

**Title:**

Parents, family culture and family response to drug use

**Introduction:**

My qualitative doctoral research on "Sibling bereavement when the brother or sister dies for a drug related reason" led to investigating the brother or sister's drug use in the broader family context; this was in recognition that each person who engages in drug use has a family, siblings and exists in a multiplicity of relationships.

**Methodology:**

This interpretative study was underpinned by Gadamerian hermeneutics. I conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews with 21 siblings with the aim of understanding their experiences and the meanings attributed to their experiences.

**Key Findings:**

In this presentation I will report on key findings concerned with families and their responses to a family member's drug use. In particular I will focus on, and normalise, without judgement, the inherent parental influence within the family; typically established well before any drug use begins.

**Discussions and conclusions:**

To understand and analyse the intricacies of family life for each participant I used a family systems theory lens. Family life is multilayered with many interwoven functions, rules, positions, responsibilities, relationships, determined by interactions, systems and boundaries within and outside the family, that change in response to events and developmental life stages. From a family perspective, individual experiences are understood and explained in the context of interpersonal relationships, and interpersonal relationships are shaped and organised by all aspects of family culture. Each family is unique. I will draw on the participants lived experiences, context and quotes to illuminate the nuanced responses to a family member's drug use, with emphasis on convergence of parental influence, stigma, stress, conflict that emerge by deploying various coping strategies. My research, together with other emerging research, shows how family members affected by another person's drug use would benefit from interventions in their own right to support them.