

353R- The Effects of Someone Else's Drinking with Al-Anon

Steven Bruce

Good afternoon and welcome to another of our lunchtime learning sessions. This one is a bit different to normal. It's not about treatment that we ourselves offer but it's about signposting patients who are in distress in this case as a result of the effects of someone else's alcohol problems. Now, I realise that patients aren't going to be coming to you as their first port of call for something like this. But we are let's basic first contact practitioners and And there's every possibility that you we might be in the place of finally being the first person to recognise a problem like this. So it's possible your patients won't even realise that there are support mechanisms available to them. To that end, I have Ian and Annie in the studio with me today to represent the Northamptonshire branch of Al Anon. They've asked me to keep their surnames confidential, because this is a fairly sensitive area. But we'll find out more about that in a couple of seconds, I'm sure. In Annie, welcome. lovely to have you with us. So you're not alcoholics I think we established before, which is perhaps a common myth, when people sort of talk to you about what you do

Ian

it is and it's, it's really the fact that we've been affected by someone else's problem drinking or alcoholism? Not necessarily. We don't necessarily label it as alcoholism because sometimes if that person doesn't admit that they were an alcoholic, then it might just be a fact that they're drinking causes a problem to one of us and so so that's how we sort of rather than labelling someone right away,

Steven Bruce

yeah. And alcohol is well known for causing problems even in people who are not alcoholics isn't. See that on the high street of Higham, Ferrers, and our lovely little town here every weekend. Can you go into, are you prepared to go into a bit more detail and share what led you down this particular path? Of course,

Ian

many, many moons ago, I was happily married to a woman who we had, we had four children and life was pretty good. We had lots of holidays, we weren't. We didn't have a problem with any money or anything. So we all of a sudden, good money and, and life seemed really good. But it crept up on us very, very slowly. And it became apparent that she was drinking when she was alone in the house and drinking in the evenings when I was sometimes at work and even drinking first thing in the morning to just to try and get through the day. And I didn't really I didn't really understand I'll be honest, I despite living with this woman, I I really didn't understand what was going on. And I had my own sort of denial that that she had got a problem. However, there were times when I took her to the doctors, I took it to see mental health practitioners, I took her to homoeopathy list and so on, you know that everybody any attempt to get her to stop drinking, really.

Steven Bruce

So by this stage, you had recognised that the problem I had and

Ian

it was a fairly Rude Awakening is a visit to a&e where she was absolutely unconscious with the effects of alcohol. So

Steven Bruce

so he got to that stage. I mean, presumably, I mean, if your ex wife was drinking during the day, while you were out at work, you must have noticed when you came back, she was a bit the worst for Well,

Ian

yes. But confronting her with it, usually mentally add arguments and fights and breakups, and, and so on. And, and as our children got older, they joined in the mele, so to speak. So it was a very uncomfortable time for all of us. And not only were my children affected by her drinking, but they were also affected by my behaviour, because I focused all my attention on attempting to stop her drinking and eventually my sort of coping mechanisms for that period of time became serious defensive my character anger for one and frustration and and I really ended up sort of dealing with everybody in the same way. And I turned into a bit of a monster myself, what members were quite scared of me.

Steven Bruce

What about you and to use your experience anything similar? Similar

Annie

Yes. And in Al Anon family groups we we identify with what people are talking about in the room. And so this is common thread and the common thread is that I was affected by somebody else's drinking, I would never call him an alcoholic per se, but his drinking his actions affected me and happily married, you know, did the thing I was gonna live in like no one else had ever lived in before. And gradually, our marriage knows died with the amount of alcohol that he was consuming. And after the second drink, driving offence, that meant he had served attorney in prison. Our children said, Mommy, we don't want drinks in our house anymore, and I went We don't really do we. Okay, I was terrified of him.

Steven Bruce

How long did it take you to realise that there was a problem with? Is it something that crept up slowly? Or was it evident from the outset, but you've tried to deny it yourself? Yeah.

