

# HIDDEN HARM



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# AGENDA

Hidden Harm

Identifying Hidden Harm : Drugs and Alcohol.

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Impact it can have on parenting capacity and how to increase protective factors.

Supportive approaches to deal with hidden harm

How to seek help?



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# Hidden Harm

- 250–350,000 dependent children living with parental drug misuse (ACMD, 2003)
- 920,000 living with parental alcohol misuse (Alcohol Concern, 2000)
- Non-opiate use, Alcohol, Prescription & NPS
- Children at risk from neglect (60%), emotional and physical abuse – including Sexual
- Feelings of hurt, rejection, shame, sadness and anger over their parents' drug problems.
- Not limited to children, this can be other members of the family that are also vulnerable (partners of substance misuser/older adults).

## New Estimates

- Around 1 million live with a parent who uses illicit drugs
  - 72,000 children living with an injecting drug user
  - 2.6 million children live with a hazardous drinker
  - 2011 and 2014 parental alcohol misuse was recorded in
- 37% of cases where child seriously hurt or killed

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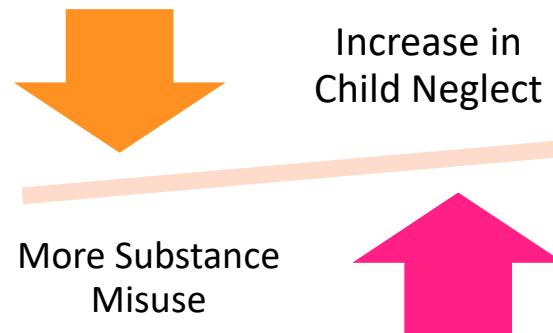
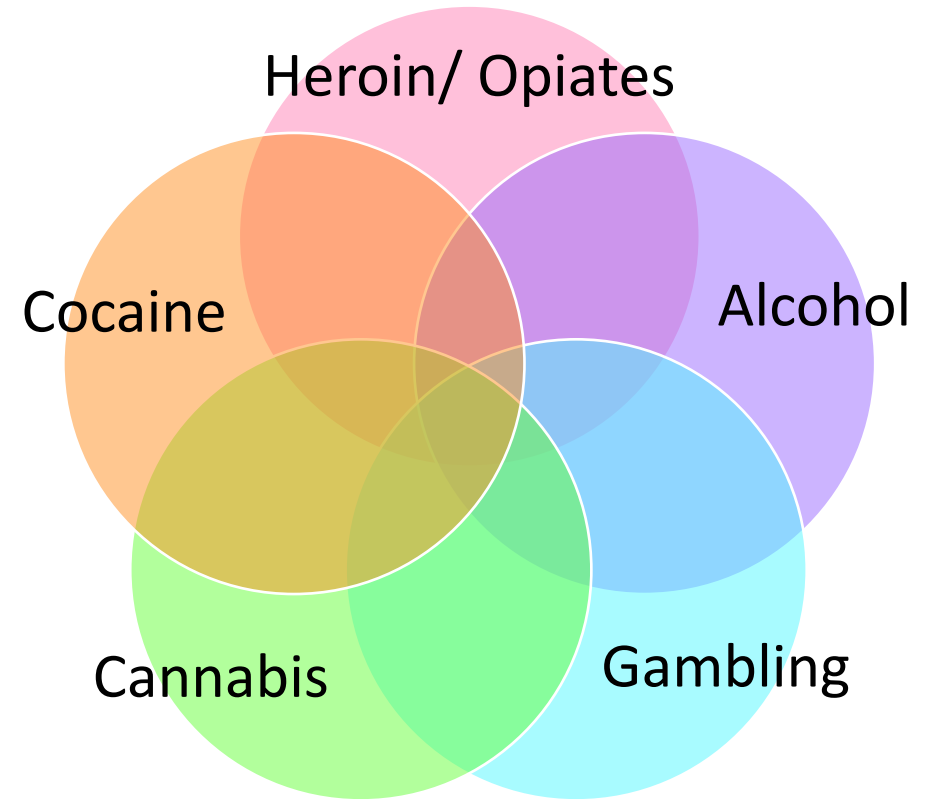
# Identifying Hidden Harm

## Common Scenarios –

- Parents are poly drug / alcohol user's – also use of prescribed medication
- Family not engaging with services, a pattern of not attending appointments
- Parent believes that their drug / alcohol misuse does not affect their children
- Absence of extended family support & irregular Childcare arrangements
- The Home is being used by other drug / alcohol user's, actively using substances in the presence of a child.
- Children witnessing drug use and the dangers associated with the drug using paraphernalia
- US ACE Study – Children experiencing 5 or more adverse episodes may engage in addictive behaviours.

# Hidden Harm

- Harm or abuse that is usually hidden from public view occurring behind closed doors, often not recognised or reported.
- Hidden Harm to children and vulnerable individuals has the likelihood to increase as substance misuse addiction develops



# Hidden Harm

Understanding the impact it can have on parenting capacity.

