

COURSE COMBATS CYCLE OF DRUG USE

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CENTRE EMPOWERS FAMILIES

Natalie Filmer

FAMILIES caught in the nightmare of a loved one's alcohol or drug abuse can learn how to take action during a free six-week course.

The Action for Recovery Course is being run by the Self Help Addiction Resource Centre as an initiative of Sunbury Community Health.

SCH alcohol and other drug services team leader Jim Carlton said addiction was a community problem.

"Drug use is something that families often try to keep hidden," he said.

"There is a real stigma and families become isolated and lack community connections because of a sense of shame."

Mr Carlton said more than 70 people attended an information session about ice held by SCH in May.

"We took the initiative for a community response to all the hype around the use of ice," he said.

"The information session created a lot of interest and we looked at the families who attended and decided to get on the front foot again and facilitate a program that would assist families on how to deal with the behaviours of loved ones struggling with alcohol and other drug addictions."

Mr Carlton said a lot of single parents and grandmothers ended up caring for drug-using family members.

Self Help Addiction Resource Centre family education spokeswoman Angela Ireland said the course had been in use for the past five years and included a workbook of strategies to support change.

"It's a very strategic program designed to change that dance of addiction that families continue to do out of love or fear," Ms Ireland said.

"We unpack all those emotions each week to begin the change process, teaching positive strategies on dealing with behaviours."

Ms Ireland said families usually identified as the rescuer.

"There is a ripple effect when family members model a well-balanced life and change their language from pain to power," she said.

"We teach them how to coach and create opportunities for change. The secondary impacts are very big."

The free six-week course is from 6-8pm each Monday beginning September 28 at Sunbury Community Health, 12-28 Macedon St, Sunbury.

Bookings: 1300 660 068 or arc@sharc.org.au