## Scottish Families Our latest news and updates

### AUTUMN

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### Our Helpline & Covid-19

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### Love Makes You Family

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### Our New Family Support Service in Inverclyde

Our Inverclyde Family Support Service is now open for business!

We're here in Inverclyde with the message for any family members who are affected by a loved one's alcohol and/or drug use that you have a right to access support and we're here to support you.

This is support for you because caring for a loved one can often be stressful, difficult, overwhelming and confusing.

The Inverclyde Family Support Service is open and accepting referrals for anyone over the age of 16 who is affected by someone else's alcohol and/or drug use.



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To keep up to date with all of our latest news make sure to follow our social media channels: Twitter @ScotFamADrugs, Facebook @ScottishFamiliesAffectedByDrugs Instagram @ScotFamADrugs



### Mailing List 🖂

Want to stay up to date with all the latest news from us? Sign-up to our mailing list and we'll send you our monthly bulletin and other updates.

Sign-up here: http://eepurl.com/c9oCYb

# A Word from Our CEO



There's slim pickings nowadays for a photo to accompany this column – I just have a depressing succession of Zoom gallery shots from various meetings and events, and nothing that looks like real human contact! So here I am as I have become – on screen, in my kitchen, wearing my

#TeamSFAD sweatshirt (great branding of course, but also essential work wear for those days when my 'office' is absolutely baltic).

Since our last newsletter, there has been plenty going on at Scottish Families, global pandemic notwithstanding. We've recruited six new team members since lockdown, with a further post for a much needed Helpline Support Assistant out to advert as I write.

After all, we have our new #ChangeWillCome strategy to deliver (<u>complete with its very own web</u> <u>page and animation</u>), and we have a huge 'To Do' list to get through.

It has been great to welcome Callum, Laurie Lee, Daryl, Nicole, Gillian and Lena into our team this year. With their arrival, we have been able to expand our support via Routes (our young persons' project), as well as for adult family members aged 16+ years in South Lanarkshire, Inverclyde and Forth Valley. We have also been able to launch a new test of change, provisionally called 'Families as Lifesavers' thanks to Drug Deaths Taskforce funding. This will allow us to test out the impact of providing intensive wraparound support to family members who believe their loved one is at high risk of drug-related death.

We hosted our first ever virtual AGM event earlier in November, which created many mixed emotions. It was so lovely to see everyone on screen (and there was definitely less travel involved), but it was also a reminder that every other year we have been able to meet in person for an action-packed agenda as well as lots of chat and gossip! This year we were supposed to be premiering a brand new drama about families and substance use, but we know these days will come again. It was a fun morning all the same, and we packed in a chat with Tash and Chloe from Routes (who showed their investigative journalism skills grilling our colleague Callum); an interactive quiz about our new strategy hosted by our Quiz dream team of John and Rebecca; and a great conversation with Mel and Lisa from All in the Family in South Lanarkshire, hosted by our own Susie McC. Oh yes and we even held the AGM too!

As we dig in for continued home working through the autumn and winter, it is more important than ever before that we all think about our wellbeing, and many team members have been leading by example with their use of mindfulness, regular exercise, clear separation of work and home (very tricky when they are now the same place), walk and talk catch-ups and so on. The energy levels and sense of fun at our twice-weekly team zoom check-ins has not abated, and all those lovely, kind and empathetic staff are showing their true colours when answering questions on 'pointless celebrities', 'things you would eliminate from the world' and 'white lies you have told'!

I know the team have continued to keep families right at the heart of everything they do through this whole period, no matter what practical and emotional challenges have been thrown at them. Feedback from families confirms they continue to feel supported too, which is critical at this time. There is so much political and media focus on COVID risks and harm this year, and so little recognition of the everyday harms for the families we support. Look out for our forthcoming COVID insights report which will shine a light on this – more to follow!

# Our New Family Support Service in Inverclyde



Our Inverclyde Family Support Service is now open for business!

We're here in Inverclyde with the message for any family members who are affected by a loved one's alcohol and/or drug use that you have a right to access support and we're here to support you.

This is support for you because caring for a loved one can often be stressful, difficult, overwhelming and confusing.

When we say family, we mean who you see as your family. It could be close and extended family members, friends, your friend's family, colleagues, neighbours, anyone.

