



# **Dealing with strong emotions**

# BroS &Sis

## Dealing with strong emotions

### Worry/anxiety.

Sometimes you won't know what to do, you'll constantly worry about your brother or sister and what might happen to them.

Helpful responses: – Try to think of ways to reduce the harm and risks associated with their drug or alcohol use. Have a read of some of the drug fact sheets for the specific drugs your brother or sister might be using.

Focus on one thing at a time, there's no point lumping all of life's events together, as this can make things feel even more overwhelming.

Get some advice from a parent, online counsellor, friend or psychologist.

If you're ever worried about your safety then you need to get away from the situation, and talk to someone whom you trust, like friends, teachers, your parents, or even the police.

### Sadness/grief.

It's common to feel sad when your brother or sister is using drugs. You could be neglected by your parents, and you might feel like you've lost your brother or sister.

Helpful responses: Talk to someone like an online counsellor, a friend, or call the Family Drug Helpline.

Post something on the discussion board, or just try writing stuff down.

Regular exercise is as good as antidepressants at making you feel better. You could try going for a run, a walk or play sport. You could also do something you enjoy, or used to enjoy. Try not to crystal ball gaze or imagine a bleak future. This doesn't achieve anything and can fill you with unhelpful despair.

Remember that it's okay to feel sad, everyone does at times, it's a natural part of life. The sadness will pass and you'll probably learn a lot from this. Try not to focus on the negatives, remember what's good about your life (you're still alive!).

Know that you are not alone. Most people eventually learn to live with this situation. Everything will probably work out.

### Anger.

Many things can fill you with anger or even rage; your brother stealing your bike, your sister constantly asking for money, your parents being too easy on your sibling.

Helpful responses: Getting angry is completely normal, and a natural response to frustrating situations.

It's how you respond to the anger that matters.

Try walking away from a situation, deal with it later when you and everyone else has had time to calm down.

Go running, take it out on a punching bag, or play sport to help get rid of the anger.

Anger and blaming can really interfere in relationships. Have a look at the section called 'dealing with conflict' in the how to get through this fact sheet, for a few ideas on how to interact with your siblings.

### Feeling alone/social embarrassment.

It can feel like you're the only one going through this, that no one will understand, and that people will judge you for having these issues.

You can feel like everything should be kept secret, even from other family members.

Helpful responses: It often helps to see that there are many other people going through similar issues to you.

Post something on the discussion board. Have a read of the sibling stories. Call the Family Drug Helpline (1800 888 236). Everyone there has been through similar experiences.

### Jealousy.

You can feel jealous if your parents continually focus all their time and attention on your brother or sister's problems.

Helpful responses: Try giving your parents the fact sheet your son or daughter is using drugs, what can you do?

You could talk to your parents about what you need.

Remember what you do have, rather than focusing on what you don't have.

Spend time around people who appreciate you for who you are.

### Guilt.

You can feel guilty about a lot of things; breaching privacy, not being able to help, being the sibling who is 'fine'. Even negative feelings, such as anger, jealousy and hostility towards your brother or sister and their problems can trigger feelings of shame. Helpful responses: Remember that feeling guilty does not mean that you are to blame.

Ask yourself who is actually responsible for the problem.

If the problem is yours there are probably things you can do to make the situation better.

If the problem is someone else's, let go of the problem and let them deal with it.

Remember that it is your sibling who has a problem and often they're not thinking about you. Ask yourself if you're trying to keep them from experiencing pain, hardship or discomfort? Sometimes this can be a valuable experience for them. Often you can't do a lot to help them, and the best thing is for you to get on with your own life.