

WHEN DEFLECTION INCLUDES CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

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November 12, 2019
PTACC Conference



**Sesame Street in
Communities:
Parental Addiction**



Parental Addiction: Key Advisory Takeaways

- **The shame, isolation, and stigma of parental addiction** cause children to experience more fear and loneliness.
- **Caring adults play a key role** in explaining the situation in age-appropriate ways and in helping children talk about their feelings without criticism or judgment.
- **The 7 Cs can help children understand key messages:** “You didn’t *cause* the problem, and you cannot *cure* or *control* it. But you can *care* for yourself by *communicating* your feelings, making healthy *choices*, and *celebrating* yourself”
- **Our resources should help children and families build resilience, hope, and optimism,** and should communicate that challenges can make a family stronger.



Salia: A Day in the Life

- **Meet Salia**, a 10 year old who's “been there” and is thriving.
- **Muppet kid-bits:** Karli and Salia in candid conversation.



Videos for Grown-Ups

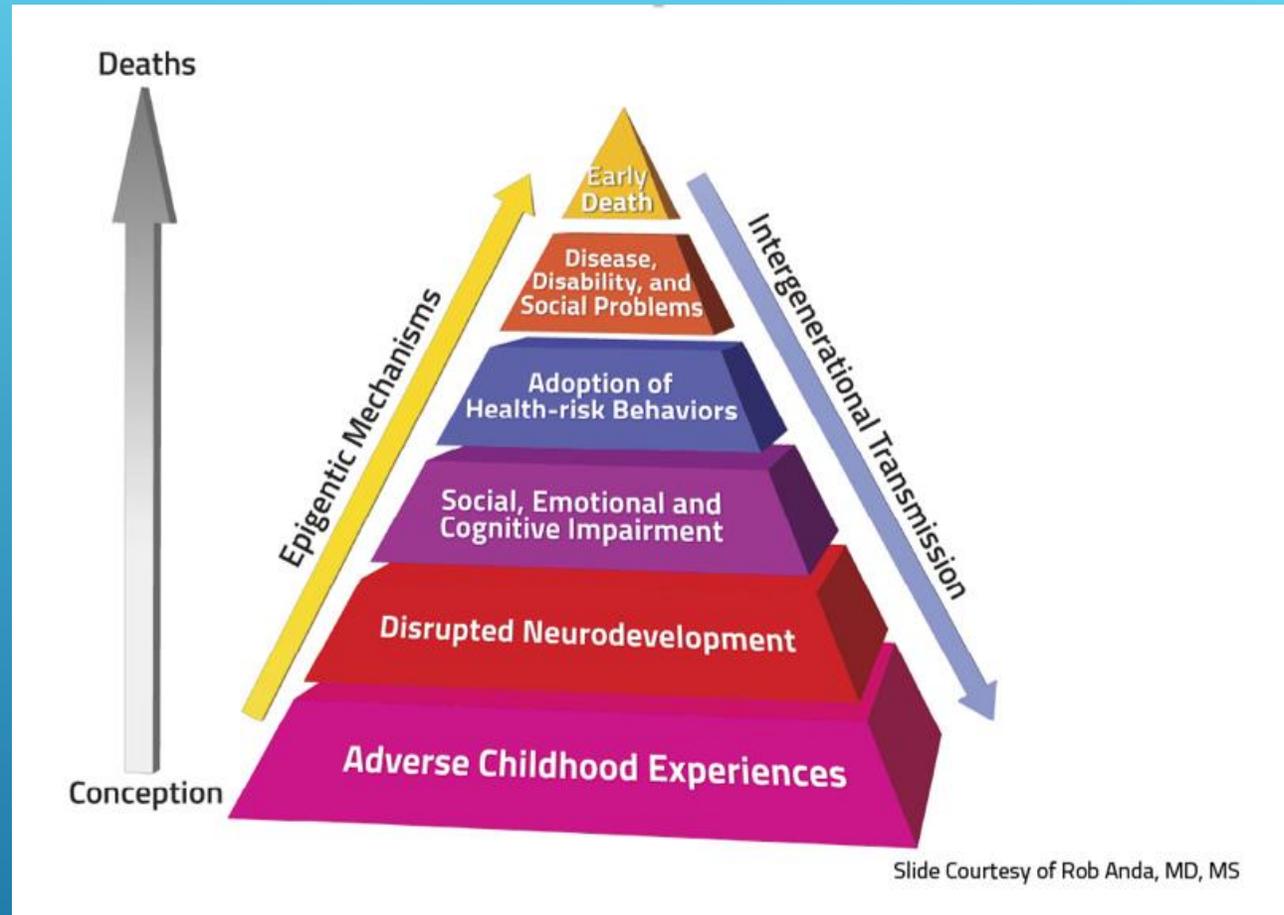
- **Introduction** explaining addiction (Elmo, Louie); also for kids
- **Professional Development Provider Portrait:** Cynthia Galaviz (Betty Ford/Hazelden Kids' Program) shares strategies for supporting children
- **An SSIC social media/marketing piece** with Salia and her parents



