

Thank you FDS for giving me this opportunity to speak on this national support day.

As Tony has said supporting a loved one with drug dependence is like being a member of a club that nobody wants to belong to. Behind every person struggling with drug dependence there is a family in distress.

It's about learning to live with grief

With loss

With pain

With fear

It's about learning to cope and live your own life.

It's about letting go of control while trying to aid their recovery.

FDS is about listening, and giving families the knowledge

the support

the realistic information

the hope

the pathway to resilience and coping and freedom from judgement, shame and stigma

There is no easy way

There is no quick way

Recovery from drug dependence is a painful slow journey for all.

At the heart of FDs is its aim to keep families intact and supported, which has immeasurable benefits to society.

My path to FDS was not the one I would have voluntary chosen, but nevertheless it is what it is,

Before discovering FDS I felt fragile, alone trying to cope in a situation that I would never have imagined would happen to me or my family,

afraid to discuss what was happening,  
I felt a failure as a parent.

but after completing the stepping stones course I realised how not so alone you are and I gained understanding into drug dependence.

I am grateful for the opportunity FDS has afforded me. To gain a better insight into self and others, whose life has led them on a journey with a return which is fraught with loss and difficulties, made all the more chaotic if there are mental health issues.

As a health professional

As a mother

As a volunteer for FDS

I feel some of the millions of dollars spent on drug law enforcement and corrective services would be better directed at state supported treatment services.

Our health system prides itself on evidence based medicine, but when treating drug dependence, which IS classified as a chronic medical illness, it's not just a social problem,

the evidence is not always applied to the treatment.

Drug dependence provides significant and lasting change to brain chemistry.

Decisions related to treatment and care needs to be in the hands of enlightened health professionals and policy makers, aligning drug policy to evidence not core beliefs or the tabloid press.

A less punitive approach is needed, which may appear counter intuitive to the ill-informed and those with backward thinking.

It is well known that the frailties of the human condition respond better to a helping hand rather than vilification, they need

understanding and assistance to become productive members of society.

FDS is an organisation which gives hope and relief to thousands of families across all walks of life who are suffering in silence and grief.

A collective louder voice is needed and an acknowledgement to families for the role they have in grappling with this complex issue.

Thank you FDS

And thank you everyone

