

USER'S GUIDE

Children of Alcohol follows a group of young people on a horse-back trip into the mountains. Each child is from a family where alcohol abuse is creating problems. In group sessions and individual interviews, the individuals talk about their anger and frustration, about the struggle to accept

and deal with their parents' drinking. By sharing their experiences they open a door for others like them. To those in the audience who know exactly what they are talking about, they are saying, "Hey, you're not alone. If I can do something about this problem, for myself, so can you..."

Children of Alcohol aims primarily at a general audience of eight years and older. It is a starting point for discussion about alcohol abuse and the family. Even though most of the viewers will not have experienced what the film describes, they will be sensitized to what some of their friends may be going through and what the effects can be.



CHILDREN OF ALCOHOL



National
Film Board
of Canada

Office
national du film
du Canada

THE PROBLEM

In a typical Canadian classroom of thirty students, three have a parent who abuses alcohol. Because these families characteristically deny there is a problem, many of the children never get the help they need and deserve. Isolated by a situation they are sure no one else will understand, they are often too ashamed or frightened to ask for support.

Children of problem drinkers are at risk in the following ways:

- Studies indicate they are two or three times as likely to abuse alcohol themselves.
- Because of traumatic developments in the family they are prone to emotional and psychological problems such as depression, aggression, emotional detachment and poor self-concept.
- A high incidence of alcohol abuse is reported in cases of incest, neglect, battering and suicide.

Because these young people are at risk, yet often appear to be coping, it is vital that someone — a teacher, another child, a group leader...you — encourages them to ask for help. Showing this film may be all the encouragement they need.

IDENTIFYING THE CHILDREN

Alcoholism specialist Charles Deutsch has identified signs that suggest a child may be dealing with alcohol abuse in the family. (These signs may also indicate other family problems not related to alcohol use.)

1. Extreme fear about situations involving contact with parents.
2. Scrupulous avoidance of conflict.
3. Regression such as thumb-sucking, wetting, infantile behaviour.
4. Hyperactivity.
5. Friendlessness; isolation.
6. Achievers' exaggerated concern with achievement or authority.
7. Sudden temper or other emotional outbursts.
8. Frequent illness, fatigue...listlessness.
9. Inappropriate clothing for the weather.
10. Bad body odor.



11. Poor attendance, morning tardiness.
12. Consistent concern about getting home promptly.

During individual or group discussion about alcohol or alcoholism the child might exhibit these signs:

1. Strong negativism about alcohol and/or alcoholics.
2. Inability to think of appropriate drinking styles. (For them, drinking means getting drunk)
3. Greater familiarity with kinds of alcohol than peers.
4. Inordinate attention to alcohol in situations where it is marginal. (For instance in a story or program)
5. A normally active child will become passive and vice versa.
6. Frequent requests to leave the room.
7. Lingering after activity to ask questions or collect belongings.
8. Evident concern with whether alcoholism can be inherited or cured.

WHEN A CHILD APPROACHES YOU

- **BE OPEN** and show that you are willing to listen **IN COMPLETE CONFIDENCE**.
- **DON'T PUSH** by asking too many questions, too soon.
- **KNOW YOUR LIMITATIONS** and **BE COMMITTED** to accompanying the child the next step towards on-going help.
- **BE SUPPORTIVE**; the important things that a child in this situation needs to hear are:

"It's not your fault."

"You are not alone."

"It must have been hard for you to tell me this...I am pleased you did."

"I believe you."

"I will help you" or "I will help you get help."

"People with drinking problems can and do recover."

The child is taking a risk by revealing the family "secret" to you. Reassure him or her that you will not tell anyone else unless he/she asks you to do so. Please make use of this opportunity to connect the child with some form of on-going support...an agency, the school counsellor, another child with a similar problem. Support may be as simple as making yourself available to the child the next time.



BEFORE SCREENING THE FILM

- Preview the film yourself
- Read the USER'S GUIDE thoroughly.
- Know why you are showing it. Try to be objective about your own responses to alcohol abuse and the issues raised by the film.
- Recognize that the film is a springboard and may provoke strong reactions. It makes sense to show it to an already established, cohesive group.
- Be familiar with appropriate counseling and information agencies in your community.
- Brief other teachers or leaders in your school or organization about the film's content, so they too will be prepared for students' reactions.