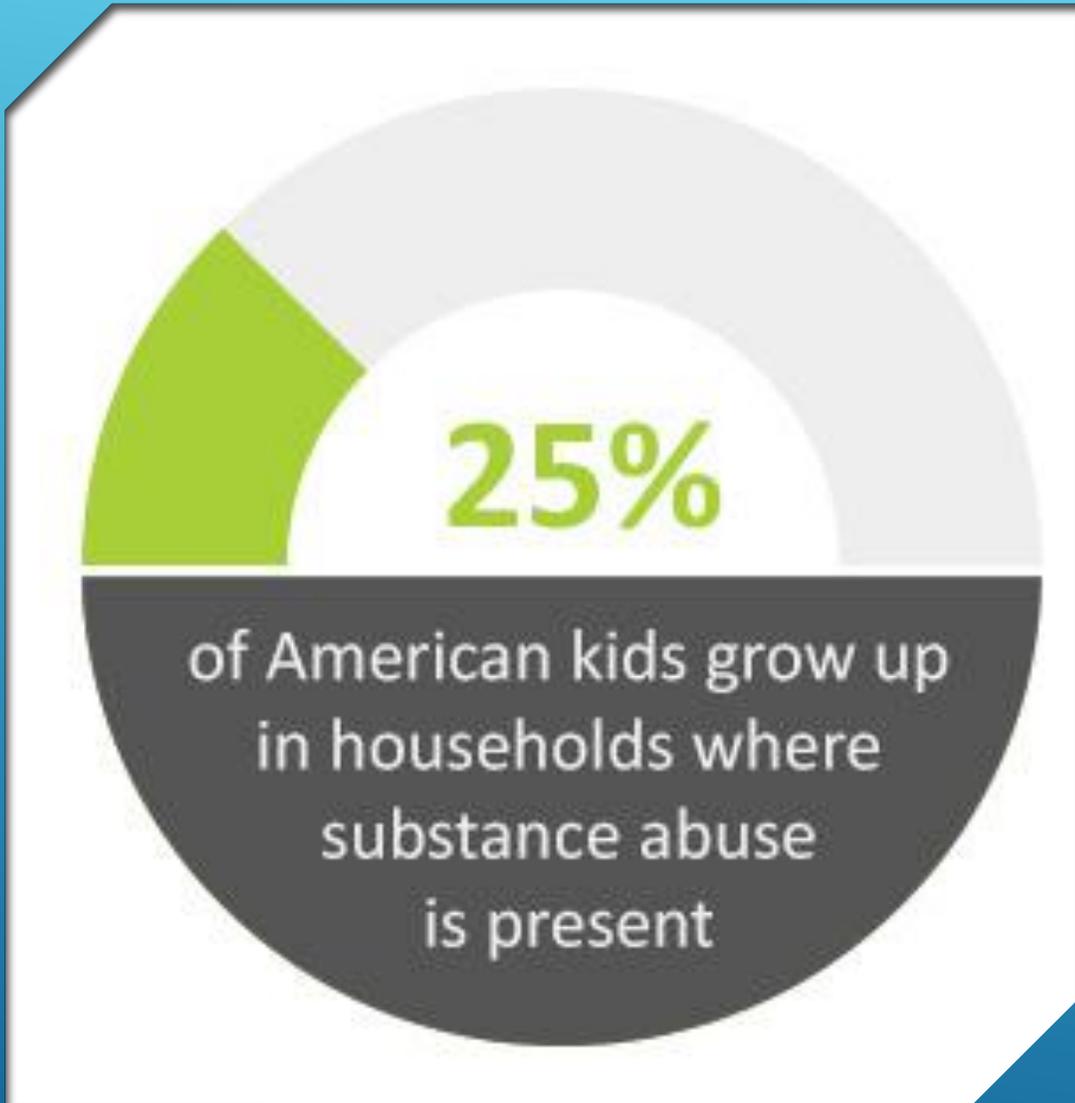
Articles

- 1. Using These Resources:** Resources to help providers offer hope and support to children and families coping with the challenges of parental addiction.
- 2. Explaining Addiction:** Children can have tough questions, but there are clear, honest, age-appropriate ways to respond. This article provides guidance on explaining addiction, drugs, and alcohol.
- 3. Questions & Answers:** Suggestions for handling children's difficult questions about addiction.
- 4. Rebuilding Trust:** Guest-written by Jerry Moe, National Director of the Children's Program, Betty Ford Hazelden.





ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES



25 % OF AMERICAN
KIDS GROW UP IN
HOUSEHOLDS WHERE
SUBSTANCE USE
DISORDER IS PRESENT.

Source:
The National Institute on Drug Abuse

DISEASE TERMINOLOGY IS IMPORTANT



Terminology can provide support, clarity and hope, or deepen misunderstanding, shame and stigma.

- Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD)
- Addiction
- Substance Use Disorder (SUD)
- Individual with SUD (person first language)
- **Not Appropriate:** substance abuse, alcoholic, addict, drunk, dirty/clean tests, etc.



GENETIC RISK

- Prevalence rate of AUD is 3 – 4 times higher when a first-degree relative has an AUD.
- Adoption does not eliminate genetic risk.
- Low level of response to alcohol may explain relationship between family history and alcohol problems.

AGE OF FIRST USE VARIABLE: regardless of heredity, those who begin use at age 15 or younger are 3 times more likely to develop alcohol dependence and are more difficult to treat than those who begin drinking at 21 years or later. This includes all children, not just those affected by parental addiction.



ADDICTION AFFECTS THE WHOLE FAMILY

Family members develop unhealthy ways of communicating with each other and coping with addiction.



Rules in Families Impacted By Addiction:

- Don't talk
- Don't trust
- Don't Feel*

WHAT RESILIENT ADULTS SAY MADE A DIFFERENCE

- Had a special relationship with an adult who cared and was nurturing, often a teacher.
- Latched onto another “parent” figure or family.
- Had somewhere other than home where they felt like they belonged.
- Had activities that were easy to participate in outside the home.
- Had a sense of purpose and future.
- Ability to make decisions and communicate feelings.



HELP THE CHILDREN UNDERSTAND...



1. the disease of alcoholism and drug addiction.
2. that addiction is not their fault.
3. they are not alone; many young people live in families with addiction.
4. (middle-school and high-school-age children) they are at increased risk for addiction because it runs in the family.

