



Children of Alcoholics

Growing up as a child of an alcoholic can be challenging, terrifying, miserable and lonesome. Often times the child blames themselves even though the parent may have been abusing before they were born. They will constantly worry about their parents and feel embarrassed to bring friends home or ask for help. The parent gives them mixed signals of love and hate and does not rely on a regular schedule for meals or sleeping. Later in life the child may not be able to have close relationships, become very angry with the world or become depressed. The child may try to keep this situation a secret, but friends, teachers, relatives and other adults need to be vigilant for warning signs.

Symptoms

- Poor performance or failure in school
- Lack of friends or withdrawal from peers
- Defiant and careless behavior
- Repeated complaints of physical pain, i.e. stomach and headaches
- Aggression toward adults or other children
- Depression
- Excessive risk taking
- Preoccupation with death, dying or suicide
- Drugs/alcohol use

Statistics

- Research has shown that there is a genetic link, especially between mothers who are alcoholic and their children. The probability of a child becoming an alcoholic also increases because they witness the events.
- Over 6 million children under 18 live in households with at least one alcoholic parent.
- Several studies indicate that children who were raised in homes where their parent was an alcoholic, report more instances of depression and anxiety and have a greater amount of stress than do children from non-alcoholic families.

Tips

- It is important for the child to get help and support
- Talk to the child about their feelings and life at home
- Children often benefit from educational programs and help groups
- Help the child learn positive ways to cope and resources for help

ADAMH is your community safety net. If you or someone you love needs help call 276-CARE, the front door to the ADAMH system of care.