



## Put In Your 2¢ Worth...

About 2¢ a drink yields \$44 million annually to reduce the impact of alcohol problems in Missouri.

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### **Question:**

*Does alcohol affect our children?*

### **Answer:**

YES - The problems that plague many children of alcoholics remain invisible because their coping behavior tends to be approval seeking and socially acceptable. However, a disproportionate number of those entering the juvenile justice system, courts, prison, and mental health facilities, and those referred to school authorities are COA's.

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## **MISSOURI ALCOHOL IMPACT FACT # 17**

### **As a Matter of Fact**

- An estimated 28 million Americans have at least one alcoholic parent.
- Approximately one-half of all alcoholics have an alcoholic parent.
- One of three families currently reports alcohol abuse by a family member.
- Children of alcoholic parents demonstrate an unusually high risk of becoming alcoholic themselves or of marrying someone who is or who will become an alcoholic.
- In up to 90 percent of child abuse cases, alcohol is a significant factor.
- Children of alcoholics (CoA's) are frequently the victims of incest, child neglect, and other forms of violence and exploitation.
- CoA's often adapt to the chaos and inconsistency of an alcoholic home by developing an inability to trust, an extreme need to control, excessive sense of responsibility, and denial of feelings all of which result in low self-esteem, depression, isolation, guilt, and difficulty maintaining satisfying relationships. These and other problems persist or exacerbate throughout adulthood.
- Children of alcoholics are apt to experience a range of psychological difficulties, including learning disabilities, anxieties, attempted/completed suicides, eating disorders, or compulsive achieving/failing.

### **Adult Children of Alcoholics (ACoA's):**

- Guess at what normal is.
- Become isolated and afraid of other people, especially authority figures.
- Tend to judge themselves harshly and consequently suffer feelings of low self-worth.
- Have difficulty acting; they more often react to others.
- Often are dependent and fear abandonment.
- Become alcoholic, marry alcoholics, or do both or they tend to find some other compulsion, such as work, eating, gambling.
- Frequently become "addicted" to excitement after having lived for many years in a traumatic and sometimes dangerous family soap opera.
- Tend to confuse love with pity, and often "love" those whom they can rescue or pity.
- Feel responsible for their unstable families and have difficulty living independently. Frequently suffer guilt feelings if they consider their needs rather than the needs of others.
- Become approval-seekers, losing their identity in the process.
- Tend to deny or repress the feelings of their traumatized childhood which separates them from all feelings, making it difficult or impossible to recognize/accept adults.
- Are sometimes unable to separate truth from fiction in their lives.

*Source: National Association for Children of Alcoholics, "Charter Statement"; by Janet Woititz, Laundry List for Adult Children of Alcoholics*

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