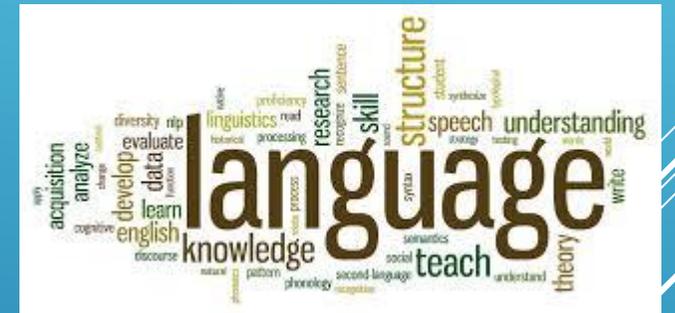


STRATEGIES & TOOLS

- ▶ Language to use with Children
- ▶ Building Trust
- ▶ 7 Cs – A tool that helps
- ▶ Remember Al-Anon (families) & Alateen (adolescents & teens)

LANGUAGE TO USE WITH CHILDREN

- ▶ Give boys & girls enough information – in language they can understand – to validate their experience and provide support, but not too much they end up confused and overwhelmed.
- ▶ Preferred term is addiction.
It can refer to alcohol, other drugs, and tobacco.
- ▶ Words like “stuck,” “hooked,” and “trapped” help children to understand what addiction is.
- ▶ Help children separate the person they love from the disease of addiction.* (letters to addiction)
- ▶ Look them in the eye – be on their level



BUILDING TRUST



- ▶ Be consistent*
- ▶ Avoid “vague promises” “everything will work out” “You’re going to be ok.”
- ▶ Better to say, “We’re doing everything we can to keep you safe while other grown ups take care of helping your mom/dad, etc.”

The Seven Cs

I didn't **cause** it.
I can't **control** it.
I can't **cure** it, *but*
I can help take **care**
of myself by

Communicating
My feelings,
Making healthy **choices**,
and
Celebrating me.

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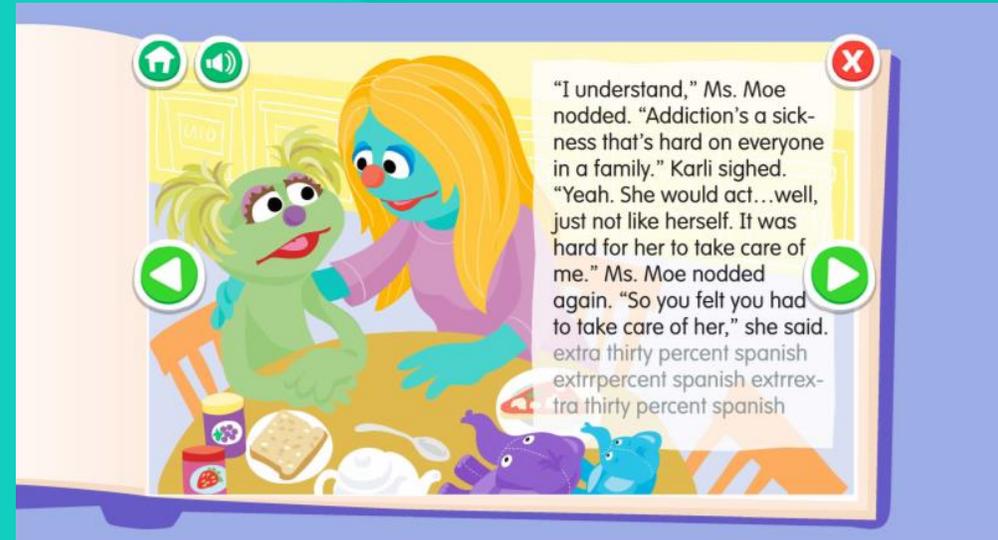
NA CoA Nacoa.org - 888-55-4COAS (2627)
nacoa@nacoa.org

