

"Healing Hearts and Families: The Intersection of Heart




Health and Substance Use Awareness"

Our focus in February is how to support children of alcoholics. We are offering resources and strategies to foster resilience and promote healthier lifestyles; by increasing awareness about how alcohol and substance misuse can impact on your heart and the well-being of children involved.

February

Heart Health Awareness Month

Children of Alcoholics Awareness Week: 2/9- 2/15

These campaigns remind us how deeply interconnected physical and mental health are, especially within families affected by alcohol and substance use.   

Understanding the Connection Between Alcohol Use, Substance Abuse, and Heart Health

Did You Know Alcohol and Substance Abuse Impact Heart Health

- Alcohol and substance misuse contribute to high blood pressure, irregular heart rhythms, strokes, and coronary heart disease.
- Chronic stress, common in families dealing with substance use, exacerbates cardiovascular issues.
- Heart disease is the leading cause of death for men, women, and most racial and ethnic groups in the United States.
- Exposure to alcohol and substance misuse in the home creates chronic stress, increasing the risk of both physical and emotional health challenges, including cardiovascular disease.

Impact on Mental and Emotional Well-Being 🧠💔😞

Children of alcoholics often experience isolation, shame, and a lack of emotional support, increasing their vulnerability to substance use and health problems later in life. [Impact of SUD on Children COA Week.NACoA.2025](#)

Key Statistics 📊📈🔍

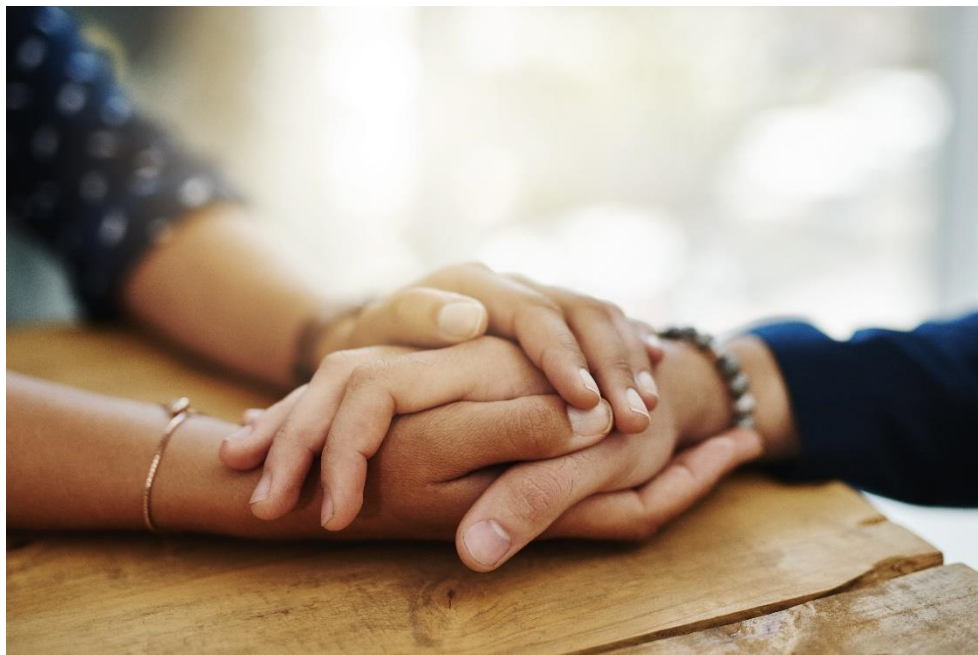
- Substance use disorders, including chronic alcohol use, significantly increase the risk of cardiovascular diseases.
- In 2022, heart disease accounted for 702,880 deaths, making up 1 in 5 fatalities.
- Nearly one million deaths in 2021 were attributed to cardiovascular disease.
- One in four children in the U.S. are exposed to alcohol abuse in the home.
- Approximately 6.6 million children in the U.S. live with at least one alcoholic parent.
- Children of alcoholics are four times more likely to develop alcohol use disorders and three times more likely to experience abuse.

Sources: Drug Abuse Statistics, Addiction Group, Health Research

Funding <https://drugabusestatistics.org/>.

<https://www.addictiongroup.org/resources/addiction-statistics/>.

<https://healthresearchfunding.org/startling-children-alcoholics-statistics/>.



Prevention Strategies and Resources



Lifestyle Tips:

- Nutrition: Focus on heart-healthy foods like whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and lean proteins.
- Exercise: Encourage families to engage in 30 minutes of physical activity daily, such as walking or biking.
- Stress Management: Incorporate mindfulness techniques, yoga, or deep-breathing exercises into daily routines.

