

BRIDGING THE DIVIDE

FAMILIES
AFFECTED
BY DRUGS



‘Bridging the Divide’ provides support services to families with members accessing treatment services

The NGO Treatment Grant is funded by:



Australian Government

Department of Health and Ageing

Reconnecting Families by Recreating Community

A community development approach to engaging families and support people in drug and alcohol treatment and counselling service delivery.

'Evidence exists that family support is a key element in successful treatment outcomes'

Orford J. (1994) Empowering family and friends: a new approach to the secondary prevention of addiction. Drug Alcohol Review 1994; (13)



FAMILIES - a definition

Do not need to be “blood relatives”

- Nuclear family
- Extended family members
- Blended families
- Single parent families
- Non-parental primary carers
- Partners
- Friends
- Support people

“Anyone who cares...”

FAMILIES EFFECTED BY DRUG & ALCOHOL ISSUES

1. Engaged

- active - motivated - educated - resourced
- tend to be white Anglo-Saxon backgrounds

2. Engaged but disadvantaged by identified barriers

- active and motivated but don't know how to
- cultural, language, literacy barriers

3. Disengaged

- uninvolved - burnt out- fearful of services
- generational drug and alcohol use (in some cases)
- families of mandated clients

“Some do, some want to, some don't...”



STAGES OF CHANGE – DRUG USER

- by Prochaska & Di Clemente (1986)



CYCLE OF CHANGE FOR FAMILIES

DENIAL – DON'T WANT TO...

- Can't happen in our family
- Hearing what we want to hear
- No knowledge of drugs
- Thinking its over



EMOTIONS – LOTS OF IT!

- Reactive & unmanaged
- Anger! Masking others
- Shame/stigma, Guilt, Grief
- Blame



control

CONTROL – FIX IT...NOW

Rigid, ultimatums, 'my way' vs Rescue, Collusion, Over Involved

- Judgemental
- Distrust
- Poor Boundaries
- Expectations
- Agendas
- Masks – brave face



CHAOS – What do we do...

- Feeling useless/hopeless
- Not sure what to do
- No support or respite
- Powerless/Panic



The Different Drum: Community Making and Peace

M. Scott Peck M.D.

Publisher: Touchstone Book by Simon & Schuster Inc. New York 1987

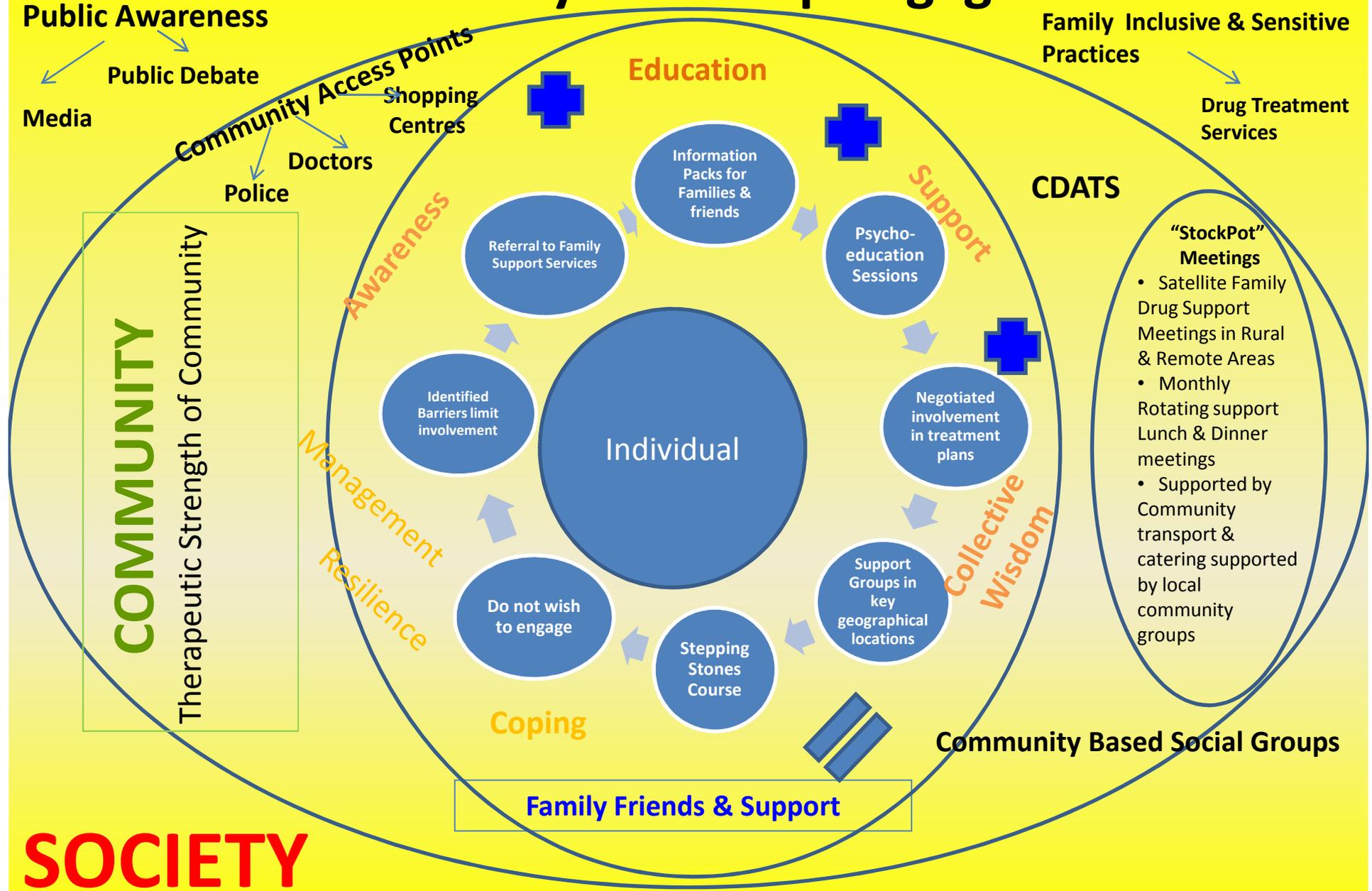
Chapter 3: The True Meaning of Community - A Safe Place, pp. 67 – 68.

