



Honor Thy Children

Archdiocese of Louisville continuing education for the awareness and prevention of child abuse

ALCOHOLISM HAS A LASTING IMPACT ON CHILDREN

Prevention starts with understanding

CREDIT SHARON MARTIN, LCSW FOR THIS ARTICLE. Most of the adult children of alcoholics who I know, underestimate the effects of being raised in an alcoholic family. Perhaps it's wishful thinking. Perhaps it's denial. More likely it's shame and simply not knowing that adult children of alcoholics (ACOAs), as a group, tend to struggle with a particular set of issues.

If you're an adult child of an alcoholic, you feel different and disconnected. You sense that something is wrong, but you don't know what. It

can be a relief to realize that some of your struggles are common to ACOAs. You don't outgrow the effects of an alcoholic family when you leave home. If you grew up in an alcoholic or addicted family, chances are it had a profound impact on you. Often, the full impact isn't realized until many years later.

The feelings, personality traits, and relationship patterns that you developed to cope with an alcoholic parent, come with you to work, romantic relationships, parenting, and friendships. They show up as anxiety, depression, substance abuse, stress, anger, and relationship problems. The effects of growing up



in an alcoholic family are varied. Many ACOAs are very successful, hard-working, and goal-driven. Some struggle with alcohol or other addictions themselves. Others become codependent. An alcoholic home is chaotic and unpredictable. Children crave and need predictability. Your needs

must be met consistently in order for you to feel safe and develop secure attachments. This didn't happen in your dysfunctional family. Alcoholic families are in "survival mode." Usually everyone is tiptoeing around the alcoholic, trying to keep the peace and avoid a blow up.

Denial is prolific. You really can't understand addiction as a child, so you blame yourself, and feel "crazy" because your experiences didn't line up with what adults were telling you (namely that everything is fine and normal).

Home could be scary. Addicts are often unpredictable, sometimes abusive, and always checked-out emotionally (and sometimes physically). You never knew who would be there or what mood they'd be in when you came home from school. Stress levels were through the roof. There may have

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If you need support or someone to talk to:

- ☺ Prevent Child Abuse Kentucky or Indiana: 800.CHILDREN/800.422.4453 www.pcaky.org www.pcaain.org
- ☺ Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline 800.4.A.CHILD 800.422.4453 www.childhelp.org

Signs of Possible Sexual Abuse

- Unexplained pain, itching, redness or bleeding in the genital area
- Increased nightmares or bedwetting
- Withdrawn behavior
- Angry outbursts/mood swings
- Loss of appetite or difficulty swallowing
- Sudden/unexplained avoidance of certain people or places
- Sexual knowledge, language or behavior that is unusual for the child's age.

HONOR THY CHILDREN TRAINING

Those employed or volunteering with youth must undergo a background check every 5 years as well as attend the "Honor Thy Children Training" that addresses child abuse, how to recognize it and how to report it. See your parish/school Safe Environment Coordinator if you have not sat-

isfied either of these requirements. The "Honor Thy Children" training is a one time requirement and is normally completed within 30 days of beginning service. Each training session lasts 2 hours. The background check MUST be completed BEFORE any service/employment begins.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT COORDINATORS

Some friendly reminders for Safe Environment Coordinators.

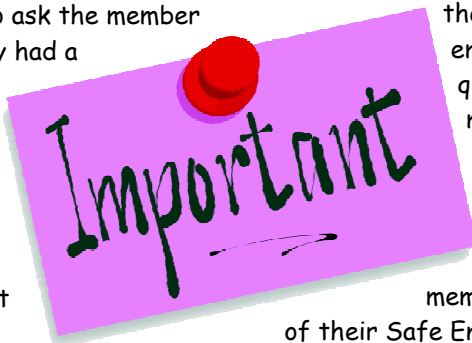
Before submitting a background check, be sure to ask the member if they've already had a

background check submitted via selection.com (this would be August 2014 and later).

If unsure contact Scott Fitzgerald

(fitzgerald@archlou.org) or 502.471.2132 to check the status.

