

Parents dream of many things for their children...
drug addiction
is never one of them.



No Quick Fix

A FILM BY ANDRÉE CAZABON



Accompanying Guide



Youth
Employment
Strategy

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Canada



A National Film
Board of Canada
Production



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This guide accompanies the film **No Quick Fix**

It was made for parents, professionals and teachers who are in contact with teenagers who abuse drugs.

Concept: Andrée Cazabon and Deirdra McKie, in consultation with Rideauwood Addiction and Family Services.

Graphic Design: Mardigrafe inc.

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For more information about the film **No Quick Fix**, visit our Web site www.nfb.ca/noquickfix

For information on the programs of Canada's Youth Employment Strategy call the Youth Info Line at 1 800 935-5555, or visit their Web site at www.youth.gc.ca

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DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT



When I thought of what I would have to go through for *No Quick Fix*, I was scared. I had real reservations. I didn't want to be labelled an "ex-punk/addict filmmaker." I knew that the subject of this documentary and my particular approach were dangerous for me, given my history.

I was afraid of immersing myself once more in street life. I was afraid of succumbing once more if I went back to the "old battlefield." In my early twenties, I had finally overcome my addiction and was leading a peaceful life, without ghosts or war wounds. I had regained a closeness with my family. Our long therapy was finally over. I was a student, like everyone else.

The more films and TV programs I saw about street kids, the more I felt the need to expose the myths surrounding these kids. I wanted to make a film that questions what's being said about street kids. You can say what you like about them but, for too many, drugs hold them captive. It was time to hear a new voice: the parent's voice.

Knowing that the resources available to me when I left the streets in 1988 are almost non-existent today, I started wondering what would have become of me if I were a fourteen-year old on the streets now. Those tremendous gaps in care and treatment, together with our blaming parents and refusing to talk about the families of street kids, left me wondering about hope...

Yet, I know there is hope. Given half a chance, the human spirit will always opt for survival.

I knew that if I, as an ex-street kid, took a stand, I'd have a much better chance of being heard than a parent ever would. And so I decided to take my "voice" and give it to parents, in order to honour my parents' courage, and that of many other families presently living this nightmare. My goal was to take away the shame and isolation that destroys entire families. I believed that, given a forum, parents would stand up and begin the fight for their kids. There lay the hope for me: parents advocating for their children. As one parent once put it: "Those who profit from our children's addiction are much, much more organized than we are as parents."

What really amazed me during the whole filming process was the impact it had on my parents. We found ourselves reliving the old nightmare. That was not my intention. I just wanted to make a film that would be a tribute to my parents for having wrestled with this nightmare. For their part, my parents wanted me to make any film except this! They wanted to protect me from the street once again. The shoot proved difficult for everyone. I could see myself in these kids, and my parents in their parents.

No Quick Fix was a harrowing adventure. No one remained unmoved by it. Now, when I look at the film, I feel deep gratitude and great admiration for the families who took part in it.

Andrée Cazaban

THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE FILM

Through the lives of two street kids, *No Quick Fix* bears witness to the pain and worry of parents of drug-addicted youth. The filmmaker follows Cathy and Laurent over a nine-month period. Nothing is held back in the account of their troubled existence and the relapses they fall into. This video gives the parents' perspective and shows their personal struggles to try to save their children, despite them.

In *No Quick Fix*, we see excerpts from *Letters to a Street Child*, a short docu-drama by Andrée Cazabon, based on the letters written to her by her father during the period Andrée lived on the street.

CATHY AND MARJOLAINE

Twenty-year old Cathy has been an IV drug user and street-involved youth since the age of thirteen when she first ran away from home. Police officers found her in a derelict building where she had been introduced to heroin. A report was made to the Youth Protection Services. At that point, Marjolaine and her husband lost custody of Cathy. No one informed the parents about addiction. It wasn't until the end of shooting *No Quick Fix* that Marjolaine began to understand that Cathy didn't have a "behaviour problem", but was an addict who, like an alcoholic, needed to be treated professionally if she was to overcome the addiction.

*"We should inform parents...
I have often been in contact with Cathy
while she was under the influence
of drugs and never noticed it."*

— Marjolaine.



