

THE ADULT CHILD OF ALCOHOLICS SYNDROME

Was there alcohol abuse in your family of origin or in the generation before?

If you can answer yes to the question above, there are some things you need to know. People who grew up in alcoholic families have common symptoms and behaviors as a result of their common experience. Adult children of alcoholics (ACoAs) are different from people that were raised in other types of family systems. They view the world in a way that is unique.

When children are born into this system, they are born into a system that from the beginning inhibits their development as healthy human beings. It is important to recognize that the symptoms and behaviors of adult children of alcoholics are directly related to the experience of being raised in an, unsafe, dysfunctional, alcoholic family system. And is no fault of their own.

An alcoholic family is one in which the disease influences and invades all aspects of family life, and the family operates in a way that is basically unhealthy. The alcoholic family operates in a way that limits and controls the actions and emotions of its members. A healthy family allows individual freedom and expression and the freedom to grow.

There are four types of alcoholic family systems;

#1. This one is riddled with active alcoholism.

Often in the children, parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, even further back, active alcoholism is rampant.

#2. In this alcoholic family the actively drinking member has stop drinking.

It is important to note that even while the alcohol has been removed from the family, without treatment the alcoholic behavior will continue.

#3. The active drinking has been removed from the family for one or more generations.

Active drinking has not been in the family tree for a long time, but parents or grandparents were alcoholics and the dynamics continue in a way that is still characteristic of an alcoholic family.

#4. In this non-alcoholic family one of its members becomes an alcoholic.

The family then becomes an alcoholic family.

There are four general rules that operate in the alcoholic family;

#1. the Rule of Rigidity

#2. the Rule of Silence

#3. the Rule of Denial

#4. the Rule of Isolation

It is important to understand that these rules were established so the family could adjust to having an active alcoholic member. These are survival techniques, and the family does survive, but the survival behaviors learned are unhealthy.

The ACoA is bound by the four rules of the alcoholic family. They use these rules as a way to live their lives. They really have little choice in the matter; this is how they learn to live and survive as children. To become healthy, to learn to live full and happy lives ACoAs must begin to break the rules of the alcoholic family. This is being done by thousands of ACoAs, who are not content to remain bound by chains of rigidity, silence, denial, and isolation.

With therapy the ACoA loses the deep sense of fear that has always seemed to be with him. The anger and hurt lose their potency, and are replaced with a true feeling of happiness and joy. The ACoA becomes much better at dealing with life's ups and downs. There is a sense of wonder and joy for the ACoA as life's new experiences are greeted with comfort and excitement. Beginning the process is a huge step to freedom and a sense of well-being.

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