We also no longer accept outside Safe Environment Trainings. Reason being is we have a Code of Conduct specific to the Archdiocese of Louisville that is reviewed in the training and the member ultimately signs off that they understand.



As always if you are filling out the background check form in it's entirety for a member (as opposed to

them doing it via an email link) you are required to have the member sign a release form and you need to maintain this form on file.

Also remind your members to return a copy of their Safe Environment Completion Certificate to you after they complete the Safe Environment training. Should you have any questions or concerns don't hesitate to contact Scott Fitzgerald Coordinator of Safe Environment Services via email (fitzgerald@archlou.org) or by phone 502.471.2132.

NOW IS THE TIME...

For Safe Environment Coordinators working with schools.

As we approach the fall sport season, now is the time to touch base with your athletic directors and ensure your fall sport coaches are up to date with background checks and have attended a Safe Environment Training.

Background checks are to be updated every five years while the Safe Environment Training only

needs to be completed one time. Some best practices have included getting a list of all coaches from the athletic director and verify each coach on the list.

As many parish sports programs merge (especially with football) the school who is hosting the team's practices shall take the lead in ensuring all background checks and Safe Environment Training is complete. Coordination can take some time and

UPCOMING TRAININGS

A current list of trainings is always available at www.archlou.org/safe
All trainings are at 6:30p unless otherwise indicated.

8.3.16

*Holy Trinity (Louisville)
(5:00 pm start)*

8.8.16

St. Gregory (Cox's Creek)

8.10.16

*Assumption High School
(3:00 pm start)*

8.11.16

St. James (E-Town)

8.16.16

Immaculata Classical Academy

8.22.16

St. Dominic (Springfield)

8.25.16

Holy Spirit (Louisville)

Be sure to check archlou.org/safe for a complete list. Dates are subject to change and of course weather delays also effect training dates

with practices ramping up, now is the time to gather that information and remind those who have to complete a Safe Environment Training to get it done.

Should you have ANY questions at anytime or need to verify information fee free to contact Scott Fitzgerald, Coordinator of Safe Environment Services via email (fitzgerald@archlou.org) or phone (502.471.2132).

ALCOHOL (CONT...)

been a lot of overt tension and conflict. Or you might have sensed all the tension just below the surface, like a volcano waiting to erupt.

Growing up in an alcoholic home, you feel insecure and crave acceptance.

The constant lying, manipulation, and harsh parenting makes it hard to trust people. It also leaves you highly sensitive to criticism and conflict. You work hard, always trying to prove your worth and make others happy.

Because as a child life felt out of control and unpredictable, as an adult you try to control everyone and everything that feels out of control (which is a lot). This leads to controlling behaviors in your relationships. You

struggle to express yourself, subconsciously remembering how unsafe it was to speak up in your family.

9 Common struggles for adult children of alcoholics:

Being rigid and inflexible

You have a hard time with transitions and changes. A sudden change of plans or anything that feels out of your control can trigger your anxiety and/or anger. You thrive on routine and predictability. These things help you to feel safe.

Difficulty trusting and being closed off

People have let you down and hurt you. It's natural to close off your heart as a form of self-protection. It's hard to trust people (including yourself). You hold back emotionally and will only

reveal so much of your true self. This limits the amount of intimacy you can have with your partner, and can leave you feeling disconnected.

Shame and loneliness

Shame is the feeling that you're bad or wrong and unworthy of love. There are so many things that alcoholic families don't talk about - to each other and especially to the outside world. These secrets breed shame.

When there are things so awful that they can't be talked about, you feel there is something awful about you and that you'll be judged and cast away. When you feel unworthy, you can't love yourself and you can't let others love you either.

Self-criticism

External messages that you're bad, crazy, and unlovable become internalized. You're incredibly hard on yourself and struggle to forgive or love yourself. During childhood, you came to believe that you're fundamentally flawed, and the cause of the family dysfunction.

Perfectionism

You try to be perfect in order to avoid criticism (both internal and external). This sets you on a treadmill of always having to prove your worth by achieving more and more. But your

achievements aren't satisfying. Perfectionism and low self-esteem force you to set your goals higher and continue to try to prove yourself.