*“Even if you live in the suburbs,
you’re not immune to this.”* — Laurent’s father

*“Organized crime is much better organized
that we are as parents.”* — Marjolaine

LAURENT AND HIS FAMILY

Laurent, at 19, is involved with hard drugs like crack. He has been in the custody of the Youth Protection Services since he was thirteen years old. Having received every possible intervention in over twenty youth institutions, Laurent wants nothing to do with another institution or facility. He wonders which is worse: what he lived through on the streets or his experiences in the youth system.

THE CAZABON FAMILY

Having been sexually abused by an employer at the age of the twelve, Andrée, the filmmaker of *No Quick Fix*, abandoned her life to drugs and alcohol, quickly falling into the violent underworld of street punks. Her parents tell the story of the difficulties they faced in their attempt to save Andrée.



VIEWER DISCRETION

No Quick Fix takes us into the raw reality of life on the street. The audience should be aware it contains scenes that are difficult to view, including two scenes of drug use. The personal accounts shared by the participants in the film can provoke painful emotions in some viewers.

We recommend that you preview this film before showing it to an audience.

WHO SHOULD VIEW THIS FILM?

No Quick Fix can be an important tool for educating youth about drug use. It is particularly useful for:

- parents of youth at risk
- youth over 16 years of age
- professionals working with youth at risk
- teachers, youth workers, outreach workers, police officers
- at-risk youth and young addicts

"I dream of freedom : the freedom to no longer depend on the garbage that I use." — Cathy



WHAT IS THE PROCESS OF ADDICTION?

Experts agree that progression to addiction is predictable. No one sets out to become an addict or alcoholic, nor does it happen instantly. Experimentation can lead to regular use, resulting in increased tolerance of and dependence on the chosen drug and a physiological need for it. The drug becomes an obsession for the user and replaces other more positive things in life. Addiction indicates a dependence on the substance; at this point, being under the influence of the substance feels “normal”, leading to an inability to live sober.

WHO IS “AT RISK”?

It would be easier to ask who is not at risk! Many factors can lead to addiction. Any time someone relies on a substance to camouflage their feelings or deal with painful events, there is a risk of developing an addiction as an unhealthy coping mechanism. During the physical and emotional changes of adolescence, youth seem more vulnerable to addiction. Life skills are developed during adolescence and this growth does not occur when drugs or alcohol artificially handle problems.

It may be an indicator for concern, if the child is:

- seriously violating family standards
- using or misusing drugs
- showing manipulative or aggressive behaviour
- showing significant decline in school attendance or performance
- involved with an antisocial or unfamiliar peer group
- leaving home periodically, or constantly on the street.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF DRUG USE?

Certain signs or changes in behaviour can indicate that a child may be using drugs.

- Do you get the impression that the child is hiding something?
- Do you notice an odour of alcohol, marijuana or solvents on the child?
- Have you found drug paraphernalia?
- Does the child borrow large sums of money?
- Are valuable articles disappearing from the house?
- Does the child openly admit drug use?
- Does the child associate with known drug users?

The more symptoms you notice, the greater the likelihood of drug use.

“Even if you’re stoned twelve hours a day, the rest of the time you’re a human being.”

— Laurent

“When you develop an addiction to drugs, it becomes a prison.”

— Cathy



DENIAL, ENABLING AND DETACHMENT

Denial is a form of self-defence. As addiction causes more difficulties, we try to dismiss the problem with lies or attempt to minimize its seriousness. Denial is an act of protection or cover-up when, in reality, the addiction is destroying life, both for the user and those living with him or her. Enabling behaviour can be part of the denial.

Enabling is the term used to describe actions that unwittingly allow negative behaviour to continue. In essence, enabling behaviour creates an atmosphere in which the addict can continue using the substance. It will be necessary to learn how to detach from the addict's behaviour. We can support our loved one without enabling the addiction.

Detachment refers to learning how to separate oneself from the adverse effects of addiction. Detachment does not imply judgment or condemnation of the addicted person. It means learning how to hold the addicted person accountable for their drug use and the kinds of choices it results in. By practising detachment, you can better look after yourself and others affected by the drug use.

“Now in Montreal it’s easier to find heroin than pot.” — Laurent





THE SUBWAY ANALOGY

No **Quick Fix** often uses images of a subway tunnel to travel between the world of the parents and the world of the streets. Throughout the film, the subway system is used as a metaphor. The subway analogy can be used to examine many concepts relating to addiction.