Annie

I had that big cloak of denial on Steven. I didn't. I didn't want to believe that, you know, because I loved him, and nobody else had loved him. I was gonna love him enough for this to stop. So I knew there was something strange. And my mother said to me the night primaried him, I can't believe you're marrying somebody. So like your father goes, Oh, really? Anyway, should

Steven Bruce

we infer from that, that your father also had a drinking problem, or my dad drank?

Annie

The he was a happy, happy, you know, happy happy daddy. And he bestowed upon me many gifts that I still have today. So I was in very, very much in denial, dad was my dad, my father was a policeman. And in in his retirement, he was also a rest arrested for drunk driving. So you know, had a big effect on us as kids, as a family,

Unknown Speaker

so is your experience, then quite typical that people enter into a relationship with somebody, whether it's marriage or not. But it goes for a long time before it comes to a conclusion, if you like, and the problem is resolved one way or another? I

Annie

think, I think so. And I think I hadn't I was unwell. And well, physically. And nobody could put their finger on it. Really? What what, you know, why? Why would I suddenly have lots of red blotches all over my body? And why did my Why did I have to crawl around on my hands and knees? Because I

couldn't take the weight of my, you know, those sorts of illnesses manifested themselves within me? And if I could stay under the duvet for the day, I would, you know, so, but nobody could nobody ever said, Did you know, there's a special place? There's this place that talk about, and it's for families and friends of people who've been affected by

Steven Bruce

you talk there about what we might call musculoskeletal problems that you you said you couldn't stand up, you couldn't stand up because of pain or? Yes. So there is actually potentially the scope for someone in your situation to seek help from an osteopath or chiropractor or physiotherapist, because they're in pain, and they think that was our expertise rather than the GPS or a an ease? So we would expect? No, we wouldn't expect we would hope that in our case history taking, we might identify the sort of factors which are contributing to this. Were, were they in your case? Are they generally the sorts of things that people willingly share? Because this is a sort of problem, which, probably a lot of people want to keep private, isn't it? Well,

Annie

there's a lot of shame and guilt attached, as you can imagine, because I've divorced my first husband, pre allanon, pre finding the rooms of Al Anon and pre finding any health of any sort for myself. And I know he went one way I went the other and I, the children stayed with me. And so yes, I would say that there is this. There's a stigma attached to it. My children were mortified. They were embarrassed, they were ashamed. They were everything because their daddy wasn't at home. You know, daddy wasn't there. It was a really, really hard time

Steven Bruce

after he'd been locked up for drink driving. Yes,

Annie

yes, but he wasn't there either. So Daddy would go to the pub from work, and then he would eventually come home. Right? So he was never there.

Steven Bruce

I imagine a lot of these cases and I don't know if it's the same. This is the case for you, as a lot of them presumably result in domestic violence or abuse of some sort. Which may, maybe that's easier to spot because, you know, health care professionals are always taught to be on the lookout for unexplained injuries, especially in children. What would have been the cues if you've gone to any practitioner, what would have been the cues that we should pick up on that say, Hang on, there's something going on domestically here

Annie

domestically didn't ever happen to me it was more.

Steven Bruce

I don't mean that there was a there was a problem at home that there was something contributing to your lack of health.

Annie

I think just the verbal diarrhoea that I would get if somebody said how are you today? I'd go moo and I tell you exactly how I was.

Steven Bruce

Would you put the blame on your ex husband?