We can give information and advice, help you with confidence, communication, and general wellbeing. We can help you recognise and understand the importance of looking after yourself, and we can help you look at strategies to help your loved one in the most effective way. Although we're currently working from home, we're able to offer support through digital methods like Zoom, or simply over the phone. We're aiming to set up some digital support groups for family members in Inverclyde to attend, in addition to one-to-one support.

In the COVID-free future, we are going to be meeting you in your community offering one-toones in person and groups near where you live.

The Inverclyde Family Support Service is open and accepting referrals for anyone over the age of 16 who is affected by someone else's alcohol and/or drug use.

You can refer to us via:

Email: inverclydefss@sfad.org.uk or daryl@sfad.org.uk

Phone: 08080 10 10 11 or 07554686672

Online referral form over on our website.

# Our Helpline During Lockdown







"I think you're the lovely lady who spoke to me about 16 months ago when I was in despair about my son. You kindly spent over an hour giving me help and support and then allocated me to the care of Colin McIntosh who has been an absolute saint. I cannot begin to thank Scottish Families for the much appreciated support and help to learn how to cope. Thank you."

As we get closer to the end of the year with Christmas looming and most of the central belt of Scotland in tier 4 government restrictions, it's no wonder that our helpline has seen a greater increase in demand than usual.

Between March 2020 to October 2020 we have seen a 78% increase in contacts to our helpline compared to the same period in 2019.

### Key points (comparing statistics from March – October 2019 with March – October 2020)

• Increase in contacts from people who use alcohol and/or drugs = 270% (151 contacts to 559)

• Increase in contacts from people affected by someone else's alcohol and/or drug use = 33% (451 contacts to 602)

• Increase in use of alcohol = 122% (276 contacts to 615)

• Increase in use of benzodiazepines = 116% (102 contacts to 221)

• Increase in use of cocaine = 43% (181 contacts to 260)

• Increase in people looking for mental health support not related to drug and/or alcohol use (7

contacts to 88)

• Increase in people who have no money/food and require foodbank support (7 contacts to 146)

#### **Emerging info:**

• Treatment provider issues (132 instances). There continues to be issues of people not getting a hold of the person they wish to speak to in a service, it either going to answer machine or ringing out. The majority of the people coming through our webchat is because they don't have credit to phone their service. We are acting as a bridge to get the service to call the person back.

• Domestic violence (58 instances). This continues to be a concern highlighted on our helpline. It's not something that normally comes up in conversation in a helpline call.

• Prescription issues (52 instances). Mostly individuals having concerns about their Opioid Replacement Therapy (ORT).

• Withdrawals (98 instances). Individuals are experiencing withdrawals and are now looking for urgent support. A high number of these instances relate to alcohol and the family/ individual not having enough money to buy alcohol.

We have also issued 126 Naloxone kits across all Alcohol and Drug Partnership areas except Stirling and Angus. These kits include 70 service workers, 13 people at risk and 43 family members and friends.

Our helpline continues to be very busy and our advisors are here to listen if anyone needs help or just someone to chat to. If you have any questions about our helpline reporting please contact Suzie Gallagher suzanne@sfad.org.uk.

## Love Makes You Family Discussion Guide

We're delighted to say that we have launched our new animation 'Love Makes You Family' and our discussion guide! This is a tool that you can use to host workshops or discussions about what 'family' means in your communities.

Our animation celebrates families from all walks of life, structures and backgrounds. It promotes a broad and inclusive definition of family, encouraging us to appreciate the many forms that family can take.

Our animation was produced by the amazing crew over at <u>SUMM.Studio.</u>

You can watch our animation over on our <u>Vimeo</u> page here.

### How did the Love Make You Family Project develop?

Love Makes You Family was developed in response to:

• A challenge in communicating what we mean by the word 'family'.

• A recognition that some people and families are under-represented in our own services and community work.

• Identified barriers for particular communities in accessing family support, especially but not limited to LGBTQ+ people and families.

#### What is 'family'?

There is no clear or agreed definition of 'family'. Our understandings of family are often based in our own experience and are culturally bound. Our experiences in our family of origin and our cultural context determine what we 'think' when we hear the word 'family'.

The Love Makes You Family animation starts with showing the image of a heterosexual, white, able-bodied presenting nuclear family. This is the image of 'family' that is most often represented



but it is not reflective of the diversity of families in our communities. This leads to some people and families being less visible or supported.

Our hope is that the Love Makes You Family project will help us to communicate and that there is no one 'type' of family. Families come in all shapes and sizes and our diversity is what makes us stronger!

