SAPS

(Sunderland Area Parent Support)

Silver Box

**Forward**

Life, as a parent or carer of a person who is addicted to drugs and or alcohol is, at best extremely stressful and at worst is devastating and destructful to all concerned.

At Sunderland Area Parent Support (SAPS) we have a Therapeutic Writing Group, originally set up for the parents and carers as a means to release their pent up feelings.

As I said in the foreword for the first booklet, it has been a real privilege to be the tutor for this group. Building up trust and respect is a vital two-way exercise in a situation where hidden emotions are being released, sometimes for the first time. However our group grows from strength to strength. Watching the parents and carers develop the many and varied skills they are achieving is very humbling.

Each person is at a different place on his or her pathway of life but all are united in a joint cause, to invest in a future where self-respect is restored and society demonstrates a better understanding of addiction and the effect of it on families around the world – the pebble in the pond effect!!

I hope you enjoy reading this booklet and perhaps spare a thought for the unimaginable roller coaster ride that had to be undertaken by the parents and carers to get this far.

Barbara Blyth (Tutor)









**Letter to a drug**

**Cannabis**

I can still remember the day you came into my life.

 Going to a bonfire party not a care in the world then seeing my grandson there with his friend stoned out of his mind, eyes red and staggering about. I could not believe my eyes, he said he was hungry so I took him to the fish shop; he wolfed the food down as if he had never been fed before my mind was in a whirl, why was he behaving like this? That was the day you came into my life, the day my life and family was destroyed.

The change happened over night, from a gentle happy boy to this aggressive bully who would kick doors, walls or anything that got in his way. To demanding money so he could buy you Cannabis. I despise you with my very being.

My grandson was the world to me, now I’m so angry with him I lose my temper continuously, everything is so strained. It is like coping with a stranger in my home. My family won’t come to my home anymore because of his behaviour. Through trying to help my grandson I’ve lost my other two grandchildren.

You are harmful, destructive and a destroyer of family’s heart and soul.

I wish I’d never heard your name.

**To alcohol**

**It has spoilt my life**

This is a letter to Alcohol.

I want to tell you how you have destroyed my life since my husband started drinking.

My family life has gone down the drain.

You have split my family apart.

Every day is like living in a nightmare in which I cannot wake up or escape from.

**A Note from Babs**

Writing these letters proved to be a very stressful and challenging time for the parents and carers. Facing your demons is no easy task so I would ask the reader to acknowledge the strength of character shown by all those who contributed to both Chapter 1 and Chapter2.

Thank you.

***Letter to a family member***

The day you were born I could not have been so happy.

My first grandchild what a fantastic day, we went everywhere together, where ever I was so were you.

When your mam got a house it took a month to convince you to live there. I picked you up every day from school to take you home and stayed with you till you were in bed.

At 13 years old you tried cannabis and drink for the first time. The change in you was unbelievable, I could tell straight away just by looking at your eyes that you had used cannabis. Your appearance started to change.

Cannabis was your best friend along with lager and cider. This person came out of you and this person I didn’t like!

My love for you was still there but I didn’t like the person you were becoming. You started getting in trouble with the police and getting violent with your mother, the cannabis started to affect your mind and you became forgetful.

You changed from a lovely lad, a lad I was so proud of to someone that if you were not related to me i don’t think i would want to know you.



**A Note from Babs**

A Carer’s role in society is often clouded by stigma, isolation and criticism.

In this chapter there is a variety of carers’ work to look at, giving an insight into the mental and physical strain felt by the carer as they struggle to deal with the personal heartache of watching a loved one falling into the world of drugs and alcohol. At the same time they become targeted by members of the public (sometimes even family members), who speak out of ignorance and chose to criticise the carers, apportioning blame and in turn, committing the carers to a world of isolation.

After witnessing the profound affect that stigma, isolation and criticism have on the carers, I can only say ‘shame on those who believe that they have the right to sit in judgement’! Not one human being can say for certain that they will **never** be affected by the evil spread by drugs and alcohol!



Acknowledgements

Living with addiction is one of the hardest things a person can do and yet it is done every day because of one of the simplest and purest reasons there are; **love,** whether it is a child, a sibling, a parent, or a spouse.

Sunderland Area Parent Support (SAPS) is for families or loved ones of those struggling with addiction, the families and loved ones of the addict can often find themselves feeling overwhelmed or unsure how to cope with the emotions that they are feeling, and this is a perfectly natural process.

Creative Writing therapy has helped the parents attending SAPS understand the emotions they are experiencing when living with addiction.

Once Again the parents attending SAPS Family support have gone far and beyond their expectations, in once more producing a fantastic piece of work.

I would like this opportunity to say to parents/carers of SAPS, well done!

Susan Leigh

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