

Title:

Understanding how generalist drug and alcohol workers can help affected family and friends and an introduction to the 5-Step Method

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Background:

In Australia publicly funded AOD treatment services provide reports on the national minimum data set. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare annual report on Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) treatment services in 2023 shows that 18,500 closed treatment episodes were for someone else's AOD use. This is not surprising when reputable authors in the field have estimated conservatively that over 100 million people worldwide are likely to be affected by another person's drug use. It is well recognised that affected family members (AFM) experience significant physical and psychological health issues due to the stressful circumstances associated with the drug use and would benefit from family informed approaches.

Description of Model of Care/Intervention:

The 5-Step Method has been developed and refined over more than a decade with positive results. Follow up studies conducted with AFM twelve months after participating in the 5-Step Method also show improvements in health, coping, self-care and family relationships.

Effectiveness/Acceptability/Implementation:

The presenters of the workshop contend that many generalist AOD clinicians are at a loss in how to work with AFMs. As a non-pathologising and non-blaming approach the 5-Step Method can inform the practice of generalist AOD clinicians by providing them with a framework for 5 sessions focused on the AFM in their own right.

Conclusion and Next Steps:

This workshop targets generalist AOD clinicians and through small group work will draw out some of the difficulties experienced when working with AFM, introduce the 5 Step Method, provide access to resources and allow practice of step 3 of the 5-Step Method. The workshop will expose participants to a family informed approach that can be implemented when working in a generalist AOD role/service.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

There are no conflicts of interest to declare.