People-pleasing

You have a strong need to be liked and accepted. This again stems from experiencing rejection, blame, neglect, or abuse, and a core feeling of being unlovable and flawed. People-pleasing is also an effort to avoid conflict. Conflict was scary in your family.

Being highly sensitive

You're actually a highly sensitive person, but you've shut down your emotions in order to cope. You're sensitive to criticism, which fuels your people-pleasing. But you're also a highly compassionate and caring person.

Being overly responsible

Out of necessity, you took on some of your parents' responsibilities. These may have been practical (like paying the bills) or emotional (like comforting your siblings when Mom and Dad fought). Now you continue to take responsibility for other people's feelings or for problems that you didn't cause.

Anxiety

ACOA's have high levels of anxiety. Childhood fear and trauma left you in a hyper-vigilant state. You often sense problems when there aren't any. You're on edge, tense, and full of worry. Anxiety keeps you trapped as whenever you try to move away from the other eight traits, it flares up. You may find that you identify with some or all of these traits. You might like to create your own personal list, as well. Healing can start in simply knowing that you aren't alone. Groups like Al-Anon and ACA (Adult Children of Alcoholics) provide free support and recovery.

9 Common Struggles for Adult Children of Alcoholics

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1. BEING RIGID AND INFLEXIBLE
2. DIFFICULTY TRUSTING OR BEING CLOSED OFF
3. SHAME AND LONELINESS
4. SELF-CRITICISM
5. PERFECTIONISM
6. PEOPLE PLEASING
7. BEING HIGHLY SENSITIVE OR REACTIVE
8. BEING OVERLY RESPONSIBLE
9. PRONE TO ANXIETY

From the article "You Don't Outgrow the Effects of an Alcoholic Parent" by Sharon Martin, LCSW
<http://blogs.psychcentral.com/imperfect>

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No child or adult should ever experience abuse by anyone, especially a church minister. We all have the right to be treated with dignity and to expect our church to reflect the goodness of God in all of its dealings.

We hope that this information is helpful to all in our communities who are working to prevent and respond to childhood sexual abuse. Please let us know if you need further assistance or information by calling or emailing our victim assistance coordinator, Ms. Martine Siegel, at 502/636-1044; victimassistance@archlou.org or the Chancery at 502/585-3291.

We must heed God's call to care for the most vulnerable among us and to continue our efforts toward wholeness and health in dealing with sexual abuse.

BACK TO SCHOOL AND EXPERIMENTATION

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse's *Monitoring the Future* study, roughly 30 percent of teenagers between the ages of 12 and 17 will experiment with illicit drugs -

including alcohol, marijuana, cocaine and prescription pills. In fact, teenagers are more likely than adults to engage in risky drug behaviors as a way to impress friends

and express independence. These adolescents are particularly vulnerable as the school year begins, thanks to peer pressure.

The reasons for the surge in drug abuse at the school level are abundant: the increased availability of prescription drugs, a rise in stimulant

drug use among kids with ADHD, a mistaken notion that prescription medications are somehow safer than street drugs, and - likely the most dangerous culprit - peer pressure.



Friends have an increasingly strong influence during the teenage years. Drug-using pals have been known to sway the strongest of teens, convincing them that trying

drugs is "cool." Under the microscope of peer pressure, a teenager's naive experimentation can develop into regular drug use, typically morphing into a strong addiction long before he or she reaches the age of 18.

According to research from the American Academy of Pediatrics

(AAP), parents are the best defense against drug and alcohol use. AAP research also shows that, when parents provide their kids with strong, consistent, and frequent drug-related information, they are less likely to develop issues with drugs and alcohol.

When talking to teens about drug and alcohol use, parents should keep the following tips in mind:

- Be absolutely clear that drug/alcohol use is unacceptable
- Be willing to talk openly about the dangers and results of addiction
- Become an active listener
- Give honest answers and avoid making up what you don't know
- Never react in a way that cuts off future discussions