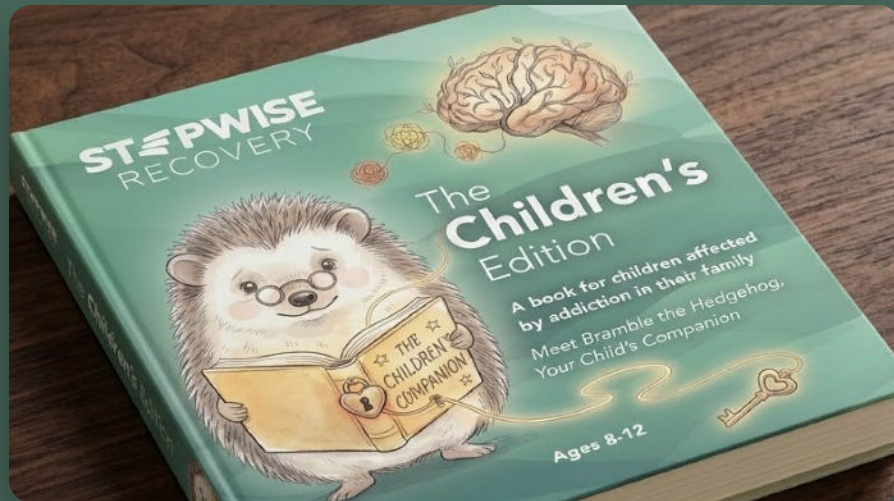


STEPWISE RECOVERY

FREE PREVIEW · NO EMAIL REQUIRED



The Children's Companion

For children aged 8–12 affected by a family member's addiction

This preview contains the contents pages, the book's welcome, and the complete Chapter Three — *Is It My Fault?* — exactly as they appear in the printed book.

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Help and Support

A Note for Grown-Ups

Hello

If someone in your family is struggling with addiction, maybe a parent, a brother or sister, or someone else you love, this book might help.

You might be feeling confused about what's happening. You might be feeling sad, or angry, or scared. You might have lots of questions that nobody seems to answer.

That's okay. All of those feelings make sense.

In this book, we're going to talk about addiction, what it is, why people act the way they do, and what it all means for you. We're also going to hear from other children who have been through similar things. You'll see that you're not alone.

You don't have to read this book all at once. You can read a little bit at a time. You can skip to the parts that feel most important to you. You can read it with a grown-up you trust, or by yourself.

Before we start, there are three things we want you to know:

- It's not your fault. Nothing you did caused this.
- You're not alone. Lots of other children have someone in their family who struggles with addiction.
- Things can get better. Whatever is happening right now, your future is full of possibilities.

Ready? Let's begin.



Chapter Three

Is It My Fault?

This might be the most important chapter in this whole book.

So we're going to start with the answer, right at the beginning, so you don't have to wait for it:

No. It is not your fault. Not even a little bit.

Nothing you did caused this. Nothing you didn't do caused this. Nothing you said, or didn't say. Nothing about who you are.



The addiction is not your fault.

Let's talk about why that's true, because sometimes, even when we hear it, it's hard to believe.

Why You Might Think It's Your Fault

Lots of children whose family members have an addiction secretly wonder if they caused it. You might have thoughts like:

"Maybe if I was better behaved, they wouldn't need to drink."

"Maybe if I didn't make them angry, they wouldn't use drugs."

"Maybe if I was easier to look after, they'd be happier."

"Maybe if I helped more around the house..."

"Maybe it started because of something I did when I was little..."

If you've had thoughts like these, you're not alone. It's very common. But these thoughts aren't true.

Children don't cause addiction. Full stop.

OTHER KIDS SAY...

“I used to think if I just got better marks, or tidied my room more, or stopped asking for things, then maybe Dad would stop taking the pills. I tried so hard to be perfect. It didn’t make any difference. Because it was never about me.” – Marcus, age 11

Why It Really Isn’t Your Fault

Addiction is an illness that happens in a person’s brain. It’s caused by lots of complicated things, things that happened to them, the way their brain is wired, the choices they made as adults, and sometimes just bad luck.