Annie

I'm definitely pre allanon I would have done it would have all been his fault. Yes, definitely. And why me? You know, why me? Why is this happened? I'm a good person and I'm holding down a job and I've got three children, and they're all attending school and all those things. So it's yes, it was. Yeah, I think that would be the cue that I would either tell you, everything, or nothing. Right, depending on the day. And how I was. We

Steven Bruce

had a comment in from Charis who says her son is 17 year old grandfather is in care as a result of a mother with drugs and alcohol. I'm sure I'm getting this right. It's been abbreviated slowly. And father has died recently. She's very much latched on to us as a family and they have been together one year, but I worry about being too caring and being the mum, she's lost. If the relationship doesn't go, well, she'll be hurt so much, as well, I suppose cares. But navigating this is so hard as I really don't understand how a mother can choose drugs and alcohol over her children is if there's something you've

Annie

seen, yes, all the time we see.

Steven Bruce

And what's the what's the what's the root? What's the best outcome I know that Al Anon is not a an organisation that provides therapy or counselling, as I understand that, you'll tell us more about that

in a minute. But what do you see as the solution for someone who's in that situation, you see a child whose mother or father has become absent

Annie

and get some help from Al Anon family groups? You know, Reese research, have a look at the website, have a look at calling somebody we have a helpline you actually do do helpline work, Daniel, and

Ian

you did that this morning, this morning, from eight to 10. Yes.

Steven Bruce

So are you under pressure, there

was a lot of a lot of phone

Ian

calls. Actually, I didn't have any, but sometimes I can have known in the space of two hours. And sometimes I can have 10. So it's, it varies quite a lot. But I just like to pick up what you said about how a mother can choose alcohol and drugs over her children. And my first wife didn't really have a choice. It was something that she couldn't stop doing. After after, after it became the habit, a daily habit. And we're probably talking around sort of a bottle of vodka a day. Not only was that extremely expensive, but it disrupted the family. But that was her. That was the only way she could cope with the only way she could get through the day. I didn't understand this at the time, I was very angry. But I realised now that she had an illness, it was a disease and she was allergic to alcohol, it drinks and certain drugs too. And I actually went along to allanon A long time ago now. And I actually went along as part of my quest to cure her. I wasn't, I wasn't looking at or believing that I had a problem. And so I went along to Al Anon, thinking that they would give me the a4 sheet of paper that says, Do this, do this and do this. Do you think

Steven Bruce

that your wife didn't recognise the problem, so she wouldn't have gone to Alcoholics Anonymous. So

Ian

she did. She did recognise the problem in moments of sobriety. But she was unable to stop. She was addicted. And that's pretty much as simple as it became.

Steven Bruce

I think you said a moment ago that she was allergic to alcohol. Did you mean addicted? There was?

Ian

No no, there was the in Alcoholics Anonymous, they believe that most people that that that become alcoholic, have a gene that that is affected by alcohol and mind altering drugs, right. They also believe that, that most people suffer as a result of abandonment from family, relatives and so on. But I joined Alan on thinking that that I would get the fix I would be able to cure her of the addiction. And of course, when I got to Amazon, that that clearly became just a figment of my imagination and, and they said that allanon is actually for you is not for the alcoholic, it's to support you and to help you to recover from those effects. because I not only and he mentioned physical illnesses I can remember sitting outside an AMA with such terrible stomach cramps that I thought I was going to pass out. And I thought if I'm going to pass out at least I'm outside AMA, and somebody will pick me up and drag myself crazy. I got with it. And, and I attribute a problem with raising blood pressure to those stressful times as well.

Steven Bruce

The I'm not sure what the relationship is with Alcoholics Anonymous, but I'm aware everyone's aware of the 12 steps that go with alcoholics. AAA is rooted to resolution as it were, but seven of those 12 Steps talk about God or spirituality or something else is AI Anon a religious organisation, does it have the same sort of principles?

Ian

Well, it's interesting that you should mention that and allanon started as a as a break off from Alcoholics Anonymous, back in 1951, in America, in New York, and they use the same 12 steps as or very similar 12 steps to Alcoholics Anonymous. And, yes, those steps do mention the God word. And it wasn't something that I took very kindly to, when I went along to AI Anon. And in fact, my first visit to the first meeting that I went to an AI Anon, I went along, decided I wasn't going back. That was that was, as our felt. And it was about six weeks later that I picked up the phone to someone who had given me their, their number. And, and I went back, and we're talking several decades ago now. So this, this fellowship is, as allowed me to change my whole outlook on life, to change my behaviour, and to change my actions and, and to learn some strategies for not taking responsibility for other people just taking responsibility for myself, not projecting into the future or having regrets about the past, but to live in the day.

