

How Teens May Cope with a Loved One's Substance Use Disorder



ISOLATION

Some teens pull away and stay quiet to avoid adding tension at home. They may feel like their emotions are a burden and that it is safer to go unnoticed than to speak up.



CAREGIVING

Teens often step in to care for siblings—or even their parents. This leaves little time or space for their own needs, emotions, or development.



ACTING OUT

Anger, fear, and sadness with no safe outlet can lead some teens to act out at school or in the community. These behaviors are often misunderstood, when in fact they are a cry for help and a sign that something is wrong.



DISTRACTION

Some teens use humor or denial to cope, laughing things off or pretending everything is fine to protect others from discomfort. This coping style hides their pain and teaches them to silence their own needs.



PERFECTIONISM

Easily overlooked, some teens may respond by trying to be perfect—good grades, staying out of trouble, and seeming “fine.” But underneath, they are dealing with a huge amount of stress and pressure to perform, and fear what making a mistake could mean.

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