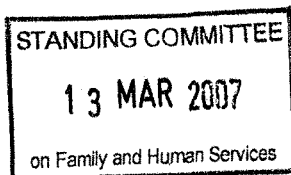


The Secretary of the Committee  
Inquiry into the support of illicit drug use on families  
House of Representatives  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600  
12<sup>th</sup> March 2007

Submission No: 13  
AUTHORISED:

hmc 29/3



To The Secretary of the Committee

**Term of Reference 1**

**The financial, social and personal cost to families who have a member(s) using illicit drugs, including the impact of drug induced psychoses or other mental disorders.**

I am a member and volunteer of an organisation called Family Drug Support (FDS). I became involved with this group when my brother went on a drug induced rampage at my Father's house. As a registered nurse the family turned to me for advice and support but no amount of training prepares you for the angst within your own family. So I phoned places for support and was referred on to FDS and what a help it was.

There was another person totally listening to me and supporting me. What a relief this was and with their support I was able to access information that was helpful for my family, myself and the relationship with my brother. Little did I realise that soon I would be dealing with this under my own roof.

About a year and a half later my stepdaughter started injecting speed. This was devastating to all of us in the house. Belongings from her older & younger sister as well as myself and her father were stolen and taken to pawn shops. The pain of watching your child seeing things, loosing weight, stealing, lying and becoming more withdrawn is more than a mother can bear.

**Term of Reference 2**

**The impact of harm minimisation programs on families.**

FDS had taught me to keep communicating with her and this allowed me to ensure she had access to clean equipment. Harm minimisation is imperative as this gave us peace of mind knowing she had access to needle and syringes and health care workers if and when she needed advice. When she entered rehabilitation some time later we were all holding our breath for the Hep B, C & HIV results including my daughter. Thankfully all came back clear due to her having access to clean equipment.

**Term of Reference 3**

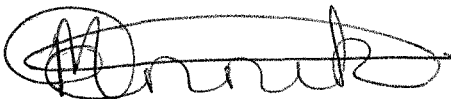
**Ways to strengthen families who are coping with a member(s) using illicit drugs.**

My own experience and work as a volunteer for FDS has highlighted areas of need in order to cope. The earlier families can get help the greater the chance that they are in the best position to support themselves and the member(s) using. In my case it took a crisis with my brother before help was accessed. This help needs to be more readily available so as to avert a crisis and give understanding and support to families and friends. When family and friends are supported through improved communication and education in variety of areas this leads to a better outcome.

To date my brother rarely uses and my stepdaughter has successfully completed a detoxification and rehabilitation programme. Throughout all this the improved communication has rippled out to our interaction with family and friends.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to tell my story.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mariette Ennik', written in a cursive style. The signature is enclosed within a hand-drawn oval shape.

Mariette Ennik