

If There's Drinking, Drugs or Violence at Home: What Youth Can Do

Information Sheet

Family violence is the abuse of power within relationships of family, trust or dependency that endangers the survival, security or well-being of another person.¹

Who Can Help

If you or someone you know is in danger right now, phone 911.

You can call these numbers any time, night or day, FREE:

Child Abuse Hotline **1-800-387-KIDS (5437)** if you are being abused or neglected.

AADAC Help Line **1-866-332-2322** if someone in your home is using drugs or alcohol, or is gambling.

Family Violence Info Line **310-1818** for information on family violence.

Alberta Children and Youth Services is proud to lead Alberta's Prevention of Family Violence and Bullying Initiative.

Are you in a home where adults drink, use drugs or are violent?

Many young people have to deal with tough problems. Being around adults who use alcohol or drugs, or adults who are violent, is one of the most difficult situations a young person may face.

If you are in this situation, you need to know:

- You are not alone.
- It is not your fault.
- You can get help.

Things you can do

1. Tell someone

Tell an adult you feel safe with, such as a:

- school counsellor or teacher
- friend's mom or dad
- nurse or doctor
- police officer
- sports coach
- leader in your religious community
- any adult you trust and think may be helpful

If the first person you talk to is not helpful, keep trying until you find someone who is.

Phone one of the numbers on this sheet

You do not need to feel embarrassed or ashamed about what is happening at your home. The people who answer these phone lines will understand and can help.

2. Get help to make a safety plan

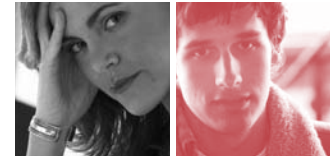
A safety plan is a list of things to do to keep yourself safe when you believe you are in an unsafe situation.

Get help making a safety plan from a trusted adult or someone at one of the numbers on this sheet. Your safety plan should include:

- people you can call for help and their phone numbers
- places you can go to feel safe.

Pack a few things to take if you have to leave home quickly, such as:

- cash
- identification like a health care card, birth certificate or student card
- medicine, if you need it.



In an emergency, leave for a safe place even if you do not have these things with you. The most important thing is your safety.

3. Protect yourself and others

If you are afraid you might hurt someone...

Sometimes emotions run high when you're living in a home where adults drink, use drugs or are violent. If you become angry and have the urge to pick fights with people, or get aggressive and physical, here are things to do instead:

- walk away
- play a game, exercise or play sports
- draw or paint
- get some fresh air
- sing your favourite song
- write about how you are feeling
- _____ (add your own).

If you are afraid you might hurt yourself...

If you are afraid that you might hurt yourself — by drinking, using drugs or in some other way — **get help right away**. Phone a number on this sheet, go to a hospital or tell an adult that you trust.

4. Build your own strength

- **Find something safe and healthy that you enjoy**, like sports, music, cars or being outdoors. That will get you out of the situation for a while, and might make it easier to get through difficult times.
- **Look for adults you admire**. See what you can learn from their example.
- **Appreciate yourself**. You are doing the best you can in a tough situation. Every day, write down one positive thing that happened that day. In a year, you will have 365 positive things about your life.

“When my mom and step-dad get into a fight, I head for my bedroom and stay there until things settle down. I can't help hearing them screaming at each other. It's worse if they're drinking. My step-dad says some terrible things. My mom sobs and pleads with him. I'm pretty good at knowing if it's the kind of fight that has my step-dad driving off somewhere or Mom coming to get me to say we're sleeping at Aunt Jo's.”²

When is substance use a problem?

Most adults can drink alcohol without a problem. But alcohol and drugs can lead to addictions or other problems like:

- family fighting
- poor health
- losing friends
- impaired driving, assault, fraud or other charges
- spending rent or grocery money on alcohol or drugs
- missing work.

Get information

Alcohol, drugs and gambling

Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission.

Visit www.aadac.com and click “youth.”

Family violence

Prevention of Family Violence and Bullying, Alberta Children and Youth Services.

Visit www.familyviolence.alberta.ca and click “youth.”

Justice Canada for Youth.

Visit www.familyviolencehurts.gc.ca.

¹ Alberta Children and Youth Services (2004). *Alberta Roundtable on Family Violence and Bullying: Finding solutions together*. Edmonton, AB: Queen's Printer. Retrieved from http://www.child.alberta.ca/home/documents/familyviolence/rpt_opfvb_finding_solutions_high.pdf

² The family violence youth site. (2008, August 7). Department of Justice. Retrieved from <http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/pi/fv-vf/fvy-vfj/safe-prote.html>