

Attitudes Questionnaire

Are the following statements *true* or *false*? Some are *true* and *false*.

1. Addiction 'runs' in families.
2. Children who are impacted by parental substance misuse are at greater risk of developing an addiction themselves.
3. A Heroin user is more likely to neglect/have difficulties parenting than a parent who misuses alcohol.
4. Parents/Family cause of adolescent substance misuse.
5. Substance misuse is not a family problem but a problem that 'lies in' the individual who uses
6. 'Early intervention' in a family and young person's life can reduce the likelihood of a child developing substance misuse issues.
7. People who have issues with substance misuse can be good parents
8. Family members of a drug/alcohol user never want to engage in treatment or support programmes
9. Practitioners who talk with their adult clients about child welfare (where there is a child) will damage their relationship with their client.
10. Siblings of substance misusers are not affected because the impact is not as 'direct'.

Case Example

Robert (47) and his ex-wife Julie (40) have 3 children together – Sarah, 16, Geoff, 14 and Jane, 8. Robert works as a skilled factory worker, and Julie worked in a nursery school for a period but stopped working after Geoff was born.

Jane has just been admitted to residential treatment for alcohol misuse; this followed after Julie took overdose of sleeping tablets, and a short admission to hospital.

Sarah (16) --- Sarah is completing GCSE year at a grammar school and is a good student. She has few friends and spends most of her time at home.

Geoff (14) – Currently suspended from Secondary School and may be transferring to an AEP (alternative education placement). Geoff drinks and smokes Cannabis 3-4 times a week. Geoff recently received a warning from police for anti-social behaviour.

Jane (8) – Jane has a mild learning difficulty. She enjoys school and has positive relationships with her teachers. Her primary school are aware of her situation at home and are supportive of her needs. She is close to her Dad and her older sister, Sarah.

History

Julie has suffered from symptoms of anxiety and depression since she was a teenager. She believes that these symptoms are related to physical abuse she suffered from her step-dad when she was a young girl. Julie would say that she 'always enjoyed a drink.' Julie's drinking increased significantly after the birth of Geoff. Julie was diagnosed with post-natal depression at this time. From this time, Julie's drinking continued to increase, and she also began to use Cannabis and Cocaine recreationally when she was out with friends. Robert often joined Julie in recreational drug use.

When Geoff was 3 and Sarah 5, Robert came home from work one evening to find Julie passed out drunk on the sofa. He was shocked to see that the children were not being minded and that they had not been changed or been given dinner. After this incident, Julie began to attend counselling at a local addiction team with the support of Robert. Robert reduced his work hours to support Julie and help care for the children.

Julie found counselling helpful and reduced her drinking significantly. She continued to drink and use drugs recreationally when she was out with friends.

A few months before Jane was born, the factory where Robert worked closed down and he was made redundant. When Jane was born, Julie again struggled with post-natal depression. Julie's drinking began to increase again at this time, and continued to increase to the stage where she was drinking heavily for more than half of the week. She also began to use cannabis and, cocaine when it was available, when she drank. Robert 'stepped in' during these years to care for the kids, as did Julie's mom who was aware of the situation.

Robert eventually found a new job and he Robert and Julie separated when Jane was about 4. Around this time, Robert began dating another woman, Rita. Robert and Rita married about 3 years ago. Jane and Geoff have had difficulty accepting Rita. Julie and Robert find it difficult to communicate on many matters.

During the last 3-4 years, Julie has been in and out of counselling and had one stay in a residential treatment unit 2 years ago. During Julie's time in treatment, the 3 children went to live with Robert and Rita, and returned to their mom when she returned home. Since this time, Robert has tried to see the children regularly, and has a good relationship with Jane in particular. She would often spend weekends with him and Rita. However, Geoff's relationship with his Dad is difficult, and Geoff has said that he blames his Dad for his mom's alcohol issues. Often, Robert is not always aware when Julie is unwell and drinking too much; Sarah would take care of the house and Jane when her mom is drinking. However, Robert tries to 'step-in' and care for the kids when things get out of hand.