Steven Bruce

Is it the case, then you said not taking responsibility for the actions of other people? Is it the case that you perhaps thought you might be responsible for your ex wife's alcoholism and others who were in AI Anon do? Yes.

Ian

I think some of my neighbours thought that well, living with him, she's no wonder she drinks

Annie

a thing in the fellowship, and we say it's it's VCs. And when I first came to the rooms, I thought it was my fault. It must be he told me it was. But the unknown fellowship said, No, Annie, you didn't cause it, you can't control it, and neither can you cure it so that we call those the three C's. And I thought, Oh, okay. But what what then the fourth C was, but you have a choice now, and you can choose to change, not change the alcoholic, but change me. So that change came about by changing just my attitude?

Steven Bruce

And could that change happen? Even had you not left your husband? Oh,

Annie

yes. Right. I have got many friends who still live with active alcoholism. And they're happy, even though the alcoholic still drinking, whether the alcoholics drinking or not. Right. It's very powerful.

Steven Bruce

What is the mechanism and you talked about one of you talked about family groups a moment ago. So I don't have a picture in my mind of how I as somebody who is in need of AI Anon services would find my way through the procedure?

Ian

Well, you would turn up at a meeting on our website, it shows, online meetings, Zoom meetings, and face to face in person meetings. And if face to face meeting, we would sit around in a circle in chairs, just like this. With a table in the middle, most of us got a cup of tea or a cup of coffee. And we might have a topic and it might be step one or step two, and going back to what you said about the God word. And I said I wasn't uncomfortable with it. I've got to accept it, but not necessarily as a religious entity. And then we also have a thing called sponsorship where people with more experience will help someone who's just coming into the fellowship. And I will suggest to them that they consider the forces of nature as as being a power greater than themselves rather than trying to deliver some message with a religious God. Having said that, some people do have a A belief and they can use that if they if they choose.

Steven Bruce

I do. I was just I was just wondering when you when we talked about it a moment ago that you've used the word fellowship a number of times, and you've said that there are those religious spiritual elements in Al Anon as 12 steps as well. I wonder whether there are some people who might be put off seeking help because they aren't religious, and it sounds a bit like church meeting and Bible reading. That may not be what they feel that they're interested in.

Ian

No, you're absolutely right. Some people are put off present

Steven Bruce

like that as like a Bible reading, but it's

Ian

not for me. It's not and, and if it if it goes that way, if someone starts to talk about the Roman Catholic Church, for instance, not anything, not singling them out for any particular reason, but I will say that's not part of the allanon. programme. It's inappropriate.

Steven Bruce

Okay. We had a couple of other comments go in Marcus says I can relate to you both. Marcus's ex partner had a drink problem, which became a huge issue. She'd hide bottles of booze in the sleeves of coats, rolled up towel, sports bags, and so on. It became hard to trust her left alone in the house or even when she went shopping. I found her drinking a bottle of wine in the car on a shopping trip early in the early morning. He said it's a very difficult time and hard for everyone involved. Unfortunately, he says they broke up after two years the bottle won over him. Yes, that's an unfortunate that I'm sure that's just a sort of a throwaway line. But it's an unfortunate thing if one should feel the bottle one and I failed. Well,

Annie

I did I felt like that. Yes. Because my marriage failed. And, and, and I couldn't understand why he would choose to go and drink. Exactly. I didn't know that though. And we were at home. You know, I was at home with three beautiful children. They weren't monsters at all, by any shape of the imagination. They were just beautiful kids I didn't understand

Steven Bruce

did they go to Al Anon as well, because they did. They.