#### **Discussion Guide:**

We want communities across Scotland to benefit from the Love Makes You Family animation and the message behind it. <u>We have created a new</u> <u>discussion guide that you can find over on our</u> <u>website</u> that you can use to host a conversation about what family means to you and your communities!

In the guide we outline everything you need to start your own discussion event. It doesn't have to be formal and you don't have to have experience facilitating or hosting community conversations to do it. If you're interested in having a discussion in a group or community that you are part of, our advice is to go for it!

If you would prefer to work alongside us to co-host a discussion together or if you'd like us to attend your event, we'd love to hear from you. Get in touch with **communities@sfad.org.uk** 

# Can You Help Us Spread Joy this Christmas?



It's been an incredibly challenging year for us all. Throughout lockdown and beyond our support services have continued, offering help and advice for families across Scotland.

Our young person service Routes has carried on, with online activities, socially distant meet ups and small group trips in line with current regulation. We are currently working with 50 young people in East and West Dunbartonshire.

We are so proud of how our young people have coped this year.

They have continued to get support for themselves, joined in with virtual chats, learned new skills such as cooking and have kept going with their studies - trying their best to stay positive in very difficult circumstances.

Can you help make Christmas a little more special for young people?

After a hard year we want to give them a nice surprise. We would love to give them a special Christmas gift of their own.

With your help we can buy a special present for each young person we work with, as well a treat for their brothers and sisters so no-one is left out. By donating to our appeal you can help us make sure that everyone gets a gift and our project workers will be able to pick something that the young people really like or need.

Please consider donating so we can lift their spirits and bring a bit of cheer at Christmas time.

#### You can donate here. Thank you.

# Christmas Coffee Morning Goes Virtual

Our annual Christmas Coffee Morning has become a fixture at the end of the year, with delicious home baking and a chance to catch up over a coffee.

Sadly current guidance means we can't have our regular event this year. But the good news is that we are hosting a virtual Christmas get together - BYOMP (bring your own mince pie).

Join us and hear about how we are supporting families this Christmas, some tips on getting a bit of headspace for yourself at a challenging time of year, some stories from the families we work with AND the world premiere of our (virtual) Christmas Choir singing 'I've got my love to keep me warm.'

We are looking forward to welcoming supporters and family members to our online event on Wednesday 16 December. <u>All are welcome to</u> join us, find out more here.



# Families We Want to Hear Your Views!

Scottish Families has recently been successful in securing funding for a new project with the working title 'Families as Lifesavers'. This project aims to support families who are concerned about their loved one's drug use and believe their loved one could be at risk of drug-related death.

This is a national project which aims to work with families across Scotland. Nicole Darroch on our team would like to hear from families to get their views on what they feel the project should include and what support is needed for families and their loved one.

Scottish Families values family voices and believes that input from families in fundamental. Your participation will directly influence this new project and gives you the opportunity to have your voice heard.

To get in touch please contact Nicole via email or phone: nicole@sfad.org.uk 07765873443.



## New Research on the Impact of Adult Family Support in Scotland



Exploring family support in relation to problem substance use in Scotland: A qualitative study of the experiences of adult family members: Constantly just holding it up and together is a recent study carried out by John Holleran on our teamas part of his Masters course in <u>Contemporary Drug and Alcohol Studies</u> at the University of the West of Scotland seeking to address the gap in understanding around Adult Family Member experiences of support in Scotland. All participants reported positive benefits from accessing family support in their own right.

#### Methods & Recruitment:

Qualitative, semi-structured interviews were carried out with 10 adult family members purposively sampled via the Scottish Families social media and networks.

#### **Key Findings:**

• Most adult family members (N=9) said support gave them a sense of relief. For some (n=3) specifically saying they felt good knowing they could talk to someone who was 'speaking their language'.

• 14 years was the average length of time spent

living with someone using substances with the average time taken to access support being 11 years.

• Families were often the first (or only) people to respond in a crisis (N=10) when services were not able to offer help to those using substances.

• Family dynamics & relationships being impacted by substance use was a consistent theme (N=10) with the whole family network representing 41 people in total (50 if we include the person using substances.

The support accessed by participants helped to build more effective coping strategies for life with problematic substance use with participants selfreporting improvements in their general health and wellbeing. Participants also said the family support experience helped to develop better relationships with those using substances and other family members.

We will soon be releasing a summary report on this research with dates for two learning events in December. To register your interest for these events or to find out more contact John Holleran at Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol & Drugs via email: john@sfad.org.uk.