It is no accident that I relearned “the lost art of crying” at the age of thirty-six while I was in a true community setting. Despite this relearning, my early training in rugged individualism was sufficiently effective that even today I can cry in public only when I am in a safe place. One of my joys, whenever I return to community, is that the “gift of tears” is returned to me. I am not alone. Once a group has achieved community, the single most common thing members express is: “I feel safe here.”

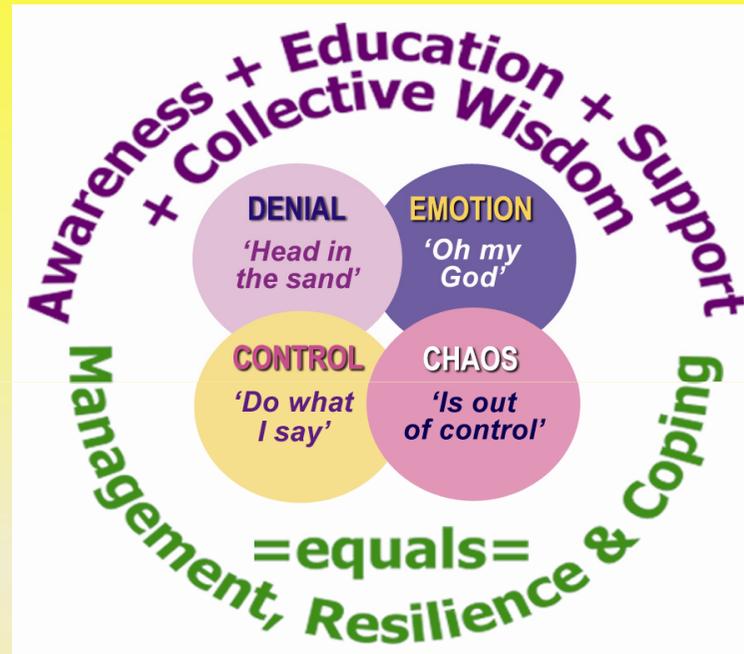
It is a rare feeling. Almost all of us have spent nearly all of our lives feelings only partially safe, if at all. Seldom, if ever, have we felt completely free to be ourselves. Seldom, if ever, in any kind of group, have we felt wholly accepted and acceptable. Consequently, virtually everyone enters a new group situation with his or her guard up. That guard goes very deep. Even if a conscious attempt is made to be open and vulnerable, there will still be ways in which unconscious defences remain strong. Moreover, an initial admission of vulnerability is so likely to be met with fear, hostility or simplistic attempts to heal or convert that all but the most courageous will retreat behind their walls.

There is no such thing as instant community under ordinary circumstances. It takes a great deal of work for a group of strangers to achieve the safety of true community. Once they succeed, however, it is as if the floodgates were opened. As soon as it is safe to speak one's heart, as soon as most people in the group know they will be listened to and accepted for themselves, years and years of pent-up frustration and hurt and guilt and grief come pouring out. And pouring out ever faster. Vulnerability in community snowballs. Once its members become vulnerable and find themselves being valued and appreciated, they become more and more vulnerable. The walls come tumbling down. And as they tumble, as the love and acceptance escalates, as the mutual intimacy multiples; true healing and converting begins.