Annie

There's there's a there's a branch off. And going back to the lady that spoke about a 17 year old just now. There's a there's a group called Alateen, which is part of Al Anon family groups, and it's for 12 to 17 year old children. And, and this, it works in exactly the same way that Al Anon does. But it's specifically for children who've been affected by somebody else's drinking. Now, when my children were that age 12 to 17. We didn't have a regular face to face group of Alateen in where I live. But now what's happened since the pandemic and out of bad comes good often. And we have online meetings for Allah teens. So anybody between the age of 12 and 17 can access the Alateen programme, which again, uses the same 12 steps, traditions concepts as as the AAA programme, and they can access it and come to a meeting in the same way. If you could if you were housebound, you could go to an online meeting to how

Steven Bruce

on earth would a 1213 year old find out about Allah team? Well,

Annie

that's a very good point, Stephen. And most of our young people today have access to the internet. Yes. If you put in the in a Google search my dad's drinks, what do I do? He'll come up with various options. And sometimes the young people do reach out like that. And, you know, my mum's drinkin men, you know, my children. Were not my eldest son was 910. You know, when our relationship ended, so after that they only ever saw daddy when he was sober.

But I think I just passed back to in here because your own children experienced quite a lot of trauma around them, didn't they? Yes,

Ian

they did. And, again, as Annie said, we didn't have another team meeting available in Northampton at the time, but we do have online meetings now. And sadly, due to safeguarding laws and regulations, under eighteens are not allowed to come into an adult's Al Anon meeting anymore. So it's all the more important that the allanon the Alateen organisation continues And if, if a young person does wish to join, then then they can call our office in London, who will make sure that they sort of fit the criteria, so to speak with age and so on. And branches. There's about 1414 meetings in the country of Alateen. And most of those are on Zoom now. So it should be quite accessible for young people. And of course, when they turn 18, they're allowed to come into to an Al Anon an adult Al Anon meeting. And that's only been the case recently, unfortunately, we've sort of had to go down the road of adults and young people and the Young People's Meeting is, is supervised, facilitated by a number of screened. DBS checked. Al Anon members.

Steven Bruce

So how does the confidentiality issue work? Because if a child approaches Allah teen, let's say, let's say it's a 13 year old, and says, you know, this is happening, because my parent is drinking, Surely

there must be some responsibility to notify appropriate authorities if there's a threat to the safety of that child. Safety isn't safe. Safety is a bit of a wide issue as well, because that doesn't just mean physical safety, does it mean ongoing? Well, well being of the child,

Annie

and that's the thing. And so we have training, as group sponsors in and I both actually Alateen group sponsors, interestingly, just as another, I'll come back to service in a moment. But so if if there was, if a young person says X, Y, and Zed has happened, we have a duty of care to report that. And we would, and then once it's been reported, we have to stand back then there's nothing more as, as an individual that I would be allowed or able to do. So. So we're very, very, we're very, very hot on our safeguarding it's really important that our young people feel safe. And it's very important that anybody come into our rooms, I call them rooms, I should just say, Al Anon Al Anon. And it's very important that they feel that they're safe. I'd been in, in the meeting three weeks, and my neighbour came in the room. Oh, my God, what am I gonna do? And at the end of the meeting, I shared that with a friend that they do this. And she said, Honey, she's here for the same reason you don't worry about it. And we have this anonymity, you know, our colleagues, and us, hello, non family groups. We have those same things in place and anonymity. And protecting somebody's anonymity is really important. You know, had I walked in here today, and there's been somebody, you know, in your block, who who recognise me, we wouldn't have said, we might have said, Good morning or whatever. But we wouldn't have said, Hey, I saw you at the meeting last week. How do you do and you know what happened to you, ma'am? No, you don't do that? We very definitely do. I think everyone

Steven Bruce

watching will be sort of be familiar with that sort of medical ethos around.

