

# Coping with Substance Abuse at Home

**If you're dealing with substance abuse at home, you aren't alone. About 12% of children have been impacted by the substance abuse of a parent, guardian, or family member.**

When someone you love is dealing with drug and/or alcohol addiction, it can have a huge impact on you. The following are common feelings individuals have when coping with substance abuse at home.

- ▶ embarrassed, sad, and/or angry
- ▶ feeling scared or unsafe at home
- ▶ continuously worrying about a parent or family member's safety and health
- ▶ feeling like you have to be an adult before you are ready
- ▶ having a hard time relaxing or trusting others
- ▶ feeling like you have to hide what's happening at home
- ▶ feeling depressed or anxious
- ▶ thinking that it's somehow your fault, or that it's your responsibility to fix it

**You don't have to deal with the substance abuse of a loved one by yourself. There is help available for you. Keep reading to learn how you can cope with substance abuse at home.**

**Your safety  
is what's most important.**

If you're being physically harmed or endangered in any way, get help. Talk to a counselor or to the police, if needed. You can also reach out to the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 800-799-SAFE. If you or a family member are in immediate danger, call 911.

**In addition to your safety, keep the following in mind.**

**It's not your fault.** Even if you have been blamed for it, know that your family member's substance abuse issues are not your fault. Nothing you did caused their issues to begin, and nothing you do causes them to continue. Also, remember that they have to be the one to stop. Not being able to help them stop is not a failure by you.

**Acknowledge the problem.** Pretending that you don't have negative feelings, or that you don't feel angry, embarrassed, or afraid isn't good for your mental health. Acknowledge that things aren't okay.

**Get support.** You might feel that you need to hide what's going on, or perhaps you've been told not to tell anyone. You might also feel like you have to be strong for your family. *But you need help too.* You need someone to support you. Talk to a counselor or someone you trust, visit [al-anon.org](http://al-anon.org) for information on Alateen support groups and chat meetings, or call their hotline: 1-800-344-2666.

**Break the cycle.** Never turn to substance abuse yourself. Look for healthy ways to cope with your situation and your feelings.