THE 7 CS

I didn't **CAUSE** it
I can't **CONTROL** it
I can't **CURE** it, *but*
I can help take **CARE** of myself by
COMMUNICATING my feelings,
Making healthy **CHOICES**, and
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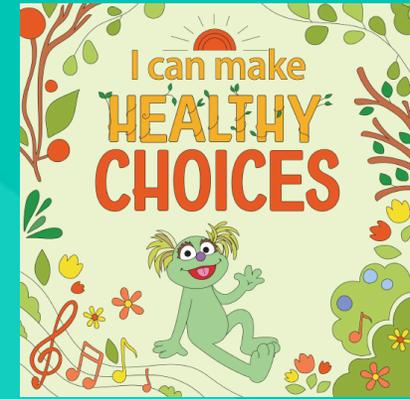
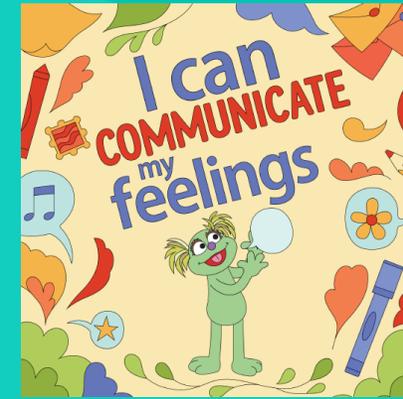
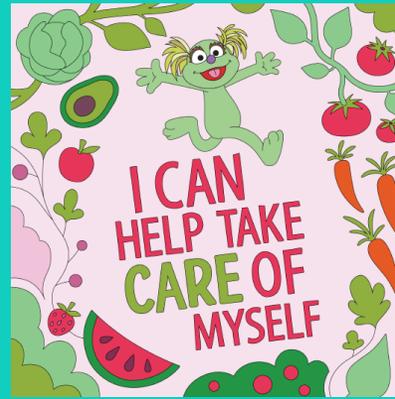
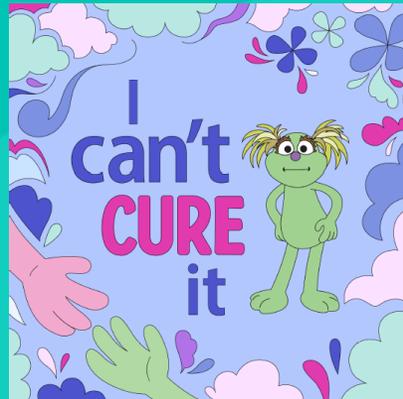
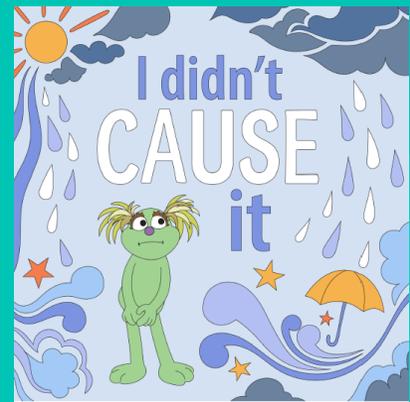
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Play, Talk, Imagine! Digital Storybook



