

## Submission No: 38

Supp to Sub:

AUTHORISED:

9/5/07

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19/3/07

### Submission to the committee of inquiry to the impact of illicit drug use on families.

The Secretary of the committee,

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am the Parent of a young adult who has, from the legal age to consume alcohol, abused this socially acceptable practice. By this I mean that this adult consistently and frequently abuses alcohol, and from appearances and confessions to me has had considerable experience with party drugs. From these earlier years to now the cost has been considerable. There is not just the cost of the drugs but the unseen cost on the family. Trust takes an extensive dive when time after time the lies that are told get caught out. And time after time when getting them back on their feet, the emotional and financial cost of food, clothes, accomodation and so on. The cost of the relationship between parents and/partners, the strain on the relationship of what happens now, do we turn a blind eye? Do we help yet again? What lie is this? How much will it cost financially this time? How much can a family take before giving up.

The list does go on, but the gist of it all is, when is it too much, too late? The family is not supported all that well, there is still the stigma that it is the parents fault. there are countless facilities that can help to a point but these all have waiting lists and most in my opinion appear to work independently of each other.

I believe that laying the blame is not a cure, we all know that abstinence, will not work without proper support for the abuser and the family. In all areas of the illicit and licit use of all drugs the current supply, demand and harm minimization approach is a start in the right direction, let's not forget that with all drug related problems there are underlying problems that cannot be seen, some have mental health issues and drug issues as co-morbidity. In the past drug induced psychosis and mental illness have been dealt with separately which has not worked well, combining them and treating the consumer as a

whole person would go a long way to helping in minimizing the flow on or ripple effect.

How do we deal with this ripple effect. Considering it starts with one abuser who is misunderstood in the first place, uses drugs as an escape then finds that they cannot escape. The family feels this through financial cost, emotional cost, loss of the partnership, possessions, pride and then they too start to deal with depression and require help. They also may find themselves embarking on illicit or licit drugs to escape. As the ripple effect expands, so too the cost of rectification to the family, community and health system. Crime rises, cost in crime prevention, healthcare, insurance claims. Some of this cost and tailchasing could be offset by developing already existing agencies and recognizing that drug use and mental health goes hand in hand, may not always be the case. But by working together with existing policies and further refinement of them with making better use of all existing aid agencies that are available things may get a little better.

Unfortunately there is not one simple cure, I hope this submission is helpful and accepted.

Regards

David Bowman