## On the parent due to Substance misuse

- Poor money management
- Housing issues
- Nutrition
- Personal neglect
- Breakdown in relationships
- Stress/Anxiety/MH Issues

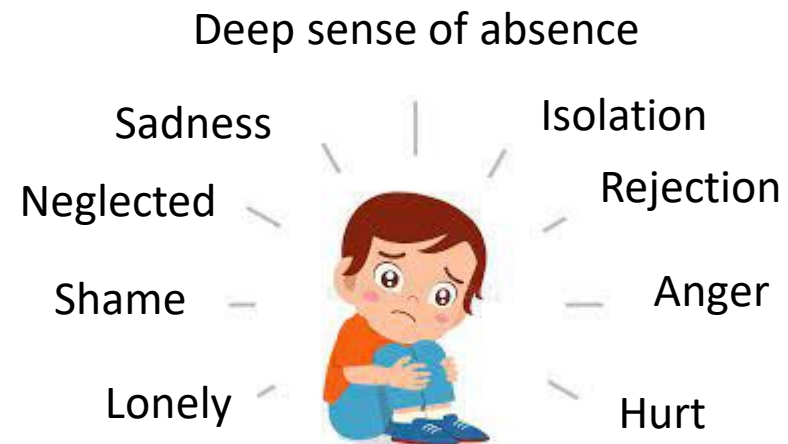
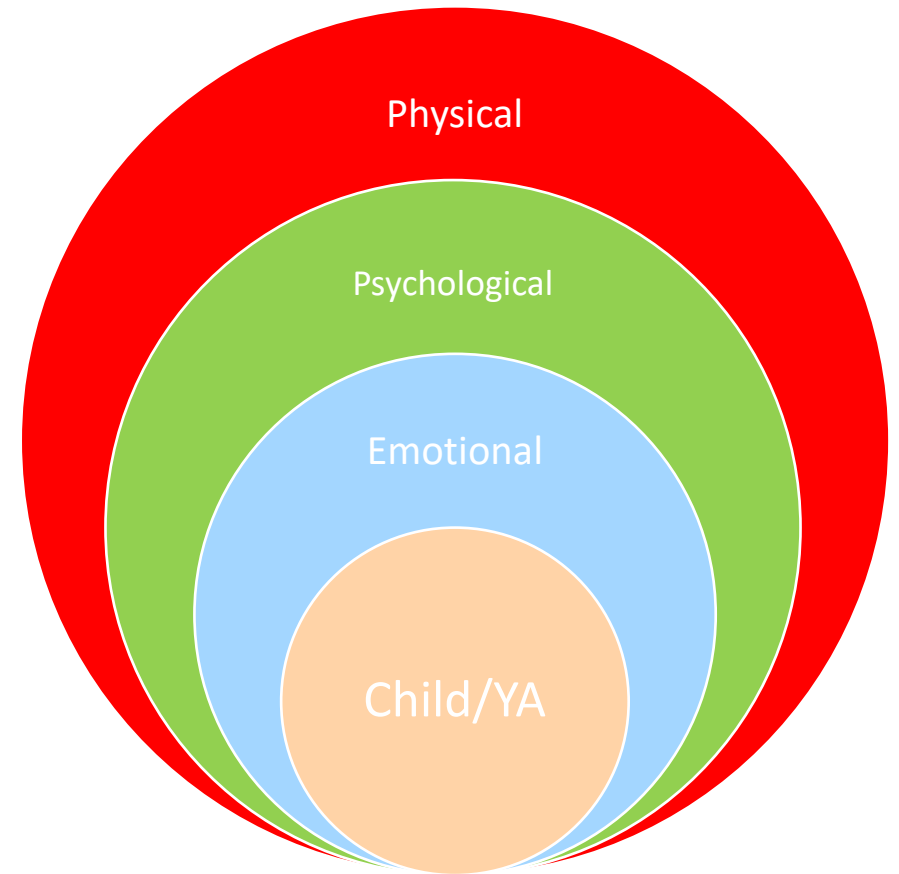
## On the Child

- Housing issues
- Nutrition
- Poor physical health
- School attendance
- Child development
- No access to appropriate additional learning
- Negative social networks
- MH issues



# Hidden Harm

- Distractions with substance misuse can lead to Children and Young Adults not having their needs met from parents and direct carers.



# Hidden Harm

Supportive approaches to deal with hidden harm

## Individual Support

- Trauma informed Model - to work with women and men who have been traumatised.
- Parenting skills training
- Assess Drug and Alcohol support need
- Crisis intervention - to provide safety

## Family Support

- Family systems approach
- Shift towards whole family support
- Service user involvement / friends

## Organisational Support

- Drug services working in collaboration domestic violence services.
- Multi-disciplinary team working between all professionals to ensure correct outcomes are met for the parent to reduce the risk of hidden harm



# Summary



The risk of Hidden Harm is increased when the correct support and guidance is not provided to parents or carers. Hidden Harm can be in the form of emotional and psychological potentially leading to physical harm towards children and vulnerable individuals in the family.

As professionals we need to all be aware of the early signs and symptoms that can increase risk of hidden harm and ensure we signpost individual requiring help into the appropriate services.

The way to get started  
is to quit talking and  
begin doing.

Walt Disney

**THANK YOU**

Sundeep Saundh

**NEWHOPE**