# A Little Update from Routes



Our young person's group Routes still continues to meet in line with government guidance in East and West Dunbartonshire, and we're delighted to share some lovely updates and photos with you all. Claire, Pam and Callum from the team arranged some activities for the young people during the school's October Holidays and Halloween.

During the October week we:

• Walked around Loch Lomond and Loch Lomond Shores enjoying ice cream and scenery, followed by a game of football.

• Walked around the parks in Kirkintilloch and finished off by going to a deserts café. This was with a group of young people who had never met before. They all go on well and wanted to continue meeting as a group.

• Went to M&D's theme park and even though the weather wasn't great, they managed to go on every ride and had a great day.

• Had a social distanced get-together in a shopping centre for two young people for some muchneeded pampering.

• And we also went Go Karting, having done dinner



and racing around the tracks.

For Halloween, we delivered all of our young people goody bags filled with Halloween sweets, treat and activities. We invited the whole family to take part in a spooky Zoom quiz and scavenger hunt with many of our young people and our Routes team dressing up for the occasion! Our November monthly group was filled with fun and games. Keeping everyone energised and on their feet for back-to-back games, followed by a drug and alcohol awareness session for Alcohol Awareness Week. Young people said after the session that they felt better equipped to know when help is needed if someone had drunk too much alcohol and how to best support someone until help arrives.

We're delighted to still be able to support our young people, this year has been incredibly difficult for them and we're doing what we can to help them stay positive in difficult circumstances.

To find out more about Routes or if you are interested in joining the group and live in East or West Dunbartonshire contact our helpline 08080 10 10 11 / helpline@sfad.org.uk.

# A Warm Welcome to New Staff Members

You may or may not have already seen some new faces in the Scottish Families team. Since summer we have welcome six new members of staff and we have one more soon to join us! Even though it's a bit odd only being able to meet and speak to each other online, we feel that everyone has become part of our little family very quickly.

We're very pleased to be welcoming this week Gillian McHendry and Lena McMillan to our Forth Valley team! We'll also be welcoming a new Helpline Support Assistant in December.

Below are some mini introductions to our new team members along with their contact details.

#### Callum Shipcott – Support Assistant for Routes

Callum joined us back in July and is our Support Assistant for Routes, working alongside Claire and Pam supporting our young people. He is passionate about developing health and wellbeing and enjoys working with different people.

Callum can be contacted on callum@sfad.org.uk

### Laurie Lee Whitton – Family Support Development Officer for South Lanarkshire

Laurie Lee joined the team in July as our Family Support Development Officer for South Lanarkshire in our new service 'All in the Family'. She is passionate about amplifying the voices of people in communities that may be overlooked or stigmatised. She is a strong believer that everyone deserves to be heard and supported.

For any enquiries about our South Lanarkshire service contact Laurie Lee on laurielee@sfad.org.uk

#### Daryl McLeister – Family Support Development Officer for Inverclyde

Daryl joined us in November as our Family Support Development Officer for Inverclyde. He enjoys engaging with people in a warm and empathetic way and loves helping people work towards the changes they want to make. He is really passionate about the role of family members in recovery and the incredible influence the right support can have in helping family members find their way through tricky situations.

For any enquiries about our Inverclyde service contact Daryl on daryl@sfad.org.uk

#### Nicole Darroch – Virtual Family Support Practitioner

Nicole joined us in November as our Virtual Family Support Practitioner working on our new project (working title Families as Lifesavers). She is currently looking to hear from families to get their views on what families feel the project should include and what support is needed for families and their loved one. Nicole is a qualified Social Worker and says relationship-based practice is always at the heard of what she does and she always aims to work for an organisation that places relationships at the centre.

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#### Lena McMillan - Forth Valley Family Support Assistant

Lena joined us in November as our Forth Valley Family Support Assistant where she will support the delivery of our Forth Valley Support Service. She is passionate about engaging with people, working in ways that support them to find their own solutions to their situations. She particularly enjoys working with groups and values the enriching experience this can be for participants.

Lena can be contacted on lena@sfad.org.uk

#### Gillian McHendry - Forth Valley Family Support Assisant

Gillian joined us in November as our Forth Valley Family Support Service where she will be working alongside Lena and Lynne in delivering our Forth Valley Support Service. She says her strengths lie in relationship building, empowering people to find their voice and supporting them to use it. She calls herself a people-person and has enjoyed working for many years with people!

