

Navigating the impact of parental addiction on young people: Resilience, wellbeing and breaking intergenerational cycles of trauma

Presenter:

Name: Nikki Butler

Organization: Nikki Butler Consulting & Training

Position: Founder, Consultant & Trainer

Bio:

As a highly qualified professional, Nikki has provided leadership, consulting, and training for over 35 years, including implementing an extensive child protection program within the health context as part of a national strategy. Her expertise lies in equipping services with collaborative trauma-informed responses to increase the wellbeing of young people.

Overview of Workshop:

This workshop draws on my own adolescent experience of parental heroin addiction, as well as professional expertise in working in the health and child protection context. Complexities experienced by young people can include disrupted attachment, emotional instability, inconsistent parenting, neglect, exposure to trauma and cumulative harm, leading to a fractured sense of wellbeing and safety. These adverse experiences increase the risk of poor health and life outcomes, including increased risk of addiction in their own lives.

What is often overlooked is that despite these significant challenges, young people can develop inherent resilience. Their inner strength and wisdom empower them to adapt and thrive amidst adversity. Real-life narratives alongside evidence-based findings provide examples of the ways in which young people develop the ability to flourish in many areas of their lives. This resilience can be nurtured and strengthened through a combination of protective factors at individual, family, and community levels. Factors include being heard and valued; consistent and safe adult support; mental health interventions; developing social-emotional skills; access to community resources; and developing a sense of purpose, meaning and hope.

Trauma-informed approaches which prioritise strengths and possibilities, rather than focusing on deficits, are crucial. Understanding that trauma and resilience can coexist enables us to better support young people as they navigate their experiences. Developing resilience does not erase traumatic and harmful experiences but recognises that young people also have inner strength. Drawing on their inner capacity and building a sense of hope for their future can counter the often deficit-based narratives and expectations of poor outcomes.

Practical insights and strategies designed to support resilience in young people will be explored through interactive discussion. By acknowledging inner strength and facilitating collaboration among families, professionals, and communities, pathways for wellbeing, healing and growth can be paved and cycles of addiction can be disrupted.

Target Audience:

- Community / youth workers
- Health professionals

Learning Objectives:

1. Identify the impact of parental addiction on children and young people, from a trauma-informed perspective.
2. Understand how trauma and resilience co-exist, increasing hope and breaking intergenerational cycles of addiction and trauma.
3. Recognise key factors and strategies that support resilience in young people, countering deficit-based narratives.

Duration of workshop:

- 60 minutes

Will this workshop be co-presented with young people?

- No *(the workshop draws on my lived experience as a young person, integrated with professional expertise and knowledge. There will be a strong focus on the narratives and experiences of young people)*

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

Nikki Butler, Founder of Nikki Butler Consulting & Training, recognises the individual family relationships that form part of her childhood story presented in the workshop. Care will be taken to be respectful of these intersecting relationships and family connections.