Annie

So that's that whole thing about who you see here, what you hear here when you leave here. Let it stay here. It has to be Vegas in here.

Steven Bruce

More questions, more comments and questions. Matthew says he's not sure if this is relevant, and I have no idea because I'm ready. He had a new patient three months ago who during the initial history admitted to being a recovering alcoholic treatment with him went very well that we could tell that her family and she had been through a lot. Recently, her husband attended on two out of three attendances he smelled of alcohol at 930 in the morning. He doesn't admit to any drinking issues, but I know he works as a minibus driver, starting early in the mornings, obvious confidentiality issues for me between husband and wife and I thought there's an interesting issue of between practitioner and police, they're gonna be quite concerned about someone who's got to provide a job as a professional driver who smells of alcohol. But he says confidentiality issues

between husband and wife. Do you have any thoughts on that? I suppose if he's outside your area of expertise, really, isn't it?

Ian

Well, not really, because I occasionally we get invited to go to what they call open AAA meetings. And we go along with the same protocol of confidentiality. But we might see someone in in that meeting who is married or partner of someone in the allanon rooms. But it's not for me to reveal to that person that their wife or their partner is in the allanon rooms. So it wouldn't be mentioned,

Steven Bruce

we don't know that the person concerned here actually have an alcohol problem. But I think you mentioned earlier on that one coping mechanism for living with someone with alcohol is Mr. Stein drinking yourself

Ian

as well. I remember when I was able to go home at lunch times, I would be met at the door with a glass of wine. And, and of course, that meant I was then driving in the afternoon with some alcohol in my in my in my bloodstream. Hopefully, it was never quite enough to cause me a problem. But I certainly joined in as as part of my strategy to try and stop them drinking almost. And I would, I would do one of your one of our listeners was talking about porn that was a wine down the sink and, and I did that with some very expensive bottles of whiskey, vodka and gin. And I would employ my children. Instead of Red Nose Day, we call it red hands day, I employed all my children to go around cleaning all the cupboards and, and searching the house and the garden and the garbage for bottles. And we only ever found empty ones, but so it was too late. Yeah, it was very obsessive,

Steven Bruce

clearly, and I imagine that people just get very good at hiding things if you're gonna have the drain on the bank account alone must be quite stressful and worrying. Yes, Bridget says my dad and grandfather were alcoholics and addicted to smoking and gambling as a great combination for you. As a child, I was let down by my dad more than granddad and it made me very watchful for any addictive behaviours I might I might display. And Bridget says is it common a common trait to have more than one addiction?

Annie

Commonly more commonly now, I think when we welcome newcomers, they often have alcohol with some drug abuse. Yeah, they say they tend to go more hand in hand and when I was first around in Ireland, make

Steven Bruce

it clear the people who come to Ireland and don't have that problem, it's the people that they're having to cope.

Annie

Sorry, that's what I meant. Yeah. Okay.

Steven Bruce

I just want to make it clear for the audience. Yeah.

Annie

And so yeah, I think even prescription drugs can become lethal. In a, if you mix the prescription drugs with a cocktail of alcohol to then you're heading, it ripples out the effects of the alcohol and the addiction rippled out to the families.

Steven Bruce

Actually, this is almost beggars belief, Ashley says I had an alcoholic patient who turned up with an open bottle of wine and wanted a drink in the treatment room. I told her she had to choose between having a treatment right then or a drink. She chose a treatment having been driven two hours, having been driven two hours to get there. She has since gone dry and written a book about how she achieved it. And as she Ben wrote in her comment a little while ago saying that for anyone who's interested in the topic of addiction, they should read and listen to the work of Gabor Mate and I might have mispronounced one or both of those names. Don't if you're familiar with Gable meet, or gamble Marty, I'm not sure. Particularly his book in the realm of hungry ghosts, which Ben says literally changed his life and his attitudes towards the towards the huge topic of addiction. Sounds interesting certainly. So is what can people expect to achieve by contacting Al Anon let's say they, and there's an abuse of a family member who's abusing alcohol? Is it? Is it a solution in its own right or is it a method of finding the right sort of medical therapy that you need to cope psychological therapy counselling?

