

Who is Responsible?

Helping, Fixing, Saving, Rescuing

The chaos of addiction is often engulfing and becomes a family issue, not just an individual issue. The biggest concern is family feeling responsible for others and their thoughts, feelings, needs, wants, actions and outcomes.

Common phrases thrown around by the rescuing partner, parent or sibling include: helping, fixing, saving, stopping them from killing themselves.

When living with someone who has an addiction issue, the drug itself becomes a focus of the relationship for all parties involved. There is a tendency for the family to put their needs at a lower priority than the substance user and become excessively preoccupied with the needs of others.

Does this sound like your relationship?

- Responsibilities creating feelings of anxiety, dread, sadness and heaviness
- Becoming overly involved in the substance user's issues and relationships with others
- Regularly solving their problems, even when asked not to
- Policing observation of the substance user such as: checking if they are asleep; ringing every hour to see if they are using; daily reminders of things to do
- Living with high levels of stress and having physical signs of stress
- Intimacy and relationship problems
- Difficulty in keeping boundaries
- Feeling compelled to solve their problems
- Trying to take care of other's feelings
- You may have heard the term 'Co-Dependency': this is it

What can I do about it?

- ✓ Firstly, recognise there is a problem. Burying your head in the sand will not stop the chaos, the addiction or improve your relationships.
- ✓ Identify what needs of yours are being met by the co-dependent interaction
- ✓ Make a list of what you want out of the relationship
- ✓ Relationships should never have abuse in them. Do not become violent to get your needs met
- ✓ Reflect on your relationships and interactions with others. Identify when you have been compromised, backed into a corner, forced into a situation or feel responsible for others
- ✓ Be aware of your own substance use
- ✓ Identify your communication style and how it impacts on others; and how their style impacts on yours
- ✓ Attend an assertiveness training course

Need to talk to someone? Contact the EDAS Family Program

- ✓ Seek out counselling for yourself first and consider family or relationship counselling
- ✓ Develop appropriate boundaries, coping strategies and improve communication skills
- ✓ Join a peer support group and/or talk with others about strategies they have in dealing with the substance user
- ✓ Attend a First Response forum for information, resource kits and discussion

Make a referral to Eastern Drug and Alcohol Service

EDAS provides free, confidential counselling to adults, young people and families and who live, work or study in the Eastern Metropolitan Region. Phone our duty worker on the number below to make a referral, or to arrange to speak with an EDAS Family Counsellor in your area for more information or assistance.

1300 650 705

