

A vertical watercolor illustration of birch trees, showing their characteristic white bark with dark, horizontal lenticels and vertical bark fissures. The trees are rendered in a soft, painterly style with varying shades of gray and white.

ADDICTION in the Family

What Every Counselor
Needs to Know

VIRGINIA A. KELLY



AMERICAN COUNSELING
ASSOCIATION

6101 Stevenson Avenue, Suite 600
Alexandria, VA 22304
www.counseling.org

ADDICTION

in the Family

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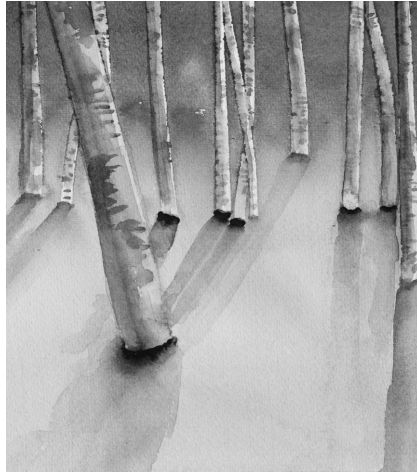
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This book is dedicated to the memory of
Marilyn Teresa Murphy Ruocco,
my first and best teacher!

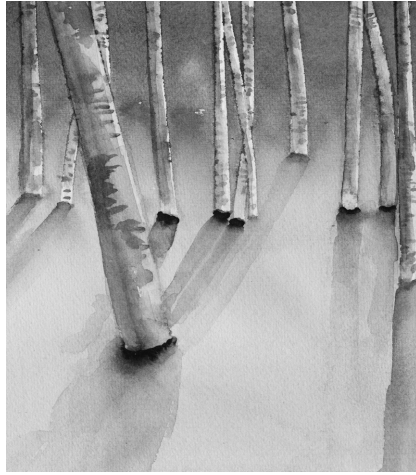


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PREFACE

This book is written for counselors and counselors-in-training. The issues of substance use and abuse are inescapable and extend to clients in every setting. Although there are textbooks that target working with individuals who have a substance use disorder (SUD), there is no such resource for understanding how this issue affects those closest to the person with the disorder. This book has been written to fill that gap.

The book covers some pertinent basics, including definitions, history, etiological models, and commonly abused substances. After going over the basics, I discuss the theoretical frameworks from which the counselor can conceptualize the issue of living in a family with someone who has an SUD. Specifically, family theory and developmental theory are covered and applied to this population of clients. Codependency is then described as a single construct that has been used to characterize the population of clients who have lived with family members struggling with an SUD. The emotional, relational, and behavioral consequences of familial SUD are explored as well as the multicultural implications of working with this group of clients. Finally, I describe and apply a number of treatment modalities.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Virginia A. Kelly, PhD, LPC, is an associate professor in the Department of Counselor Education at Fairfield University in Fairfield, Connecticut. She teaches a variety of courses, including Substance Abuse in the Family. Ginny also maintains a private practice, where she works with adolescents, adults, and couples.

Ginny received her doctorate in counselor education from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, her master's degree in counselor education from The Pennsylvania State University, and her bachelor of arts degree from the State University of New York at Geneseo. Ginny has published articles in the areas of substance abuse, spirituality, psychological abuse, and program-level assessment. She has also coedited a book, *Critical Incidents in Addictions Counseling*, and most recently coedited *Critical Incidents in Integrating Spirituality Into Counseling*.



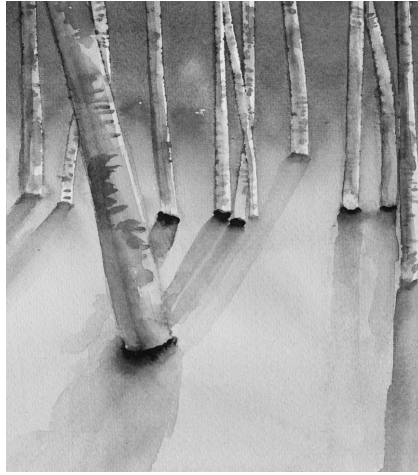
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INTRODUCTION

Every counselor in every setting will encounter the issues of substance use and abuse. The universality of these issues is well established (National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc. [NCADD], n.d.-a), and addiction and substance use disorder (SUD) cross all known boundaries. In addition, the scope and impact of this issue is extensive. It is estimated that one in every 12 adults struggles with alcohol abuse or dependence, and an estimated 20 million Americans (approximately 8% of the population) used an illegal drug within the past 30 days (NCADD, n.d.-c). These represent the data pertaining specifically to those who have an SUD themselves. These numbers in no way capture the true impact of this issue, as it extends well beyond the individual who has the disorder.

It is estimated that more than half of all adults have a family history of alcoholism, and more than 7 million children live with a parent who abuses alcohol (Dunn et al., 2002; NCADD, n.d.-b.). The counseling profession has its roots in an understanding that environments affect clients. In particular, it is well established that the perceived quality of people's closest relationships has tremendous influence on their sense of overall well-being (American Counseling Association [ACA], 2009). It is therefore important that counselors in all settings develop an understanding of how SUD affects those individuals who are closest to the person with the disorder. There is a body of knowledge pertaining to this phenomenon, and this book was written to synthesize that knowledge in a manner that will enable professional counselors to apply what is known to their work with clients who have been affected by close relationships with substance-abusing individuals.

About This Book

My purpose with this book is to address the specific issues that seem to surface for individuals who live with a family member who has an SUD. As with any issue, the individual client profiles differ. This book uses case examples as a means of illustrating the manifestation of the issues covered throughout the literature. The clients in these case studies are primarily fictional. Although some information is based on real clients, specific identifying information has been altered extensively. Some of the cases include the following:

- Aaban, a 48-year-old Muslim Iranian immigrant, the son of a violent alcoholic father;
- Juan, a 32-year-old Mexican American who is struggling to maintain a relationship after being raised by a substance-abusing mother;
- Bud, a 44-year-old man who has been laid off from his job and is struggling with a sense of ongoing helplessness after a long and complicated relationship with his heroin-addicted brother;
- Maria, a 12-year-old Puerto Rican American girl who has an alcoholic father and who is caught in a parentified role within her family and a fused relationship with her mother;
- Calvin, an 18-year-old African American man who is struggling to create a meaningful identity as a Jamaican American first-generation college student dealing with issues related to his father's alcoholism; and
- Lakshmi, a 36-year-old advertisement executive who is continuing to enable her alcoholic husband by regularly making excuses for him.

As demonstrated in these brief case descriptions, the diversity of this population of clients is vast. Therefore, it is important to note at the outset that the details shared in this book will not apply to all individuals who have lived with a family member struggling with an SUD. Instead, it is my intention in this book to present the accumulated knowledge of this population. This information, synthesized in this manner, is meant to assist practicing counselors and counselors-in-training as they consider working with individuals who have lived with or currently live with an individual with an SUD. Much of what is presented is designed to help counselors conceptualize cases with individuals who have a history of familial substance abuse or addiction, as considering the impact of this particular experience on a client is often key in understanding patterns and issues that impede psychological well-being. In addition, I provide information regarding the use of specific treatment strategies and techniques. More fully elaborated cases are used throughout the text to provide an opportunity to apply the material presented.