AFTER SCREENING THE FILM

THINGS TO DISCUSS

1. What do you know about the children's family life? What do we know about how the drinking parents behave? How do the children react to their drinking parent? (for example one boy tries to talk to his father, another doesn't want to go home.) What do we know about

the non-drinking parents and the children's feelings for them?

2. The film focuses on feelings. Have the group recall some of those feelings and who experienced them. (One boy felt anger and resentment; the shy blonde girl experienced fear when she interfered with her fighting parents.) How did the children cope with their feelings? What advice did they offer? ("Live your own life." "If it gets really bad, leave." "You don't have to be like them.") Have the class draw up a list of unwanted feelings and suggestions about how to handle them.

Example:

ANGER — Cool down, take a walk, count to ten, confront what's making you angry, take it out on your pillow, talk to someone about what makes you angry.

Discuss under what conditions certain responses might be better than others. (Confronting a sober parent is sometimes a good idea; confronting a drunk parent is never a good idea.) What other problems at home might cause the same kinds of feelings?

3. Write down the phone number of the appropriate local agency or Alateen group and have the students copy it and pocket the paper before you tell them what it is.

(That way each child will have the number without being stigmatized.) Begin the discussion by asking the group to remember the kinds of help available to those in the film...the obvious and the subtle. Where can young people in your area go for help? Make a list of helpers. (parents, teachers, a coach, a friend, grandmother, sister...) When is it appropriate to ask them for help. (If the family is denying the problem, asking Mom for help in coping with Dad's drinking problem may be inappropriate.)

4. If you and your group have successfully used role playing before, the following situations further explore the feelings of the people in the film.
 - Hoping to make a good impression, Sue is about to arrive home from school with a new friend. Sue's Mom is drunk.
 - Mom and drinking Dad are fighting in the next room. Big Sister is trying to talk little Brother out of going in and trying to stop them.
 - Kim's father pretends everything's alright, but Kim knows Dad drinks too much. After class, he decides to talk to the teacher about it.

After each role play, have the players discuss their motives and reactions.



THINGS TO DO

1. Have the group research and write editorials or articles about some aspect of alcohol use. (Drunk driving, legal age limits, children of alcoholics) These can be read and discussed in the group.
2. Ask each student to write a letter to a fictional friend giving advice on how to cope with an alcohol-abusing parent.
3. Have groups or individuals design an ad for radio, T.V., or magazines raising public awareness of some aspect of alcohol use.
4. Have individuals or groups create works of art exploring and reflecting the feelings of the children in the film. For example, a group may make a collage expressing anger; an individual could write a poem about the loneliness of coping with a problem by yourself; another could write a song expressing the joy of finding others who will share your concerns and problems.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Broken Bottles, Broken Dreams: Understanding and Helping the Children of Alcoholics, Charles Deutsch, 1982, Teachers' College Press, 1234 Amsterdam Avenue, New York, NY, 10027.

Children of Alcoholics: A Guidebook for Educators, Therapists and Parents, Robert J. Ackerman, 2nd Edition, 1983, Learning Publications Inc., P.O. Box 1326, Holmes Beach, Florida, 33509.

The Forgotten Children: A Study of Children with Alcoholic Parents, Margaret Cork, 1969, General Publishing Ltd., Paperbacks, 340 Steelcase Road East, Markham Ontario, L3R 2M1.

Living With a Parent Who Drinks Too Much, Judith S. Seixas, 1979, Greenwillow Books, Division of William Morrow & Company, 105 Medicine Avenue, New York, NY 10016.

My Dad Loves Me, My Dad Has a Disease: A Workbook for Children of Alcoholics, Claudia Black, 1979, Hazelden Educational Services, Box 176, Center City, MN 55012.

FILMOGRAPHY

"A Story About Feelings" (10 minutes, colour, 1980) Kinetic Film Enterprises Ltd., 781 Gerrard Street East, Toronto, Canada M4M 1Y5.

The film helps children understand the feelings they might have had within their families while reinforcing the message that help is available.

Recommended use: Young children; also general audiences.

"The First Step" (27 minutes, colour, 1975) Motivision Ltd., 21 West 42nd St., New York, NY, 212-757-4970.

In this drama about a family troubled by alcoholism, tensions and alliances within the family are explored.

Recommended use: Audiences of 12 years to adult; particularly parent-teen groups and counsellors.

"Lots of Kids Like Us" (28 minutes, colour, 1979) Kinetic Film Enterprises Ltd., (see above).