Model of Family & Kinship Engagement

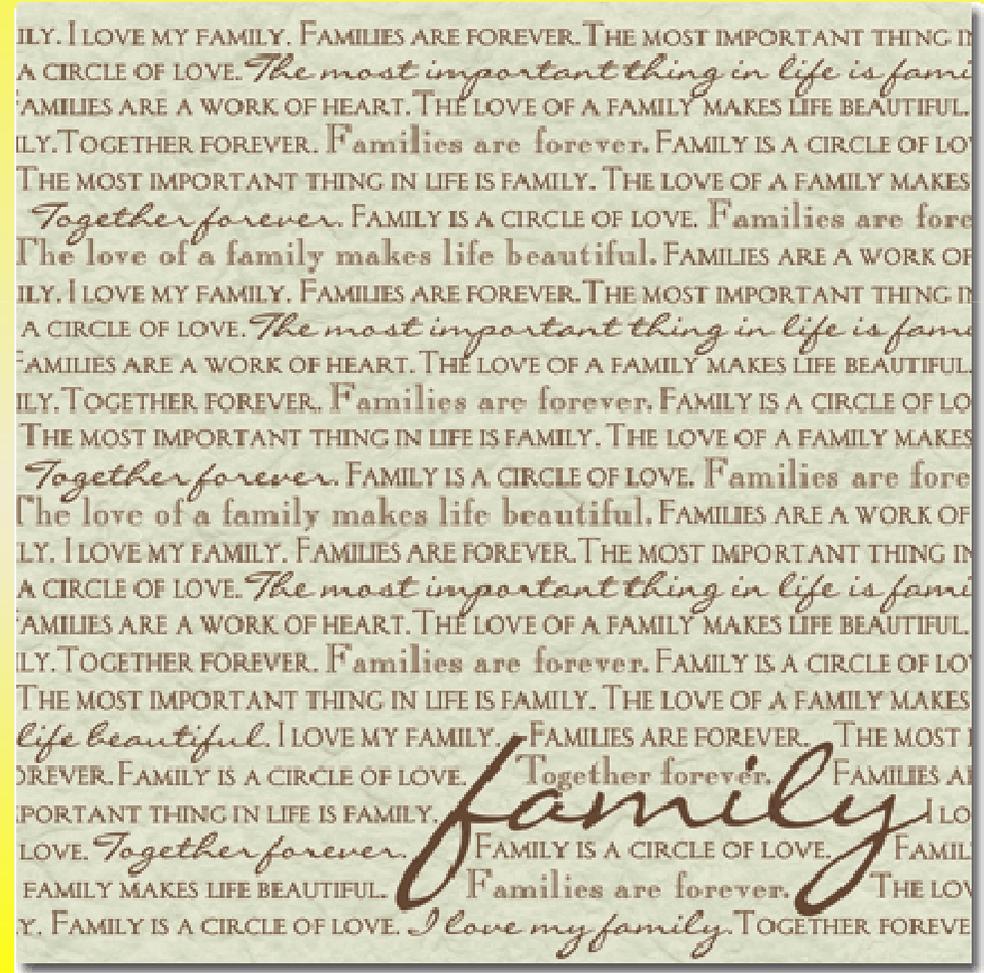


**Awareness + Education + Support + Collective Wisdom =
Management, Resilience & Coping**



**Community Development Approach to
Engaging Families and Support People in
Treatment & Counselling**

- **Redefine our definition of what we classify as “family”.**



- **Provide a range of opportunities for engagement of families, friends & support people.**

E.g. Family information brochures/packs which address specific issues relating to treatment and recovery such as tips for supporting a person on a contact visit, explanation of rules and utilising collective wisdom approach of client & family.

Community information sessions held either on site, or in neutral venues (non drug and alcohol) such as libraries, community centres just as community organisations.



- **Sustainability - setting up services, engaging the community and then closing or folding services does more damage than good.**



Less reliance on personality driven services while recognising the importance of the personal relationship focus needs to be on a collective approach often requiring a partnership of both service providers, volunteers and community members.

- **Consultation with service users (clients, residents, students) & their families and support people – provide opportunities for clients and families to share their needs and tell their “stories”.**
 - **Narrative Project: “From this Side: Personal Experiences of Drug & Alcohol Treatment and Recovery”.**

- **Break the mystique of drug treatment, counselling, drug & alcohol support services by holding family and support people open days, explanation of “rehab speak” – “recovery”, what is 12-step.**



- **Principles of therapeutic community model (peer support & modelling) and apply these in the way we work with communities and setting up family support.**

- **Creating a culture in our community where we can talk about “life stuff”.**

Why do we have to wait until there is a crisis or it all becomes too unbearable to reach out??????