Gillian can be contacted on gillianm@sfad.org.uk





# An Update on our Support Services

Seems strange that in our last newsletter we were talking about how we as a country were moving into phase 3 of lockdown and now here we are a few months later with a five-tier system and different restrictions for different parts of the country! But no matter, our support services are still continuing to be available by phone and online. Hopefully we will be able to resume our face-toface meetings next year but as of right now our services are all available virtually.

#### Forth Valley Support Service

Our Forth Valley Support Service continues to offer one-to-one support and take in new referrals from anyone in the local area that needs us. Face-toface groups are still not possible yet but we have an online alternative group through WhatsApp and Zoom. We are also offering one-to-one support of the phone.

Lynne has been keeping the family members in Forth Valley busy with a full programme of support. These include Connect, Learn and Share sessions where family members have listened to guest speakers, received information directly from Forth Valley services such as Change Grow Live, hear members of the recovery community share their own stories and experience SMART Recovery Friends & Family groups.

We're also been doing more CRAFT (Community Reinforcement and Family Training) groups where family members can learn CRAFT techniques, discuss together how we can apply them and share our experiences of using CRAFT in everyday life.

By far the most exciting development is yet to come as the Forth Valley team is set to triple! We are very excited to be welcoming Gillian McHendry and Lena McMillan as our new Forth Valley Family Support Assistants. Gillian will be joining us for three days a week and Lena two days per week, both bringing a wealth of experience, knowledge and enthusiasm so our programme of support is set to get even better!



#### Aberdeenshire

In Aberdeenshire our virtual family support group continues every fortnight. It alternates between a Thursday evening and a Friday afternoon to try to accommodate everybody who wants to join in. Recent topics in the group have included self-care, positive communication and a guest speaker who spoke about their own recovery journey with tips for family members on how to motivate their loved ones to get involved with recovery communities. In November, group members were asked to vote on a festive activity and wreath-making was the clear winner. Wreath-making kits will be posted out to family members ahead of the session in December – we're looking forward to bringing some much needed Christmas cheer!

#### East Dunbartonshire

The East Dunbartonshire Family Support Service continues to offer one-to-one support and currently has two family support meetings online via Zoom. These meetings take place on a Thursday. And Colin continues to provide one-to-one support over the phone or by Zoom.

#### South Lanarkshire

'All In The Family' is currently running one face-toface group in Blantyre on a Friday morning and two online meetings on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. For the fastest updates and information you can follow them on Twitter <u>@FamilySouthLan.</u>

#### Inverclyde

Our new Family Support Service in Inverclyde has recently opened its (virtual) doors and Daryl McLeister is taking referrals, both professional and self. For the fastest updates and information you can follow the Facebook page <u>@InverclydeFSS</u>

#### **Telehealth Support Service**



Since March, Scottish Families' Telehealth Support Service has continued to provide support to people affected by someone else's alcohol and/or drug use. As an already virtual service, we did not have to make many changes to the way we deliver support in response to the pandemic.

Our new addiction to our service is our Virtual Telehealth Family Support Group. This group has participants from different areas in Scotland and brings them together on a Tuesday evening. We have guest speakers and the participants help to set the agenda for future groups. We feel that the people we support are becoming more comfortable with video calls and technology since the start of the pandemic, and it is technology that has helped to connect family members with each other.

We are continuing to deliver CRAFT (Community Reinforcement and Family Training) over either telephone or video call and have received great feedback from people. A common theme that has been highlighted is family members who have received support from our service are urging others to do the same.

We asked some family members based on their experience, what advice would you give to someone who is impacted by another person's substance use?

'Don't lose hope and faith even in the darkest times, eventually the light will shine even if it's just a glimpse.'

'It helps to talk about it and give yourself the 'right' to have and talk about your feelings and needs as well as always focusing on the person with the addiction. It is good to give yourself space to talk about how you feel without feeling like you're being self-indulgent. It also helps get clarity in your own head around what you can change and what you can't and accepting that. Its also so useful to get advice on navigating other services and resources which may be available.

Our Telehealth Support Service provides listening support, CRAFT intervention, self-care and wellbeing advice, and an opportunity to engage with other families also impacted by someone else's alcohol and/or drug use. Through the pandemic we had the opportunity for people to engage in fitness classes and other activities such as audio writing workshops and a virtual choice through our Communities team. We have also been able to extend our counselling service for people who have been struggling with various aspects of the pandemic. This has been a valuable addition to families supported across the services at Scottish Families.

