

Family Issues

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Help! I think my family member is using drugs, I don't know what to do.

This must be very difficult for you. We can offer you support in a number of different ways including counselling, information sessions and support groups. EDAS offers a range of ways for families of alcohol & drug users. If you would like to speak to someone in confidence please phone **1300 650 705** and you will be able to be referred to a family worker who will contact you to chat and arrange a convenient time to meet up.

Where can my family member get help with his/her drinking/drug problem?

EDAS offers counselling for people experiencing difficulties with drinking or using drugs. An EDAS counsellor will be able to talk through options with the person about the range of services on offer. However it is important that the person using substances refers his or herself to EDAS, - referring someone without their knowledge may lead them to become angry and resentful and trigger more problems within the family.

He doesn't think he has a problem; how can I make him see he needs help?

The simple but difficult truth is that you can't. We are responsible for our own thoughts, feelings and actions and no-one can force someone else to change his/her behaviour. However, the family support worker at EDAS will be able to discuss with you how you might be able to make simple changes in how you deal with your family member. This may lead to him/her recognising there is a problem and how it's affecting other people.

How do I stop my family member using drugs?

See above! You cannot stop a person using if they really don't want to. But do not despair, there are strategies you can adopt that will help you do all you can to support someone effectively and reduce the feeling of helplessness that many people feel. If you ring EDAS on 1300 650 705 you can request that a family support worker call you to discuss this.

EDAS Family Program can help. To discuss your options Ph: 1300 650 705.

I'm worried about how aggressive he/she becomes when (s)he's on drugs. I am often scared he/she will hurt me.

This is something you need to take very seriously. Your personal safety and that of others is extremely important and if there is any risk of harm to yourself, others in your family or your property it is important that you have a plan of how to handle this as soon as possible. An EDAS family counsellor can talk this through with you.

How can I get him/her to leave home; (s)he won't go?

It can be very difficult to ask a loved one to leave home and at the same time feel worried about their safety and how they will cope on their own. An EDAS family support worker will be able to talk with you about the conflicting emotions you may feel.

If there is a risk to your safety or a risk of harm to you, others in your family or your property there are legitimate ways to protect yourself and it may be helpful to seek legal advice about this. Again, these are options you can discuss with your EDAS family support worker.

I've just found out the police are involved, I'm so embarrassed, our family has never broken the law before. What shall I do?

Lots of families feel distressed when they discover a member has been using and is in trouble. It may be useful to talk through these feelings with a family support worker. It is also worth remembering that the person using may also be shocked and embarrassed at police involvement and sometimes this can be the event that triggers a positive change in their behaviour.



FAMILY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What happens at family counselling?

At your first appointment your counsellor will gather information about your situation. Counselling is very much about you and how it works can differ from family to family. It is well worth you thinking about what you would like from family counselling and considering this before your first session. For some families, this is a confidential space to talk and say things they are unable to say to their loved one; for others it is about gaining information and knowledge about drugs and their effects and what services are available. Other families may require advice about strategies they can employ to support their loved ones.

For further information contact EDAS
1300 650 705

Do I make my family member who is using come to counselling with me?

All family members are welcome at family counselling. However, if the member using does not want to come then it is important that (s)he is not forced to attend. They may feel embarrassed, overwhelmed or unable to speak about how they really feel in front of their family. If that is the case, seeing another counsellor themselves may be a preferred option, or they may not be ready to engage in counselling at the present time.

Why do I need to see someone? I'm not the one with the problem.

That's right – you're not the one with the substance abuse problem but you do have the problem of worrying about someone close to you and that often means your well-being is threatened. EDAS recognises that there can be a huge impact on a family from a loved one's substance use and family members who are not using can benefit from support at what can be an incredibly stressful period in their lives.

Another important thing to know is that research has shown that when families seek help and become involved in searching for solutions, the chances of the person using substances making changes in their behaviour increase considerably.

How can we arrange an appointment with an EDAS family support worker?

Please phone EDAS 1300 650 705 and ask to be referred to the family program. A family support worker will then contact you to arrange a convenient time for an appointment. We offer some after hours appointments and attempt to offer a flexible service to suit families' needs.

EDAS Family Program can help. To discuss your options phone us on 1300 650 705.

This resource was created by the Family Support Program at Eastern Drug & Alcohol Service.

Referring to the 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 a counsellor in your area for more information or assistance.

1300 650 705

