

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

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I am writing in response to the Federal Parliamentary Inquiry to be chaired by Bronwyn Bishop for the above subject.

Cost to the family of a loved member using illicit drugs is foremost heart wrenching, soul destroying and each member, as well as the drug user will never be the same again. Family relations break down because of the impact the drug has on the user, it changes him altogether from his former self. Stress, arguments, disappointments, heartbreaks, tears and constant worry occur.

Financial cost to this family has been a burden. If you love somebody you will do all you can to get them right again but Rehabilitation is extremely expensive in the Private sector and waiting lists are long via the Public System unless you are having a psychotic episode which my son does not suffer but needs Rehab to get off the evil drug 'ICE'. I feel only supervised Rehab is the only way for this extremely addictive drug. We have enquired but immediate help is far too expensive for this family. Even Private health cover which my son has been in for many years is not enough.

Harm minimisation programs help the user to stay 'safe' as far as using clean needles, utensils etc. They should be kept but with strict supervision.

Families are at a loss when drug use becomes known. Help lines are a great source of information and comfort at this time and ongoing.

I found the Family Drug Support organisation founded by Tony Trimmingham. I am a member and find the booklets they send regularly a comfort and full of information. I have also attended a Seminar on ICE that the FDS organised.

The dreadful impact illicit drugs have on families cannot be experienced unless you yourself have a family member using drugs. Addictions are so hard to control and not a short term thing. It may take someone years to overcome and the only way to be able to do this is to have strong family support, but also ways and means to enable the user to enter into an intensive program .

Of course, this depends entirely on the user wanting to and be willing to go into Rehab to 'become clean' again.

Unfortunately this time has not happened for my son as yet, but each day I hope & pray that one day it will.

Federal Government should take a harder line with more vigilance in intercepting the persons importing and making illicit drugs.