This story about kids at summer day camp provides solutions to situations faced by children from homes where drug dependency is a problem.

Recommended use: Young children to 12 years.

"Soft is the Heart of a Child" (28 minutes, colour, 1978) Kinetic Film Enterprises, Ltd. (see above).

An informed and sensitive school counsellor encourages a father and mother to recognize the effects of alcohol abuse on their children.

Recommended use: All ages, particularly parents and teachers.

"The Summer We Moved to Elm Street" (30 minutes, colour, 1966) National Film Board.

A 9-year-old girl finds her happiness disturbed by a move to a new neighbourhood and by her father's increasing drinking problem.

Recommended use: Junior high; also adult groups.



CREDIT LIST

DIRECTOR: Gil Cardinal
CINEMATOGRAPHER: Doug Cole
CAMERA ASSISTANT: Tim Belec
SOUND RECORDIST: Garrell Clark
PRODUCTION ASSISTANT: Avrel Fisher
MUSIC COMPOSITION: Larry Reese
MUSICIAN: Mark Korven
NARRATION WRITER: Bev Ross
NARRATOR: Kris Purdy
EDITORS: Harvey Spak, Anne Wheeler, Gil Cardinal
SOUND EDITOR: Gerald K. Wilson, c.f.e.
RE-RECORDING: Jean-Pierre Joutel
POST-PRODUCTION COORDINATOR: Roberta Mayer
UNIT ADMINISTRATOR: Margaret Smith
YOUTH TRIP COORDINATOR: Susan Feddema
 This film was made with the assistance of the Alberta Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Commission
PRODUCER: Anne Wheeler
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: Tom Radford

A Production of
 THE NATIONAL FILM BOARD
 NORTH WEST STUDIO
 CANADA

FURTHER ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE IN CANADA

Addictions Foundation
 of Prince Edward Island
 Box 37
 CHARLOTTETOWN,
 Prince Edward Island C1A 7K2
 (902) 892-4265

Department of Social Services
 1075 Ste-Foy Road
 QUEBEC CITY, Quebec G1S 2M1
 (418) 542-5451

Alcohol and Drug Commission
 201 - 1755 West Broadway
 VANCOUVER, British Columbia V1J 4S5
 (604) 873-6347 or 872-7122
 (Victoria 388-4421)

Alcoholism Foundation of Manitoba
 1031 Portage Avenue
 WINNIPEG, Manitoba R3G 0R6
 (204) 786-3831

Alcoholism & Drug Dependency
 Commission of New Brunswick
 103 Church Street
 P.O. Box 6000
 FREDERICTON,
 New Brunswick E3B 5H1
 (506) 453-2136

Alcohol & Drug Addiction Foundation
 P.O. Box 4554
 ST. JOHN'S, Newfoundland
 (709) 579-4041 or 4042

Alcoholism and Drug Addiction
 Research Foundation
 33 Russell Street
 TORONTO, Ontario M5S 2S1
 (416) 595-6000

Saskatchewan Alcoholism Commission
 3475 Albert Street
 REGINA, Saskatchewan S4S 6X6
 (306) 565-4085

Alberta Alcoholism
 and Drug Abuse Commission
 10909 Jasper Avenue
 EDMONTON, Alberta T5J 3L9
 (403) 427-7301

Nova Scotia Commission
 on Drug Dependency
 Suite 314, Lord Nelson Bldg.
 5675 Spring Garden Road
 HALIFAX, Nova Scotia B3J 1R1
 (902) 424-4270

Alcohol and Drug Services of Yukon
 P.O. Box 2703
 WHITEHORSE, Yukon Y1A 2C6

Alcohol and Drug Program
 Department of Health and Social Services
 P.O. Box 1769
 YELLOWKNIFE,
 Northwest Territories X1A 2L9
 (403) 873-7155

Canadian Addictions Foundation
 10909 Jasper Avenue
 EDMONTON, Alberta T5J 3M9
 (403) 421-0435

Council on Drug Abuse
 56 Esplanade Street East
 TORONTO, Ontario M5E 1A7

Drugs Directorate
 Department of National Health
 and Welfare
 Room 125, HPB Building
 Tunney's Pasture
 OTTAWA, Ontario K1A 0L2

Health Services and Promotion Branch
 Department of National Health
 and Welfare
 Jeanne Mance Building
 Tunney's Pasture
 OTTAWA, Ontario K1A 1B4