None of those things are about you.

Think about it this way: if someone gets the flu, we don’t blame the people around them for making them ill. They caught a virus. It’s not anyone’s fault.

Addiction is more complicated than the flu, but the same idea applies. You didn’t give them this illness. You can’t give someone addiction by being a normal child who sometimes makes mistakes, or gets upset, or needs attention, or does things wrong.

That’s just called being a child. And being a child does not cause addiction.

Even If They Say It's Your Fault

Sometimes, people with addiction say hurtful things. They might even say that their drinking or drug use is because of you.

"You stress me out so much, I need a drink."

"If you weren't so difficult, I wouldn't be like this."

"This is your fault."

If anyone has ever said something like this to you, we're sorry. Those words hurt. And they're wrong.

When people with addiction blame others, it's often because they feel ashamed and can't face the truth about their own illness. It's easier to point at someone else than to look at themselves. But that doesn't make what they say true.

No matter what anyone says: it is not your fault.

OTHER KIDS SAY...

"My mum used to say I drove her to drink. For years I believed her. Then my counsellor asked me: 'Do you think the eight-year-old you were had the power to make a grown-up become an alcoholic?' When she put it like that, I realised how silly it sounded. I was just a kid." – Amira, age 12

You Can't Fix It Either

Here's another important truth: just as you didn't cause the addiction, you can't cure it either.

You might have tried things like:

- Being extra good
- Hiding their alcohol or drugs
- Begging them to stop
- Making deals with them
- Trying to make them happy
- Wishing really hard that things would change

None of these things work. Not because you're doing them wrong, but because addiction doesn't work that way. It's an illness that needs proper help from doctors, counsellors, and support groups. It's not something a child can fix, no matter how much they love the person or how hard they try.

That might feel sad or frustrating. You might wish you could do something. But actually, knowing you can't fix it can also be a relief. It means it's not your job. You can stop trying to control something that was never yours to control.

The Three Cs

There's a saying that people who love someone with addiction learn. It's called "The Three Cs":

I didn't CAUSE it.

I can't CONTROL it.

I can't CURE it.

These three sentences are worth remembering. When you start to feel like things are your fault, or like you should be able to fix them, try saying these words to yourself.

I didn't cause it. I can't control it. I can't cure it.

We'll talk more about the Three Cs later in the book, in Chapter 7.

OTHER KIDS SAY...

"Learning the Three Cs changed everything for me. I'd been carrying around all this weight, thinking if I just tried harder I could make my brother better. When I finally understood it wasn't my job, I felt lighter. Like I could breathe again." – Priya, age 10

What IS Your Job

If it's not your job to fix the addiction, what is your job?

Your job is to be a child.

That means:

- Going to school
- Playing with friends
- Having fun
- Learning new things
- Making mistakes sometimes (that's normal!)
- Being looked after by the adults in your life

You're allowed to have your own life. You're allowed to think about things other than the addiction. You're allowed to be happy sometimes, even when things at home are hard.

Taking care of yourself isn't selfish. It's exactly what you should be doing.



REMEMBER

- The addiction is NOT your fault
- Nothing you did, or didn't do, caused it
- Even if someone tells you it's your fault, it isn't
- You can't fix it, and you don't have to try
- The Three Cs: I didn't CAUSE it, I can't CONTROL it, I can't CURE it
- Your job is to be a child, not to fix the adults

THINKING SPACE

If you want to, you might think about:

- Have you ever felt like the addiction was your fault?
- How does it feel to hear that it isn't?
- Can you say the Three Cs to yourself? Try it now if you like.



Ready to go deeper?

The chapter you've just read answers the question every child in an addicted family is silently asking. The full book walks gently through all of it — what addiction is, the big feelings, staying safe, and hope.

- Twelve chapters written for ages 8–12, with Bramble the hedgehog
- The Three Cs: you didn't cause it, can't control it, can't cure it
- “Other kids say...” voices, so no child feels alone
- Gentle “Remember” summaries closing every chapter

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