THE FOLLOWING IDEAS MAY HELP YOU START THE DISCUSSION:

Society suppresses addiction and forces it underground.

The stations of the subway system can be compared to the roles people and organizations play in addiction and recovery.

In the film, the subway is the vehicle between darkness and light. In intervention counselling, how does teamwork play the role of the subway, with all its stations and possible routes?

If only the present services available to young people were as well coordinated and reliable as the subway system! Wouldn't it be great if youth were given the same value in our society as a transit commission? No one would think of sacrificing safety features in a subway system to cut costs. Why is it different for kids at risk?

If the subway represents addiction, who controls the system? Organized crime? Government? Adults? Youth? Consumer Society?

Taking the subway to go somewhere means knowing which stop to get off . Compare this to seeking professional help. Compare it to the steps of recovery. Who can travel without a map?

STRATEGIES FOR PARENTS

If you are reading this guide in the hope of preventing your child from experimenting with drugs and alcohol, learn more about fostering strong self-esteem in your child and keeping the lines of communication open between you and your child. Stress the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Read as much as literature as possible that deals with helping your child navigate the trials of adolescence.

If there are indicators that your child is abusing drugs or alcohol, it is important to be well informed about the physical signs of drug use. If you suspect alcohol or drug use, remember that the child is working hard to conceal his or her substance abuse, so what you detect may only be the tip of the iceberg.



Find out what resources and services are available in your community. Look for those that offer a family component, an immediate action plan, separate individual and group counselling for the adolescent and the parents, and an active long-term commitment. Consult an addiction treatment professional to determine the extent of your child's drug use. Make sure the agency is familiar with addiction.

Be aware that feelings of BLAME and SHAME hinder your chances of helping your child.

Learn important concepts such as DENIAL, ENABLING and DETACHMENT. Effective skills for parenting a substance-abusing teen require learning when and how to step back from the manipulation, when and how to tell the truth with love, and when and how to reach out for education and support. Learning and applying these skills will help you avoid confrontations. You can provide leadership and love and, most important, continue to assume an active parental role. Be patient, and be prepared for a long process filled with alternating periods of hope and discouragement.



You have a "station" on the long subway journey of your child's life. Know and understand your role and limits as a parent, and try not to bear all the responsibility on your shoulders.

FOR PARENTS: OPENING UP THE REFLECTION PROCESS

1. How can you counter the great strain a drug-involved child puts on the entire family? (For example, on your personal health and your relationship with your partner/spouse and other children.)

2. Towards the end of the film, Marjolaine, Cathy's mother, says "parents must get out of their kitchen". What does she mean by this?

In what ways is retreating to the kitchen a natural reflex? And how does one "leave the kitchen"?



3. Parents in the film maintain some form of contact with their "street-children" and support them. What limits and conditions would you think acceptable in order to keep supporting your child?

4. The filmmaker emphasizes that families and street youth live a "parallel hell". This may imply that if one member of the family improves his or her situation, it ought to have a positive impact on others. Is this sufficient incentive for parents to remain involved and responsible and not give up despite the seeming hopelessness of their predicament?

5. The film seems to indicate that community treatment resources may be inadequate. Is this a good enough reason not to seek relevant information and professional help?
6. For years, Marjolaine feared learning too much about the day to day life of her daughter and the world she was lost to. Yet, to her surprise, she felt empowered as a parent and much more able to help her daughter, once she learned the facts about addiction and the street world. Discuss.
7. Outside Bordeaux Jail, Pierette talks about detachment and setting limits with Laurent to ensure her own survival, yet she remains involved in his life. Reflect on this delicate balance.

“Let’s not bury our heads in the sand thinking that this is the story of others and that it will never happen to us.”

— Laurent’s father



STRATEGIES FOR THE COMMUNITY

A FEW TIPS TO START...

When a family in crisis seeks help, agencies and professionals are faced with two clients: the adolescent, who is often reluctant to discuss risk-prone behaviour, and the parents, who are often frightened and discouraged and who expect a “quick fix.”

A single agency is often incapable of serving all its client's needs. Be aware of different services offered in the community and work in conjunction with other professionals. A team approach is essential (teen, parents, counsellors, teachers, doctors and various professionals). It's important to remember, when you try to help a client, not to become an unwilling accomplice to his or her addiction.