Produced by National Film Board of Canada
in co-operation with
Alberta Alcoholism
and Drug Abuse Commission

Distributed by National Film Board of Canada

16mm Color
Screening time: 18 minutes 12 seconds

16 mm: 106C 0184 017
3/4" U-Matic: 116C 0184 017
1/2" Beta: 114C 0184 017
1/2" VHS: 113C 0184 017

NFB OFFICES IN CANADA

Atlantic Region

Regional Office

1572 Barrington Street
Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 1Z6
Office: (902) 426-6000
Film Library: (902) 426-6001

District Offices

Sydney Shopping Mall
Prince Street
Sydney, Nova Scotia B1P 5K8
Telephone: (902) 564-7770

Terminal Plaza Building
1222 Main Street
Moncton, New Brunswick E1C 1H6
Telephone: (506) 857-6101

1 Market Square
Saint John, New Brunswick E2L 4Z6
Telephone: (506) 648-4996

202 Richmond Street
Charlottetown, P.E.I. C1A 1J2
Telephone: (902) 892-6612

Building 205
Pleasantville
St. John's, Newfoundland A1A 1S8
Telephone: (709) 772-5005

10 Main Street
Corner Brook, Newfoundland A2H 1C1
Telephone: (709) 637-4499

Quebec Region

Regional Office

Complexe Guy-Favreau
200 Dorchester Blvd. West
East Tower, Room 102
Montreal, Quebec H2Z 1X4
Telephone: (514) 283-4823

District Offices

530 Jacques Cartier Street East
Chicoutimi, Quebec G7H 1Z5
Telephone: (418) 543-0711

350 St. Joseph Street East
Quebec, Quebec G1K 3B2
Office: (418) 648-3176
Film Library: (418) 648-3852

124 Vimy Street
Rimouski, Quebec G5L 3J6
Office: (418) 722-3088
Film Library: (418) 722-3086

315 King Street West, Ste. 3
Sherbrooke, Quebec J1H 1R2
Office: (819) 565-4915
Film Library: (819) 565-4931

Room 502, Pollack Building
140 St. Antoine Street
Trois-Rivières, Quebec G9A 5N6
Office: (819) 375-5714
Film Library: (819) 375-5811

42 Mgr. Rhéaume East
Rouyn, Quebec J9X 3J5
Telephone: (819) 762-6051

Ontario Region

Regional Office

Mackenzie Building
1 Lombard Street
Toronto, Ontario M5C 1J6
Film Library: (416) 973-9093

District Offices

First Place Hamilton
10 West Avenue South
Hamilton, Ontario L8N 3Y8
Telephone: (416) 523-2347

New Federal Building
Clarence Street
Kingston, Ontario K7L 1X0
Film Library: (613) 545-8056

Suite 205
659 King Street East
Kitchener, Ontario N2G 2M4
Office: (519) 743-2771

366 Oxford Street East
London, Ontario N6A 1V7
Telephone: (519) 679-4120

195 First Avenue West
North Bay, Ontario P1B 3B8
Telephone: (705) 472-4740

910 Victoria Avenue
Thunder Bay, Ontario P7C 1B4
Telephone: (807) 623-5224

National Capital

150 Kent Street, Suite 642
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0M9
Office: (613) 996-4863
Film Library: (613) 996-4861

Prairie Region

Regional Office

245 Main Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 1A7
Office: (204) 949-4129
Film Library: (204) 949-4131

District Offices

222 1st Street S.E.
P.O. Box 2959, Station M
Calgary, Alberta T2P 3C3
Office: (403) 292-5338
Film Library: (403) 292-5414

Centennial Building
10031 - 103rd Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 0G9
Office: (403) 420-3012
Film Library: (403) 420-3010

Suite 111
2001 Cornwall St.
Regina, Saskatchewan S4P 2K6
Telephone: (306) 780-5012

424 - 21st Street East
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
S7K 0C2
Office: (306) 975-4246
Film Library: (306) 975-4245

Pacific Region

Regional Office

1161 West Georgia Street
Vancouver, B.C. V6E 3G4
Office: (604) 666-0718
Film Library: (604) 666-0716

District Offices

545 Quebec Street
Prince George, B.C. V2L 1W6
Telephone: (604) 564-5657

811 Wharf Street
Victoria, B.C. V8W 1T2
Office: (604) 388-3869
Film Library: (604) 388-3868