- **Reframing the support-seeking experience & challenge or provide an opportunity to reframe the “problem focused” approach to drug and alcohol in families. Particularly important for families and support groups where there are barriers & challenges.**
 - **Only families who are “dysfunctional”, “bad” have drug and alcohol problems and need support, counselling and have family members in treatment.**
 - **Focus on family wellbeing/family health and keeping families connected (communication, valuing time together)**
 - **Programs and information for families and friends that recognises the importance and therapeutic value of positive relationships with self and others.**

Inspired by Building Healthy Communities Strategy developed by Ngangganawili Aboriginal Health Service (Western Australia). This is a 5 year (2008 – 2012) strategic plan partnership between community government & private sector stakeholders.



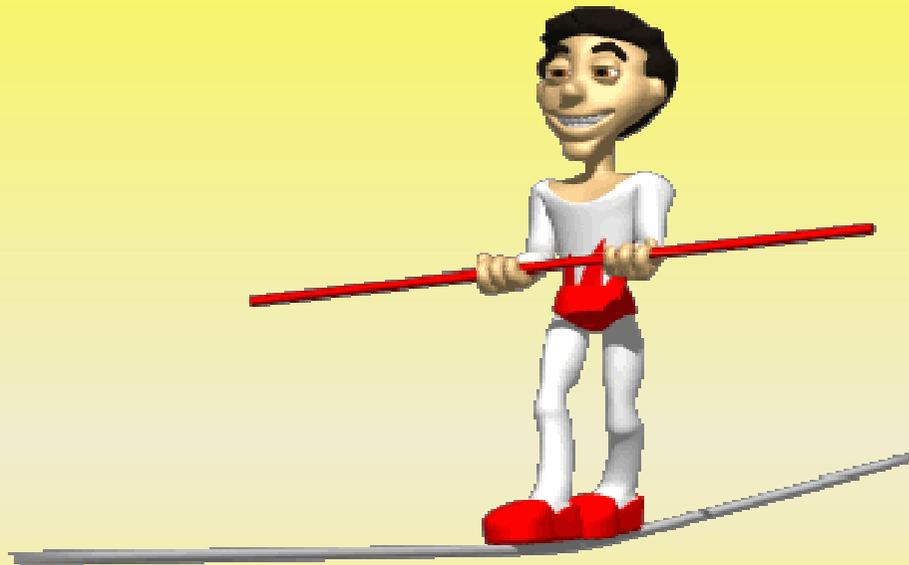
Family Drug Support Services

- 24 hour/7 days a week phone support line 1300 368 186
- Support groups in a variety of areas in NSW, ACT, VIC
- Annual Membership of \$30 which provides a bi-monthly newsletter and a copy of the 'Guide to Coping';
a comprehensive family handbook.
- Stepping Stones to Success (9 week or 2 full weekend course for families and friends)
- Bereavement counselling
- Volunteer Training

BRIDGING THE DIVIDE - 'OUR SERVICES'

- In service training and consultation sessions with workshops to explore service capacity to implement and compliment family sensitive practices.
- Dedicated 1300 884 186 Mon - Wed 9 - 4.30pm phone support service for services providers and for families and friends of people in treatment, counselling, rehabilitation.
- Support group meetings and establishment of support meeting where sustainable.
- Stepping Stones to Success courses.
- Development of Family & Community psycho-education sessions as a way to engage and provide information to families.
- Area specific Family & Kinship Sensitive and Inclusive Practice Interagency Group (meet 3 -4 times over the course of the project) to collectively share resources and development experiences in this area.
- Brief intervention family contact, support and referral (as appropriate).

Walking the tightrope: Discovering someone you care about is having problems with drugs & alcohol



http://www.woodenstilts.co.uk/images/animations/tightrope_walker_pole_a_hc.gif

Stepping Forward: Understanding Drug Issues

Drug & Alcohol Community Education Sessions

Each session is designed to run for 1 & ½ hours and are to be run as stand alone sessions or as a series of four.

A Road-Map to Drugs and Alcohol

- A Simple Guide to Understanding Drugs
- Drug and Alcohol Use in Our Communities

Step Back From The Edge

- Walking the Tightrope: Discovering Drug Use in The Family
- Waving Not Drowning: Tips for Coping

Making Sense of It All!

- Stages that drug users go through.
- Families go through stages too!

Treatment & Recovery: What does it all mean?

- Navigating the World of Drug Treatment & Recovery
- Tips to Supporting Someone in Treatment (Rehabilitation) - Presented by Treatment Service (*insert the name of service*)



Families and
Treatment
Helpline
1300 884 186



Australian Government
Department of Health and Ageing

My Contact Details

Antonia Ravesi

Project Officer

Bridging the Divide Project

0400 113 422

antonia@fds.ngo.org.au

Family Drug Support office: 02 47 82 9222