

Alcohol Themes

- Some Ways Living with Alcohol Dependent Parents Can Impact on Children's Development...



Haringey Resilience Wheel

BELONGING

- Lack of parental presence & responsiveness can lead to insecure attachments & poor relationships at school & in the community
- The need to keep the drinking a secret can prevent children bringing friends home, reciprocating with sleep overs, having/attending parties
- Parent exclusion from parent networks diminishes social inclusion
- The impact of poor social networks increases over time & further undermines the development of social skills
- Poor family relationships & social isolation can lead to a limited sense of belonging at home, at school & in the community
- A lack of belonging can lead to children seeking connections in less safe & healthy ways & could increase risk of gang affiliation

ACHIEVING

- Child focuses on parent's drinking rather than their own achievement
- Child's sense of achievement often tied to stopping their parent drinking
- The need to keep secrets about home from others means that children learn: to keep things separate; that it is unsafe to bring things together or split things up. Can cause an 'emotional blocks' in maths tasks
- Anticipation of the drinking and what they can return home to, can impact on behaviour and concentration late afternoon, Fridays, lead up to holidays
- Transition into school and recovering from drinking requires recovery time – mornings, Mondays, following holidays
- Children are often over-achievers or, conversely, could lack confidence

EMPOWERMENT

Lack of parental presence & alcohol being the focus of everything means that generally:

AGENCY	- Child is not listened to or consulted - Child has no control over parental drinking or the chaos that results
AUTONOMY	- Child may not have the freedom to make positive connections in the community - Child having the freedom to make adult decisions & take responsibility for the home can impact on their response to authority & could lead to school exclusion
INTER-DEPENDENCE	- Adult not responding or providing co-regulation results in children with poor communication skills
SELF-EFFICACY	- Child not sure they can cope as life is unpredictable
SENSE OF SELF	- Adult unable to hold child in mind

PURPOSE

- Child's sense of purpose can change dependent on whether parents are drinking or in treatment - as drinking is a relapsable condition

When parent is drinking:

- Child is responsible for cooking washing & looking after siblings & parent

This becomes child's purpose

When parent stops drinking:

- Parent may resume parenting
- Child no longer required to take responsibility for home, siblings & parent

What is their purpose now?

- When parent relapses child resumes responsibility for running the home & caring for siblings & the parent
- Child is in constant transition between these states



SAFETY

- Anticipation of what parent they are coming home to creates high levels of anxiety & makes home feel unsafe – will parent be...
- happy / fun /angry / sad / depressed / generous / mean
- Unvetted strangers invited into the home with parent unable to protect
- All adults drinking & out of control
- Child hearing noises of adults at night creates anxiety/disrupts sleep
- Child is unable to seek help in crisis
- Child becomes responsible for creating safety - paying bills / maintaining routines / survival tasks
- The need to survive exposes them to risky choices that could lead to criminality – forging signature / stealing money to survive / responding to requests for help from younger siblings

ADVENTURE

- Having freedom to do what they want due to a lack of adult supervision can lead to inappropriate risk taking
- Taking on adult role to problem solve for themselves & their siblings can lead to criminal activity like stealing or forging
- May be drawn to the excitement of gangs and criminality to fulfil their need for high risk
- Living with unpredictability can lead to low levels of confidence leading to risk averse behaviour
- It's hard to be creative when living with uncertainty and low self esteem

What May Help...

Try...

BELONGING

- Having an adult who consistently responds with interest & care
- Identifying reliable & consistent safe adults in the child's family & friend network who can hold them in mind & provide positive relational connections
- Opportunities to have a recognised role in class or within the wider school community to feel valued & connected
- Adults who can help children identify structured clubs/activities in the community & support regular attendance
- Provide opportunities for school to model healthy family routines like eating together, including socialising & collaborative set-up/pack-up
- Support child to regularly host teas or lunches for a group of friends

ACHIEVING

- Being encouraged to focus on their own achievement for themselves
- Opportunities to build models/jigsaws, break them down and re-build them can help children learn that they can bring things together and break them up again and survive
- Creating safety and stability is central to helping children concentrate – they need a safe adult and safe space
- Creating discrete transitions between home and school, outside and inside spaces, one activity to another, including notice of upcoming change can help
- Opportunities to celebrate success with others and share knowledge

EMPOWERMENT

AGENCY	- Knowing that they are not responsible for their parents drinking – that it's somebody else's job to help with that
AUTONOMY	- Knowing that their freedom to live their lives is not dependent on their parents stopping drinking - Understanding age appropriate decisions & actions & what they can influence & what they can't
INTER-DEPENDENCE	- Knowing that healthy relationships are mutually beneficial & that they can be a child with safe adults
SELF-EFFICACY	- Knowing that they have developed skills to cope with life through their lived experience
SENSE OF SELF	- Knowing that their happiness is not dependent on their parent stopping drinking

PURPOSE

- Help child/young person develop a sense of purpose for themselves
- What they would like to do as an adult?
- What are the small steps they need to make to achieve their goals?
- What do they need to focus on to achieve their goals?
- What's important to them?
- What to study at school to achieve goals?
- What strengths would they like to extend, develop at school and in the community?
- How can they contribute to & be valued by their school & community?



Resilience & Wellbeing

SAFETY

Having adults who are safe because they:

- Consistently respond to children with love, interest and care
- 'Hold them in mind' and think about them even when they are not with them, and let them know
- Are consistent, predictable and fair and who always do what they say they are going to do
- Listen to them, give them time to think, and accept them for who they are
- Help them to manage when it gets tough
- Encourage and support them to try something new

Experiencing environments which:

- Create supportive environments with no bullying, sarcasm or shaming
- Do not exclude

ADVENTURE

- Provide opportunities for appropriate adventure
- Provide opportunities for children to step outside their comfort zone
- Provide opportunities to be creative
- Provide opportunities to learn something new – (recipe dish, riding a bike, taking themselves to a new place, learning an instrument).
- Work together on making their good ideas a reality
- Provide opportunities for children and their peers to engage in supervised activities independently.
- Provide an opportunity to both do an outdoor activity together - nature trail, forest park, tree-climbing, treasure hunt.