



Moving Parents And Children Together



## What is Moving Parents and Children Together?

M-PACT is a free service, offering a holistic approach to support all family members affected by parental substance misuse.

Following a comprehensive family assessment, the programme runs for eight consecutive weeks. With trained Facilitators, each weekly session covers a different topic and combines separate group work with children and adults, family units and the whole group, they work together to understand how parental substance misuse has affected their lives, increasing the range of coping strategies and interrupt repeating patterns of harmful behaviour and reduce risks. A programme can bring together up to eight families at any one time, where at least one parent has or has had an alcohol or drug problem and where there is at least one child aged 8-17 years old. Each family has a review session shortly after the programme ends and a reunion session, approximately three months later, bringing the families together for the final time.

### Programme Aims:

- To offer the support and opportunity for change that is unlikely without external help
- To improve communication within the family
- To raise parent's awareness about the impact their misuse has on all family members
- To support children and young people
- To reduce negative impact of substance misuse on children, young people and the family
- To interrupt repeating patterns of harmful behaviour and reduce risks
- To increase the range of coping strategies and raise self-esteem
- To strengthen protective and resilience factors
- To provide education around substance misuse
- To identify additional needs of both parents, children and young people and guide them towards further help
- To explore values and beliefs that families carry
- To support children and young people whose parent(s) misuse or have misused drugs and/or alcohol
- To reduce the risk of children misusing substances – breaking the cycle of intergenerational substance misuse

## How Does M-PACT help?

M-PACT promotes a whole family approach ensuring children and young people living with parental substance misuse are safe, visible and their voices are heard. It looks at the impact of substance misuse to family life and the effects on children and young people and it aims to reduce the shame and stigma associated with parental substance misuse and focuses on helping and supporting families to make positive changes.

The programme helps build resilience and coping strategies by promoting positive and honest communication. It improves parental recognition of children's health and supports appropriate referrals for drug and alcohol treatment.

### During the programme we expect to see:

- Improved family environments
- Enjoyed quality as a family
- Improved communication

The overall outcomes of M-PACT can vary and broadly speaking there is improved communication and changed attitudes around addiction. M-PACT supports families to think about what they need as individuals and families to keep safe and recognise when there are problems.

## Who is the client group?

Families who have been affected by parental substance misuse, where there are children aged 8–17.

## Referral Criteria

- M-PACT takes referrals for the whole family and there are multiple benefits of working with the whole family. The criteria for M-PACT are quite broad – families who are or have been affected by parental substance misuse
- Generally, the referral would be for the family with a substance misusing adult, drugs (illegal/prescribed) or alcohol. Ideally this person would be engaged in a harm reduction programme or other treatment or recovery. However, this is optional as some people go on to access treatment after M-PACT, but there must be some willingness to change.
- The non-misusing adults affected by the drug/alcohol use of another adult can also attend.
- Where there are children aged 8–17 in the family.
- The family unit attending M-PACT can be made up with another adult family member e.g., Grandmother or Aunt if the parents do not want to or are unable to engage in the process
- In some cases, a child can attend on their own with parental consent.

## What happens when referral made

The referral will come to a central referral source philip@alcoholforum.org .The referral will be acknowledged, and we shall contact the family to make an appointment to meet for an assessment. Following the family assessment, the family, depending on their needs are enrolled onto the eight week programme.

When a family have been assessed and offered a place and accepted it, the facilitator will keep in touch with both the family and the referrer until the programme starts , enabling the family to develop a rapport with the facilitator and the referrer can have confidence that the family are in safe hands. It is also good practice to let the referrer know what will happen when a referral has been made.

## Benefits of attending an M-PACT programme

Engagement with M-PACT is high. Approximately 80% of those who started a programme completed a minimum of 6 M-PACT sessions (Lorna Templeton 2011)

Here is some feedback from a variety of families and family members who have attended the M-PACT Programme:

*"We talk now and its great, I don't have to worry as much about mammy now when she is not drinking anymore"*

*"It helped to know I was not on my own"*

*"Hearing other peoples experiences helped me"*

*"worried that one day you will end up like your mam and then hurt your family"*

*"we talk more, there is less shouting at home"*

*"it helped being able to speak out , knowing that others knew how I felt!!! "*

*"On the first session of MPACT, I felt like I was not on my own as there were other families in similar situations, this helped to lessen the shame that parents who have had problems with drugs and alcohol feel. Shame can be very isolating."*

*"I got so much from MPACT, I built a relationship with my family. We learned to break down the barriers and communicate. Our relationship has grown beyond belief and we feel comfortable talking to each other and most importantly, listening to each other. We also learnt to apologise to each other."*

*"I think that we learnt so much about expressing our feelings and felt safe with the other families. It was really important for the young people to be with other young people and feel heard."*

*"Substance misuse in families is quite common, MPACT helps families to understand that they are not alone and that other families are in the same boat."*

*"I still think of the other families and facilitators with a lot of warmth and affection. I will never forget an experience which helped to turn my life around. My daughter moved back in after completing MPACT."*

**For further information contact**

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