

SUNBURY

Families to help fight addiction

Barry Kennedy

Course to equip loved ones with skills and strategies to approach difficult issue

TOOLS to help families with a loved one who is battling addiction are at the centre of a new course in Sunbury.

Facilitated by Family Drug Help, the free six-week course details the boundaries, language and strategies that can assist during a volatile time.

Drug counsellor Tracey Alder said most families lacked the skills they needed to confront a loved one's addiction.

"It naturally comes as a great shock and therefore families don't have the skills to navigate a new support

system during a chaotic and traumatising time," she said.

"There is also a stigma and shame about a family issue that many haven't detailed before. There are boundaries and safety strategies which are needed to keep a family together."

A Macedon Ranges mother who took part in the course said the tools and advice she took on to deal with a teenage child's ice addiction rebuilt frayed foundations.

"The behaviour we were seeing as a family were so much at odds with our

values. You are constantly mopping up after disasters and dealing with an all-consuming incessant worry," she said.

But, by establishing boundaries and providing consistent language around acceptable behaviours, a

better environment had been established, she said.

"We have reclaimed some control over our lives and how we live," she said.

The InFocus Education Program will be at Sunbury Community Health Centre from Monday, October 9. Details: Family Drug Help, 1300 660 068.