Ian

Well, I see Al Anon as a bit of psychotherapy, it's it's always, nearly always a group experience or a one to one experience. And there are no professionals. We are all people who have been affected by someone else's drinking. And I think it was Bridget mentioned about the drink. The drink crew wanted to drink wine in therapy. So Ashley, one of the things that that we learn in Al Anon, is to set boundaries, and often boundaries are ignored. They're broken, they're smashed sometimes They're just driven through by the, by the alcoholic. And, and setting boundaries is something which often we've never done because we've always tried to placate the drinker and, and allow them to get away with whatever, whatever they chose to do. And some of our friends have young people of their own children who are alcoholic and or addict or addicts. And in fact, one of my daughters, as I stopped drinking through attending Alcoholics Anonymous, and one of our newest daughters has

also attended Narcotics Anonymous Na, because of how alcoholism and addiction and and we both have both of those children. We've had to set boundaries in the past, which we've not necessarily liked. Such as you can't live here with us. If you intend to drink or take drugs, you will have to find somewhere else to live. And

Steven Bruce

how just how is that given that you've said that this behaviour is not a choice? How is that helpful in terms of their recovery?

Ian

Well, it what happens to Alcoholics often is that they lose pretty much everything as a result of drinking. And it's only when they hit their rock bottom, that they're willing to seek help for themselves, right. But the idea is that they do that exactly, they seek help for themselves.

Steven Bruce

So you're pushing them to rock bottom a bit quicker by saying you're gonna have to get out of the hole. Yes, but

Ian

it's, we call it tough love. But what we do by not setting boundaries and not making or not having the courage to make some of those rules, is enabled them to carry on. And that's a continuation of drinking or drug taking, just becomes more and more unbearable for the people around them.

Steven Bruce

We've got a nice comment in here from Laura, who says, I've been very grateful to learn of the existence of Al Anon as a referral resource for a lovely lady who was struggling with what seemed to be somatic stress, physical stress, who eventually confided that her partner's drinking was problematic. And although she felt she was coping, she realised her physical pain suggested otherwise. Over a 12 month period, she developed several autoimmune conditions, she still has them but not the partner, and not the chronic pain. She started with the two she had for two years before accepting a suggestion to visit Al Anon. So there's a nice testimonial there to the value of Elena. I find there's even in my mind, I'm still thinking that, you know, we're helping to solve one half of the problem here are in some ways with either the tough love approach, or the other part is still got to be resolved. But that is a different issue isn't Yes, well,

Ian

in my case, where I'd spent probably 13 or 14 years, actively trying to stop my first wife drinking, and failing, failing miserably, and sometimes making the situation even worse. When I went along to

allanon, she then had the choice. And she actually decided to go to Alcoholics Anonymous. And she's passed on now, but she was sober for the rest of her life, having gone along to Alcoholics Anonymous, so she had her recovery. And it was a blessing really, that, that it meant the family stayed together. And there was no longer any arguments or issues or problems or need for boundary setting and so on, because everybody had that sort of regulation, and, and learn to live together.

Steven Bruce

And so on, tweeting in my mind as you speak there with you know, how we elicit the information, we need to recognise this as being a problem, and Al Anon has been part of the solution. And I'm just thinking, maybe patients will own up to the fact that this is one of the things that's causing them stress, and we'll always be looking for psychological causes emotional causes of chronic pain and other things. And, but I'm also thinking that maybe our conversations quite often go back to, you know, how are your children doing and so on. And if they start to tell us that their children are struggling in school or whatever, maybe that's a route because perhaps people are more willing to own up or admit to the fact that it's because they don't get on with their one parent or another. Maybe that brings out the answers I'm sure that the people watching us now have ideas of their own. How they can bring this into their case history taking or just their conversation with the patients unless you've got any hot tips for us. Not