The last 6 months has been a particularly difficult time for Julie and the children, culminating in a drinking binge that lasted several days and overdose of sleeping tablets by Julie. She now talks about wanting to 'confront her demons' and has entered a residential treatment unit.

Case Vignettes

Vignette 1

Jessica, a 16 year old GCSE student often goes out with her mates on the weekend, usually on Friday nights only. She usually drinks 1-2 small bottles of WKD, except on special occasions, she may drink a little more. She has good friends who generally look out for each other. She never gets into trouble and is usually home by 11:30- 12pm or gets picked up by her parents when she contacts them. When Jessica has a lot of homework or an exam, she usually makes the decision not to go out and stays home to revise.

Vignette 2

Johnny is a 16 year old young man who was recently expelled from school for aggressive behaviour and smoking weed in school. He has been smoking weed, almost every day for more than 1 year and has been hanging out with a group of young people who has been getting in to trouble with police. He drinks heavily, about 4-5 pints of lager and a few spirits per sitting, at least 3-4 times per week. He has got in to fights after a few drinks and was charged with driving while drunk and drunken and disorderly behaviour. He has stolen from home and outside and there are major strains in relationship with family members. He is due to attend his first appointment with the local Youth offending Team.

Vignette 3

Lauren is a 16 year only girl who is currently not in school or training. She was prescribed anti-depressants by her GP due to her low mood, but says that they don't work. Recently she had an overdose and ended up in A&E and was seen by the CAIT team. She drinks 2-3 times a week on her own or with friends. She can drink about ½ a bottle of vodka in one session and also smokes weed when she can get it. She says that she drinks because of her low mood or has flashback about past abuse from her step-father. She told you in your last meeting that "I can block things out from my mind when on am off my face. I know it isn't good for me, but nothing else has helped me so far."

Vignette 4

Gary, a 15 year old student goes out with his mates over the weekend, usually Fridays and Saturdays, and at times on Sunday nights as well. He drinks on

average 4-5 pints of a strong lager in one sitting. On a couple of occasions in the last few months, Gary ended up in A&E in an intoxicated state. On occasion he has tried smoking weed and 1 time he took an ecstasy pill. Gary hangs around with a pretty good group of kids who do not get in trouble at school or in the community. He is doing okay at school and his attendance is good. His parents are aware of his use and would like him to cut down and focus more on school as they know he has the ability to do better. He is keen to cut down for the sake of his parents, but struggles to say no to his mates when they invite him out.

Vignette 5

Jim, a 14 year old boy, smoked weed when he was at a friend's house one afternoon after school. He felt weird, very giggly and talkative, but was able to return home on time to have dinner with his family and do his homework. Jim learned the next day that one of the boys he smoked with had become very paranoid and accused friends of trying to harm him. He was not able to return home alone and his parents had to be contacted to help him. Jim was very concerned about the above, and is not sure whether he wants to try weed again.

Vignette 6

Paula is a 17 year old looked after child living in a residential home run by the local authority. Her mother has a history of intravenous drug use and dad is in jail for abusing her older sister. She has been using a number of drugs including cannabis, alcohol, cocaine, ketamine and heroin from the age of 12- 13 years and has been using heroin daily over the past one year. She uses alcohol and ketamine from time to time, but heroin is her favourite drug, though she has never injected it. She has tried to cut down a number of times, but failed to do so in account of severe withdrawal symptoms. She shows features suggestive of PTSD and depression, and has been engaged in self cutting on a regular basis for the past few years. However she failed to engage with CAMHS and the frequent changes to the care placements contributed to the above. She engages in fleeting relationships and has failed to hold down any jobs or educational placements. She feels hopeless

Child Development

	0-4	5-11	Teenage Years
Health			
Education/Cognitive Ability			
Emotional & Behavioural Development			
Identity and Social Presentation			
Family and Social Relationships			
Self-Care Skills			