Community Initiatives: 🌍💖👥

- National Wear Red Day (February 5) raises awareness for women's heart health. Landmarks, news anchors, and neighborhoods go red in support of the fight against heart disease. Learn more at Go Red for Women. <https://www.goredforwomen.org/en/>
- Heart-Healthy Recipes: Research and share nutritious recipes with your community. Find ideas at American Heart Association Recipes.

[Recipes | American Heart Association Recipes](#)

Supporting Children of Alcoholics 🧸 💬 🤝

--Building Resilience:

- Encourage open communication and provide safe spaces for children to share their feelings.
- Connect children to support groups designed specifically for young people impacted by alcohol misuse.
- Educating families on the importance of abstinence, sobriety, and recovery, emphasizing that healing is a lifelong process.





BE Heart Health Champions:

Prevention Through Education 🎓 🏆 🩺

Recognize organizations hosting health screenings and prevention workshops for families, like your local Health Department and you can also Visit <https://www.stbernards.info/services/primary-care/population-health/community-wellness-screenings/>

A FREE screening will be held Thu, February 13 (8:00 AM to 11:00 AM)

St. Bernards Auditorium, 505 E Washington Ave. Jonesboro, AR 72401

Share your thoughts on our Facebook page: [Prevent and Save](https://www.facebook.com/Region4PreventionRepresentative/)
<https://www.facebook.com/Region4PreventionRepresentative/>

Personal Stories: A Child of an Alcoholic

Speaks Out! On our recent podcast, our special guest addressed several questions about growing up in a home with an alcoholic parent. Does her experience sound familiar?

What was it like growing up in your household?

"My stepfather was an alcoholic. He was abusive when sober, but worse when drunk. My stomach would tie in knots when he asked me to bring him a beer every night after dinner."

"One night, my mother drove me to a bar to get my stepdad. She left me in the car while she went inside. They argued, and he tried to drag her out of the car by her hair. She drove off before he could."

"At 17, I moved in with family members. My mother died of cancer when I was 18. My stepfather died three days after my 19th birthday. I attended his funeral to see for myself that he was really gone."

What About the Long-Term Impact:

How has growing up with alcoholism affected your adult relationships?

"My daily life was filled with arguments and abuse. As a result, I have PTSD that impacts my daily life. I have other family members who are alcoholics, so I choose not to drink. I did drink when I was younger and made a couple of bad decisions, so I decided to stop because I know what can happen if it gets out of control."

"In my daily life I saw my mom enable my stepdad's alcoholic behavior and I felt I had to take care of her because of mental health issues she experienced. I learned codependency from them and had to learn through therapy and other support outlets how to have healthy relationships with other people."

"My childhood has impacted my marriage. It took a long time for me to really open up to my husband about the abuse. We have been through couples therapy to help us better navigate it."

"My childhood also impacted the way I parented. My childhood has impacted the boundaries I set with others and the types of behavior I will and will not allow in my life and the lives of my children and grandchildren. Did not want to repeat the cycle of enabling."

What advice would you give to other children of alcoholics?

"None of it was your fault, no matter how the adults in your life treated you or what they said to you. You are not doomed to be like the people who hurt you. There is hope. You can learn to set boundaries and have healthy relationships with others. It takes A LOT of work, but it can be done, and you are worth it."

About Healing and Recovery: 📞 🏠 💙

What are some resources for people who have been impacted by alcoholism?

- SAMHSA's National Helpline: 1-800-662-HELP (4357)
- Alcoholics Anonymous (AA): <https://www.aa.org/>
- Al-Anon: <https://al-anon.org/>
- Codependent's Anonymous (CoDA): www.coda.org
- *I also recommend individual therapy.*



Alcohol and substance misuse are not just personal struggles; they ripple through families and communities, impacting both heart health and emotional well-being.

By raising awareness and promoting prevention, we can protect both hearts and minds. For more information on [American Heart Month | NHLBI, NIH](https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/education/american-heart-month) visit <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/education/american-heart-month>

For Heart Health Awareness Month:

Download a free “Heart-Healthy Habits Checklist.”

DASH Eating Plan at <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/education/dash-eating-plan>

Each year, the American Heart Association (AHA) produces scientific statements and guidelines based on expert consensus to promote our mission to be a relentless force for longer, healthier lives. Be in the know and do your research at <https://www.heart.org/en/get-involved/advocate/policy-research>

For Children of Alcoholics Awareness Week:

Volunteer with a community program that supports children in need. [Events - NACoA](#). We encourage you to share your thoughts and success stories.



Check out our [Current Newsletter](#), feel free to **share** it with others, and stay updated on future events and resources! www.researchsolutionsinc.org