

A SKILL-TEACHING WORKSHOP FOR PEOPLE DEALING WITH THE EFFECTS OF OTHERS' ADDICTIONS: ABOUT THE WORKSHOP

This workshop offers the opportunity to learn about addiction development from a theoretical base. It offers an explanation of how family members inadvertently support an unhealthy addictive system and highlights where there can be options for changing that. The workshop is not tied to any particular treatment orientation or facility so can easily adapt to the particular concerns of attendees. It illustrates opportunities for small or large choices and changes and spends considerable time on skills for effective intervention, support, communication and/or detachment.

The workshop size is kept small to allow participants to share to their comfort level. Confidentiality is expected. There is didactic presentation and opportunity to share and practice in reading and non-threatening exercises. The material is presented in a number of formats to honour different learning styles.

Over the years, attendees have come for various reasons. Most often, people come to support a loved one's recovery, to learn key principles that underlie any formal or informal intervention with respect to another's difficulties, to figure out how to set more effective and healthy boundaries for themselves, to learn key communication skills, to gain some understanding about issues they may have carried from being raised in a family with addiction, to decide when "enough is enough" in a way that feels fair, or simply to gather some theory to support their instincts. On occasion people come where addiction is not the issue but the dynamics seem similar. While many people come out of distress over others' problematic or compulsive usage, others come purely to be better educated.

While there is specific common material, each workshop is different and is guided by the needs and strengths of the individual participants. There can be reference to problematic or compulsive use of alcohol, drugs, gambling, food, sexual behaviour, or the Internet.

There is a lot of learning, reinforcement of key points, and quite a bit of laughter. In the words of one participant: "The workshop is a spa for your mind".

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