We miss the hustle and bustle of the office and continue to work from home. As much as we are looking forward to returning to some kind of normal, we are extremely glad that our service has been able to continually support families across Scotland during the pandemic.

'So grateful for the support, guidance and advice which become my glimpse of light in a dark place.'

'I appreciated the service and how lucky I am that it was available, free and accessible to those who need it and I really needed it...feel that a lot of people have benefited in my wider family from the help.'

#### **Bereavement Support Service**

Our Bereavement Support Service continues to talk referrals for counselling sessions and offers support to anyone who has been bereaved through alcohol or drugs. These support sessions can be delivered by telephone or video call.

To contact our service get in touch with us on 08080 10 10 11 or helpline@sfad.org.uk or our webchat over at <u>www.sfad.org.uk.</u>

# Our Second Family Recovery College



Our Autumn/Winter edition of the Family Recovery College (FRC) began on Tuesday 17th November. We received over 40 expressions of interest for the course and were able to accept an incredible 30 people onto the course. We have been drawing on our experiences earlier this year of running sessions online to navigate an entire course via Zoom. Thankfully the students are gracious in this as we manage our way in this digital world!

In the first two weeks we have had 20 people coming along to each session. Our first two sessions drew primarily on the lived experience of both past students and guest speakers with lived experience. For us this is the most valuable place to start. Listening to understand families perspectives sets the culture for all of us learning together. Listening to other's experience, learning and insights has already given us a rich basis for discussion to flow, to pose questions and for students to share from their own experiences. In the coming weeks we will explore stigma, self-care and wellbeing, drugs: the basics, alcohol, as well as a mini-series on positive communication.

The college has five key values:

Education: to enable people to separate their loved one from the alcohol and/or drug use.

Inclusion: all people who are affected by someone else's drug/alcohol use are welcome. We

recognise that not everyone has the same story.

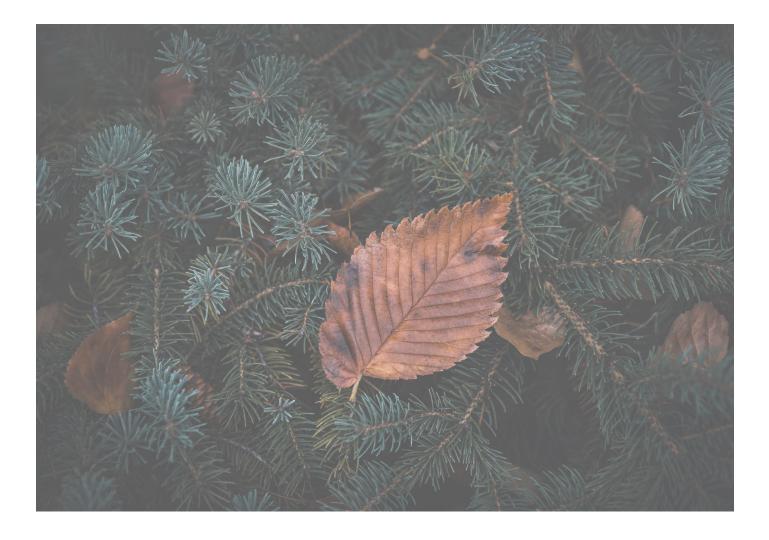
Hope and Positivity: we want students to leave the course with a sense of hope.

Confidentiality: Participation and information shared will remain private and confidential.

Non-Judgemental: the FRC is a safe and supportive environment that will challenge the stigma placed on people who use drugs and those that care about them.

One of the best aspects of running our course online is making the course available Scotland wide and this is not something we would have perhaps instinctively done had we not been forced to consider it. We miss the in-person experience of the course and the opportunity to show hospitality and care through providing the teas, coffees and cake but we can still make the most of this opportunity to connect, learn and see positive change in our lives and the lives of our loved ones.

The Family Recovery College offers a free informal 10-week online course, Understanding Substance Use and Holding on to Hope, for anyone living in Scotland concerned about someone else's alcohol or drug use. We will support you to build knowledge, skills, and confidence to support yourself and your loved one.



Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol and Drugs Main Office: Edward House, 199 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow, G2 3EX

> Helpline: 08080 10 10 11 helpline@sfad.org.uk webchat available at: www.sfad.org.uk

Twitter: @ScotFamADrugs Facebook: @ScottishFamiliesAffectedByDrugs Instagram: @ScotFamADrugs

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