

Looking after yourself is important and you do not need to do this on your own.

You can get information and support for yourself and your family and whānau from:

Alcohol Drug Helpline
www.alcoholdrughelp.org.nz
phone 0800 787 797 | text 8681

Al-Anon Family Groups:
www.al-anon.org.nz
phone 0508 425 2666

Kina Families and Addictions Trust:
www.kina.org.nz

The Familial Trust:
www.familialtrust.org

Supporting Families:
<http://supportingfamilies.org.nz>

DrugHelp:
www.drughelp.org.nz

Resources

Living Well: Life strategies for family, whānau and friends of people using alcohol or other drugs:
www.matuaraki.org.nz/uploads/files/KINA-living-well-brochure-web.pdf

We are Family: Stories of family and whānau affected by someone else's use of alcohol and other drugs:
www.matuaraki.org.nz/resources/we-are-family-stories-of-family-and-whanau-affected-by-someone-elses-use-of-alcohol-or-other-drugs/727

Matua Raki
National Addiction Workforce Development



The Substance Addiction (Compulsory Assessment and Treatment) Act 2017

Family and whānau guide

Living with and/or supporting someone experiencing a severe substance (alcohol or other drug) addiction can be distressing and confusing.

Family and whānau may want to use the Substance Addiction (Compulsory Assessment and Treatment) Act 2017 to get their loved one into treatment.

This brochure provides some introductory information about that process.



Living with and/or supporting someone experiencing a severe substance (alcohol or other drug) addiction can be distressing and confusing.

Compulsory assessment and treatment is a last resort and the Act can only be used after all other options have been tried without success.

Importantly:

- even if your loved one has serious addiction problems, and all other options have been tried, the Act may still not apply
- the Act will only apply to people who are very unwell due to severe substance addiction and who are unable to make their own decisions about treatment
- it is very unlikely that the Act will apply to someone under the age of 17
- if someone can think through the consequences of their decisions, even if that decision is to refuse treatment, the Act can't be used – no matter what we think and feel about that choice.

How to make an application

If you believe your family and whānau member has a severe substance addiction and is unable to make their own decisions about addiction treatment, you can apply to have them assessed, either through:

- an authorised officer
- your GP or other medical practitioner.

Deciding to use the Act can be a difficult decision and an authorised officer, who is a trained health professional, can talk with you about the Act, help you to make the application if appropriate, and support you and your family and whānau member to get ongoing help.

You can contact your GP, local District Health

Board or an alcohol and other drug service to arrange to talk to an authorised officer.

The Alcohol Drug Helpline:

(www.alcoholdrughelp.org.nz | phone 0800 787 797 | text 8681) can help you find a local service and talk with you about your concerns.



What happens if your family and whānau member meets all criteria under the Act?

If the authorised officer thinks your family and whānau member may meet the criteria they will arrange for an assessment by an approved specialist.

Approved specialists are health professionals who have been appointed by the Ministry of Health to make the final decisions about compulsory assessment and treatment.

If the person meets all the criteria the approved specialist will sign a Compulsory Treatment Certificate and arrange health care and withdrawal management (detoxification) for your family and whānau member. After this it is likely your family and whānau member will be transferred to a treatment centre that has been approved for this purpose by the Ministry of Health.

You will be kept informed of when this will happen, where your family and whānau member will be and how to keep in touch. It may also be possible

to visit and stay at the centre.

In the treatment centre your family and whānau member will be under the care of health workers to stabilise their health and restore their ability to make decisions about addiction treatment.

The purpose of compulsory treatment is to restore a person's ability to make their own decisions about treatment if possible. Once someone is assessed as being able to make decisions about treatment for addiction they will be discharged from the Act. If they decide at this stage to accept treatment this will be provided by, and at, a different service.

When decision making ability is not restored or it is but your family and whānau member does not want to engage in treatment, workers at a local alcohol and other drug service and at the treatment centre will talk with you and your family and whānau about what happens next.

What happens if your family and whānau member does not meet all criteria under the Act?

If the Act does not apply, the authorised officer will talk with you and support you with other options for getting help for your family and whānau member and yourself.



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