

LawCare News

Autumn 2011

Book Review: Help them Beat the Booze - How to Survive Life with a Problem Drinker by Edmund and Helen Tirbutt

I volunteered to review this book as I find its predecessor Beat the Booze so useful in my helpline work.

So why would you want to buy this book? Well, given that according to the World Health Organisation, about 76 million people worldwide suffer from alcohol-related disorders at any one time (p5), it is almost certain that either, you, or, someone you know will be in the position of looking on and wondering how to best help a problem drinker.

The book is interwoven with case studies. All offer insights into the minds of both the problem drinker and those in a potential or genuine position to help. Familiar concepts such as tough love are discussed, but also more formalized approaches such as FRAMES an acronym for the techniques that need to be implemented, Feedback, Responsibility, Advice, Menu of Options, Empathy & Self-Efficacy.

What I liked best was the Family Intervention policy where the drinker hears first-hand how his/her drinking affects others and also the positive messages of how much they are loved and will be supported if they decide to start on the road to recovery.

Sensible advice is given on how to help with cravings. The benefits of AA are highlighted as well as the simple use of distractions such as puzzles or even eating something or simply accentuating the positive things in the life of the drinker. One very important point that runs through the book is the importance of those affected to remain focussed on their own happiness and health rather than get dragged down and mired in co-dependency.

There are two excellent chapters detailing different treatments, both conventional unconventional. The final two chapters are about looking after yourself and the children of problem drinkers as all too often it is the problem drinker who becomes everyone's focus to the neglect of those closely involved.

This is a book that deserves a wide readership among those who are affected by the issue of problem drinking, those who are addicts and the world at large. It brings together a mass of innovative material, retreads familiar ground and leaves the reader with a sense of excitement at the new possibilities to help loved ones beat the booze. Thank you to the Tirbutts.

Mary B Jackson, LawCare Co-Ordinator Ireland