

News Release ... Tuesday June 22 2004

Families important in recovery from drug problems

“Working with Families’, new guidelines to support the inclusion of family members in alcohol and drug treatment, will be released nationally today by Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre as part of Drug Action Week[®]. Drug Action Week[®], coordinated each year by the Alcohol and other Drugs Council of Australia, is a national week of activities to raise awareness about alcohol and other drug issues.

Professor Margaret Hamilton, Director of Turning Point, says the role of family members is vital in the progress of drug treatment, and that agencies will find the guidelines helpful in developing family inclusive practices.

“Undergoing drug treatment is a big step for most people and it is well known to our clinicians that treatment outcomes are better when social support networks are strong. For this reason it is important that family members are encouraged to be involved in treatment as well as to seek help and support for themselves”, said Professor Hamilton.

“At Turning Point, the partners, mothers and sisters are most likely to be identified as the people our clients would involve in their treatment, and this is who we most often see”, she said.

Mr Alan Murnane, the manager of Family Drug Help, a Victorian based service said that the needs of everyone in the family must be considered as part of a response to alcohol and other drug-related problems. “It is important to understand that the impact of alcohol and drug use extends beyond the individual to affect partners, parents, siblings, other family members and friends”, said Mr Murnane. “Services such as Family Drug Help provide family specific responses such as 24-hour helplines, peer support groups, referral to other services, and information resources for family members and friends.”

“Family members want to understand and be involved in rehabilitation and treatment.. For this to be effective, they need access to information about drugs and drug treatment, recognition of the importance of their supportive role in the treatment process, and support to care for themselves during the process”, he said.

Drug treatment agencies are often called upon to operate at the interface of drug use, treatment and family life. The information contained in ‘Working with Families’ will assist organisations to determine the level of family inclusive practice they have the resources and skills to undertake and further develop services to meet the needs of family members.

MEDIA: Contact Professor Margaret Hamilton at Turning Point on: (03) 8413 8413, or Mr Alan Murnane at Family Drug Help T: 03 9573 1706, (Mob) 0404 858 725 Mr Tony Trimmingham at Family Drug Support T: 0412 414 444

Information and referral to services

Family Drug Help (Victoria) 1300 660 068 (24-hour)

Family Drug Support Hotline (All states) 1300 368 186

ADIS (Alcohol and Drug Information Services) ACT: 02 6205 4545, New South Wales: 02 9361 8000, 1800 422 599 (country). Northern Territory: 1800 131 350. Queensland: 07 3236 2414, 1800 177 833 (country). South Australia: 08 8363 8618, 1300 131 340. Tasmania: 1800 811 994. Western Australia: 08 9442 5000

Directline (Victoria): 1800 888 236

Copies of 'Working with Families' are available from Turning Point 03 8413 8413.