Karli's Coloring Quilt Interactive

A digital interactive providing a kid-friendly explanation of each of the 7 Cs



Printables

For Children

For Children & Grown-Ups

For Grown-Ups

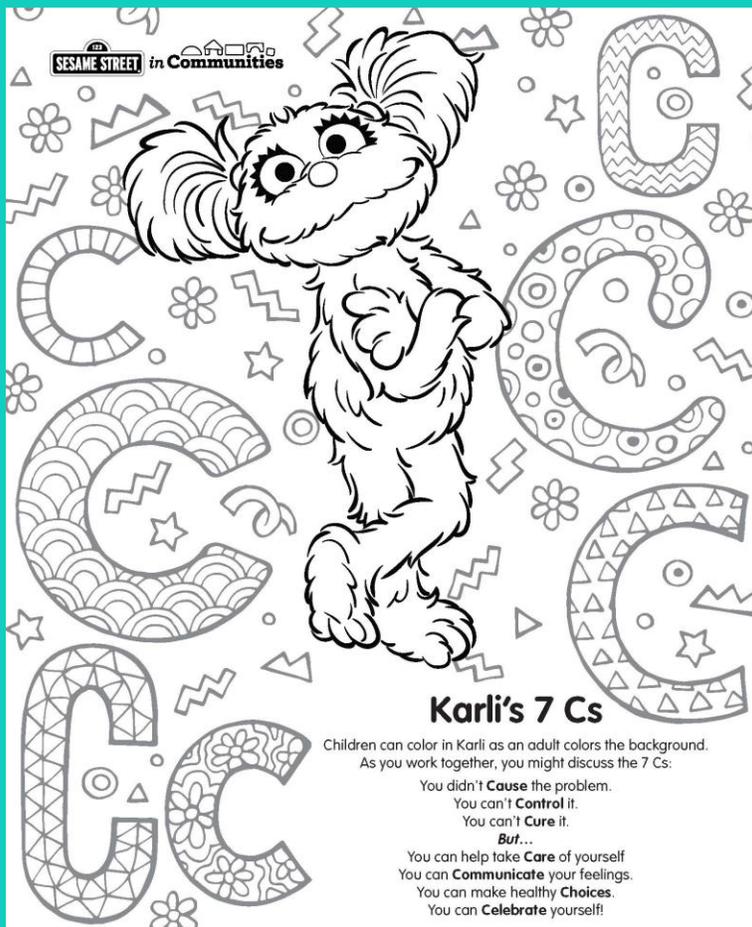


The 7 Cs

You didn't **Cause** the problem.
You can't **Control** it.
You can't **Cure** it.

But...

You can help take **Care** of yourself.
You can **Communicate** your feelings.
You can make healthy **Choices**.
You can **Celebrate** yourself!



Karli's 7 Cs

Children can color in Karli as an adult colors the background.
As you work together, you might discuss the 7 Cs:

You didn't **Cause** the problem.
You can't **Control** it.
You can't **Cure** it.

But...

You can help take **Care** of yourself
You can **Communicate** your feelings.
You can make healthy **Choices**.
You can **Celebrate** yourself!



Addiction: Resources for Providers & Families

Here are resources for help, information, advice, and support.

Adfam: Families, Drugs and Alcohol

adfam.org.uk

Mission is to improve life for families affected by drugs and alcohol by supporting families and professionals while advocating for change.

American Society for the Positive Care of Children

americanspcc.org

Offers a collection of free parenting resources.

The Children's Program at the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation

hazeldenbettyford.org/treatment/family-children/childrens-program

Provides education and support for children ages 7-12 who have a parent with an addiction.

Confident Kids Support Groups

confidentkids.com/home.aspx

A network of faith-based support groups that help children living with drug and alcohol abuse in their homes and communities.

The National Association for Children of Addiction (NACoA)

nacoa.org

Connects and provides training and evidence-based curricula and program materials to primary care providers, justice system personnel, social workers, educators and students, early childhood professionals, and faith communities to eliminate the adverse impact of substance use on children and families.

National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism

niaaa.nih.gov

Mission is to generate and disseminate knowledge about the effects of alcohol on health and well-being, and apply it to improve diagnosis, prevention, and treatment of alcohol-related problems, including alcohol use disorder.

National Institute on Drug Abuse

drugabuse.gov

Mission is to advance science on the causes and consequences of drug use and addiction and to apply that knowledge to improve individual and public health.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

samhsa.gov

Mission is to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental health problems on America's communities.

SUMMARY

- Break the “Don’t Talk” rule.
- Break the “Don’t Feel” rule by validating feelings and experiences.
- Educate: impart information and skills in child-appropriate ways.
- Break the “Don’t trust” rule with the children and the parents by keeping promises to help.
- Put the 7 Cs (card) in your tool kit



QUESTIONS:

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- ▶ *Liz Olszewski*
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- ▶