A teen in crisis may face many immediate problems. Drug use can camouflage emotional issues. However, it is difficult to address these issues while the child is under the influence of drugs and alcohol. With the help of professional assessment, begin by gauging how far substance abuse is a factor in their life. Explain at the onset that change is a long and often painful journey filled with periods of both disappointment and hope.



Both parents and teens already feel **BLAME** and **SHAME** because their family is in crisis. They are particularly sensitive to your judgement. It is important to respect both parties and try to get them actively involved in an action plan.

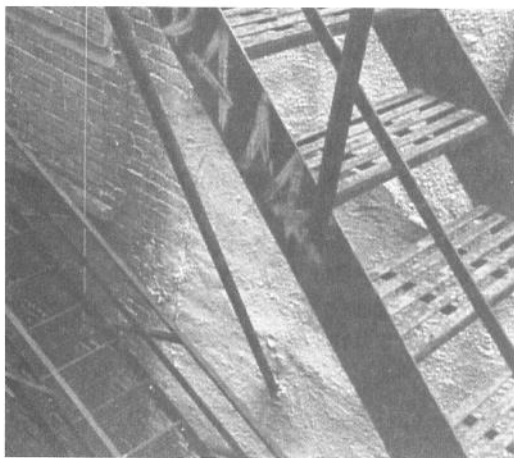
You too are just a “station” on your client’s “subway journey”. You alone cannot “fix” this family. Understand your limits and try not to assume the entire responsibility.

DISCUSSION THEMES: COMMUNITY

The following discussion themes can be used in any order. It is important to prepare the audience for the film and the follow-up discussion. The *Subway Analogy* section also offers possibilities for discussion.

1. Why do you think the three families we met in the film committed to what becomes a two-year involvement with the film project?
2. What major stereotypes of street kids' families does the film wish to counter?

3. Cathy tells us that despite her drug use, she is in control of her life. She tries to reassure her mother of this. What are your thoughts?
4. How does the dynamic between Marjolaine and Cathy, as well as between Laurent and his mother, evolve during the film?
5. In what ways have the participants in the film changed during their involvement with **No Quick Fix**?
6. We meet Laurent's father during his son's incarceration at Bordeaux Jail. He appears bitter about the ineffectiveness of the help his son has received since the age of twelve. Do you share his feelings?



VIEWING WITH YOUTH

PREPARATION

In the regular school setting, **No Quick Fix** is best suited to teens over 16 years old. The graphic footage of the film demands care when using this film as an educational tool. Preview the film before showing it. It is suggested that you research the stages of addiction and obtain a resource list of available services in your region. Invite someone with knowledge of addiction to speak to the group.

OBJECTIVES

To develop an awareness of the negative consequences of drug use and addiction.

To develop an awareness of the impact of addiction and street life on the family and society.

BEFORE VIEWING

1. Introduce the film and explain the purpose of viewing and the discussion that will follow.
2. Ensure you have prepared the teenage audience for the film. Advise them of the scenes of drug use and prepare them for possible emotional reactions to the content.

3. Establish an atmosphere of respect for the viewing. Some students may cry. Others may laugh out of nervousness. Remind them of the need to be respectful of others in their comments. Some members of the audience may be dealing with addiction in their families.

AFTER VIEWING

You may wish to give the teenagers a chance to silently reflect on the film before opening up discussion.

POSSIBLE THEMES TO EXPLORE IN DISCUSSION

In addition to the following questions, the themes suggested in the other sections might also be useful.

- How did addiction progress for Cathy and Laurent?
- What were the signs the parents noticed, first, in the early stages, then, in the later stages?
- What were the negative consequences of drug abuse?
- What resources and solutions can combat the problem of drug abuse?
- Is Cathy and Laurent's behaviour exclusive to street life? Can some kids lead a similar life while living at home?

