

TIP SHEET FOR RELATIVES AS PARENTS

#1

4/05

WHAT YOU MIGHT BE FEELING

If you have taken in a child because of parental substance abuse, you probably have a lot of feelings about it. Some are painful others may be uplifting. Here are some common feelings relative caregivers have when drug abuse is involved.

1. **Guilt** – you may feel guilty. Maybe you think if you had been a better parent your son or daughter would not have a drug problem. Remember, you didn't cause the addiction. So, let go of your guilt. Focus on the present and on the future.
2. **Relief** – If the child was in a very hard situation before moving in with you, you may feel relieved. You do not need to worry anymore that the child may not be safe and fed or with a safe adult. Enjoy this sense of relief.
3. **Shame** – Many people feel embarrassed about their family problems, especially drug problems. You should know that you are not alone with this problem. Try to open up to your friends. Talk to those people you trust most.
4. **Sadness** – If you feel a deep sense of sadness, it is no wonder. You have watched someone hurt their life and perhaps the life of a child. Seeking help for yourself may be important.
5. **Anger and Betrayal** – Anger is another feeling that is normal. Your life is wrapped up with a drug abuser. Sometimes drug abusers say or do mean things, lie, break promises or even threaten you. The way the child in your care misbehaves may also make you feel angry.

Your feelings are natural just make sure you express them in a healthy way. Try writing or drawing your feelings or join a support group for people that are going through the same thing. Find something to do that is just for you.

This information is excerpted from the *Ties That Bind* fact sheets printed by
The Phoenix House Children of Alcoholics Foundation (www.coaf.org)



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