It's Not Your Fault!

Hi!

Are you worried that your Mom or Dad drinks too much or uses drugs? You are right to be concerned—about their safety and health, about what will happen to you, about their embarrassing you or criticizing you unfairly, about breaking promises, about driving under the influence, and about lots of other things that create unpredictability and confusion. While you cannot stop your parent from drinking or using drugs, you can take steps to make things better for yourself.

Facts You Should Know...

One in four youth under age 18 lives in a family where a person abuses alcohol or suffers from alcoholism. Countless others are affected by a family member's use of drugs.

✧ **Remember:** You are **not** alone. Lots of teens are in your situation and it's important to deal with it.

Addiction to alcohol or drugs is a disease. When one member of the family has this disease, all family members are affected.

✧ **Remember:** It's not your fault; it's a disease. You didn't cause it, and you can't make it stop. You need and deserve help for yourself.

Young people with alcohol- or drug-addicted parents are **four times** more likely to become addicted if they choose to drink alcohol or use illegal drugs.

✧ **Remember:** You can't get addicted if you don't drink or use drugs.

Take care of yourself...

Talk with an adult— maybe a teacher, school counselor or nurse, friend's parent, doctor, grandparent, aunt or uncle, or neighbor—who will listen and help you deal with problems at home.

Join a support group—they're great places to meet other young people who are struggling with the same problems at home that you face. To find a local support group, talk to your school counselor or social worker.

✧ **Remember:** It is important to find caring adults who can help you. Talking to them really helps.

Get involved in activities at school and in the community where you can hang out with other young people, use your special talents and strengths and learn new skills while you are having fun.

✧ **Remember:** Even if the person with the disease doesn't get help, you can still get the help you need to feel better and to have a safe and productive life.

Remember The Seven Cs

I didn't **C**ause it
I can't **C**ure it
I can't **C**ontrol it
I can take better **C**are of myself
by **C**ommunicating my feelings,
Making healthy **C**hoices,
Celebrating myself.

It's Not Your Fault!

Remember Alateen

Alateen is a group for teens who are affected by someone else's alcohol or drug use. It holds meetings, like a club, where young people share tips on how to make their lives easier when a family member drinks too much or uses drugs. The meetings are sponsored by Al-Anon. You can find the location of meetings near you by calling the toll free number for Al-Anon/Alateen, 1-888-425-2666, or you can ask your school counselor, a clergy member, your doctor, or another adult you trust to help you find meetings near you. Another way to find out about Alateen is by logging onto their Web site at www.alateen.org.

You are not alone.

Lots of other teens like you are living in the confusion and chaos caused by alcoholism or drug use in the family. You deserve help; ask for it!

For More Information

http://www.abovetheinfluence.com/help/when-parents-use.aspx
http://www.shoutinginside.com
http://www.nacoa.org/kidspage.htm

National Youth Anti-Drug Campaign

www.nacoa.org
NACoA
National Association for Children of Alcoholics
11426 Rockville Pike, Suite 301
Rockville, MD 20852