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT ADDICTIONS SERVICES

Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission

Tel: (780) 427-2837

Fax: (780) 423-1419

www.aadac.com

BC Ministry for Children and Families

Addiction Services

Tel: (250) 953-3113

Fax: (250) 953-3044

www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/mcf/

Addictions Foundation of Manitoba

Provincial Administration

Tel: (204) 944-6200

Fax: (204) 786-7768

www.afm.mb.ca

New Brunswick Department of Health and Community Services

Tel: (506) 453-8446

Fax: (506) 453-2958

<http://inter.gov.nb.ca/hcs-ssc/>

Newfoundland Department of Health and Community Services

Addiction Services

Tel: (709) 729-0719

Fax: (709) 729-5824

www.gov.nf.ca/health/

Nova Scotia Department of Health

Addiction Services

Tel: (902) 424-7220

Fax: (902) 424-0550

www.gov.ns.ca/health/

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health

CAMH - Toronto

Tel: (416) 595-6000

Fax: (416) 595-5017

www.camh.net

PEI Department of Health and Social Services

Addiction Services

Tel: (902) 368-5791

Fax: (902) 368-6136

www.gov.pe.ca/health/

Quebec Ministry of Health and Social Services

Tel: (418) 646-9506

Fax: (418) 643-9024

www.msss.gouv.qc.ca/

Saskatchewan Department of Health

Community Care Branch

Tel: (306) 787-4686

Fax: (306) 787-7095

www.gov.sk.ca/health/default.htm

TERRITORIAL GOVERNMENT ADDICTIONS SERVICES

Northwest Territories
Department of Health
and Social Services
Community Wellness Programs
Tel: (867) 873-7991
Fax: (867) 873-7706
www.hlthss.gov.nt.ca

Yukon Department of Health
and Social Services
Alcohol and Drug Services
Tel: (867) 667-5700
Fax: (867) 667-5819
www.hss.gov.yk.ca/

Nunavut Department of
Health and Social Services
Wellness Programs Bag 800
Tel: (867) 975-5700
Fax: (867) 975-5705
www.nunavut.com/government/

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

If you have a drug problem, contact your local Narcotics Anonymous chapter. The following resources can also be found in most communities and can address various needs:

- Alcoholics Anonymous
- Nar-Anon (for families, spouses and parents)
- Al-Anon (for families, spouses and parents)
- Your local detox centre

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Available from Publications Unit, Health Canada,

Tel: (613) 954-5995; Fax: (613) 941-5366

Meeting the needs of youth at risk in Canada:

A summary of the learnings 1998. 105 p.

Tips for working with youth in community development projects.
1997. 20 p.

www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppb/alcohol-otherdrugs/pdf/tipsyouths.pdf

Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission.

Available at 1-800-280-9616.

Banks, Sally (ed.) *How do I fit? A Skills Manual for Youth at Risk.*
1997, 101 p.

Prepared by the At-Risk Peer-Support Coalition.

www.gov.ab.ca/aadac/

Talking to your children about alcohol and other drugs. 2000

http://www.gov.ab.ca/aadac/addictions/abc/talk_to_children_drugs_alcohol.htm

Talking to your teens about drugs. 2000

www.gov.ab.ca/aadac/addictions/abc/talking_to_teens_drugs.htm

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Substance Abuse
and Mental Health Services Administration. Center for Substance
Abuse Prevention. *Here's proof prevention works*, Rockville,
MD 1999. 1 v. in various pagings

Available from the United States National Clearinghouse
on Alcohol and Drugs.

Information: 1-800-729-6686 or (301) 468-2600.

www.health.org/hry/

Annis, Helen M.; Davis, Christine S. (eds) *Drug use by adolescents:
identification, assessment and intervention.* Toronto, ON: Addiction
Research Foundation, Health and Welfare Canada, 1991. 155 p.
Available from Marketing and Sales Service, 1-800-661-1111.



No Quick Fix

How does a parent understand that one child, but not the other, can succumb to drugs, live on the streets and be exposed to life-threatening situations? How do we deal with this terrible reality?

Young director Andrée Cazabon draws on her own street experience to craft this powerful film. She accompanies two mothers, Marjolaine and Pierrette, who are consumed with anxiety and guilt and overwhelmed by their battle to find and save their children. *No Quick Fix* reveals the confusion and despair of parents who find themselves up against the frightening addictions of their children, just as Cazabon's parents were once tormented by their daughter's choices.

Director: **Andrée Cazabon**
Producer: **Yves Bisailon**

Produced and distributed by the National Film Board of Canada.

This guide is designed for parents, teachers and drug-addiction professionals.

The film *No Quick Fix* and accompanying guide are also available in French under the title *Enfer et contre tous!*

To Order NFB Videos, Call 1-800-267-7710

www.nfb.ca/noquickfix