.
- May not like the speed or focus of recovery.
- May feel like they
 - are on a roller coaster.
 - are walking on eggshells
 - “in the dark.”
- May feel discouraged, angry and hopeless.
- May receive little support and treatment themselves.
- May need to change their ways of relating to their loved one.

What can you control?



- You **CAN NOT** control what someone does and how they behave
- You **CAN only** control your own actions and reaction to the other person's behaviour

Taking Care of Yourself

Taking care of yourself allows you to be:

- More healthy physically, emotionally, spiritually, socially and in your relationships
- Better able to respond to and support a relative with a substance use problem
- Better able to parent and support children affected by familial substance use

Determining your boundaries and limits



- In order to determine your boundaries, it is important to know what you will and will not tolerate from your family member
- Everyone has different limits and is in a different situation, so there is no “should” or “should not” in any particular example

Group Exercise

- I will tolerate.....
- I am unsure if I will tolerate.....
- I will not tolerate.....

Family Support Group- Co-leadership Issues



- Leader directed vs. group directed
- Group leaders “chose” each other. Leaders have background/training in group facilitation and addiction
- Challenges: Managing information flow and discussion balance
 - Managing the perspectives of several members of the same family
 - Maintaining confidentiality, including that of the substance user
 - Privacy issues

Client feedback/ follow-up, future directions



- 30 group participants in three groups. Group seminar offered every couple months. “Participants have gained information and are less anxious about their personal situations”.
- Post-group evaluation questionnaire – Positive experiences. Most helpful aspect of group included; group discussion/interaction, focus on boundary management, self-care, coping strategies, and communication with the substance using family member.
- One month post group follow-up – To date, only two completed follow-ups among 48 participants. Indication of importance of treatment for families along with periodic booster group sessions and/or phone contact with a group leader
- Consideration of topic-oriented booster group sessions.
- Consideration to broadening scope of group to include families of teen substance users (with co-leadership from a youth addiction agency).

Family Support Group – Impact on Primary Care Setting



- Increases awareness/capacity of health care professionals in the field of addictions. Screening/brief intervention (How are you coping with the person using substances in your family? We have a service which provides support). Pamphlet/ self-referral process
- Increases awareness of counselors of the therapeutic issues of couples/families with substance use problems
- Supports the continuum of patient self-management to professional intervention in the area of addictions and family support
- Increases awareness of appropriate community services for addictions and family support

Family Support Group – Contact Information



Group Leaders/facilitators:

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