

Roles in the Substance Abusing Family

The Person	The Feeling	The Behavior	Defense Mechanism	Payoff	Price	Parental Message
Drug abuser	Shame/Guilt/Inadequacy	Addiction (dependence)	Denial	Relief of emotional pain	Personal destruction	"Don't do like I'm doing, because you are just like me."
Enabler	Anger and Helplessness	Worry and over-protection or lashing out in anger	Avoidance	Peace (temporary)	Self-deception and perpetuation of addiction	"What dad did was terrible, but remember, he was an alcoholic."
Family hero	False guilt	Over achievement	Obsessive-compulsive and rigid behavior	Positive attention and increased self-esteem	Workaholic and burnout	"It's your successes that make my life bearable."
Scapegoat	Damaged (inferior)	Delinquent, rebellious behavior	Substitution	Negative attention and acceptance (wrong peers)	Rejection and alienation, injury, permanent scars	"If you would stop causing trouble, things would be OK."
Lost child	Loneliness	Passive behavior (personal camouflage)	Retreat	Escape	Social isolation	"I love you. Now go away."
Mascot, clown, or Joker	Fear of catastrophe	Joking, clowning, overactive, excessively helpful	Diversion	Relief of fear	Immaturity	"You're cute (entertaining) but not important."