Ian

Not really, it's, it's pretty much got to be voluntary, from from the person and it's

Steven Bruce

driving the conversation down the right avenue to get that information if

Ian

if one suspects that that could be one of the issues, then that then possibly broach the subject. But even even broaching the subject, sometimes people's denial is so strong, that they won't actually admit that that is the problem, we

Annie

brought to the problems too. And I think there's a, there's a lovely pamphlet that we have, and it's called the merry go round of denial. And, you know, I went round on that merry go round for years and years and years. And it wasn't till my dad died, that I sought, counselling outside of Al Anon. And I spoke of to somebody who didn't know me, you know, and I just spoke of my fears, and my feelings, etc, etc. And it was only then that I couldn't admit that my dad had drunk all my life. And I've been surrounded by alcohol, all my life. And my brother married an alcoholic. And she was, she hid her bottles in the laundry bin, and at the back the back of the ladder, and, you know, in the garden, and she married them, and she was given a lot, my wife, my first one,

Steven Bruce

I suppose, you know, we're getting to the end of the show. I mean, how do people how do people track down allanon other than through Google search?

Ian

Well, we are one of the world's best secrets, best kept secrets. And we've travelled the world since we've been in Al Anon. And since we've been together, and we've visited Al Anon all over the world in four or five continents. But it's really easy. We do have a website, it's Al Anon family groups. And we have lots of little bits of paper that include a number, it's an L 800. Number, think

Steven Bruce

we've got a slide with the contact details do look

Ian

good. And that QR code is a new thing for allanon. That directs you to the website. So a lot more can be found out about it, including a section for professionals. On

Steven Bruce

the web, you said there was a lot of information for professionals on that there is

Ian

some really good, really good information. And an Al Anon is local, it's in Northampton share.

Steven Bruce

It won't help our viewers who are.

Ian

But it's nationwide, it's worldwide. It's in Australia, New Zealand. It's in India, it's in Africa, in Europe and America. Well,

Steven Bruce

we've had over 380 people watching us now and there'll be a lot more you see the recording of the show. So thank you both for taking the trouble to come in. I suppose you're used to it after all this

time. But thanks also, for sharing what for many people is, is quite a stressful experience of your own. Thank

Ian

you.

Annie

Thank you for having me. And

Ian

part of part of our recovery, if you like is to actually help others pass that message on to help as well. People are very

Steven Bruce

grateful that you've done that for us today. Thank you very much. I hope that was useful for you as well. And, you know, you never know when this sort of thing will come in handy. As I said at the start, it might not be our own area of expertise. But wouldn't it be wonderful for us to be able to point a patient in the right direction if they need resources like our non as for the rest of the week, Wednesday evening, I've got Ben Adams joining me in the studio. He's a classical osteopath. And he's coming in to talk about chronic pain performance pathways. So we'll be looking at examination physical interventions, and communicate communication aspects there. And then on Thursday, I've got a one off special. I'm really pleased about this. Well, we've got the great Laurie Hartman actually in the studio to demonstrate his own approach to treating we have a completely new patient coming in someone Laurie has never met before. He has a bit of a local celebrity in this area as well. And the aim is to look at how Laurie goes about assessing and treating the problem. I'm just hoping that it will be something Laurie can treat but if he can't it still be a useful experience. It is a great opportunity. How often do you get to watch your colleagues at work and here is one of the greatest names in osteopathy. Gonna give you that chance to see how he performs by all means, feel free to send in your critiques of his performance afterwards. So That's Thursday evening, that's a little bit earlier than our usual times. We're going live at seven o'clock and we'll be on air for about 45 minutes. But that's it for today. Have a lovely afternoon. Hope to see you on Wednesday and Thursday evenings but bye for now.