



Drug and Alcohol Addiction  
Families need support too

## Your grief, your journey – experiencing the same thing differently



8th Annual Bereaved by Addiction Conference

**Saturday 1st October 2016**

**Venue:** The Holiday Inn Handy Cross, High Wycombe HP11 1TL (Junction 4 M40)  
[www.hihighwycombehotel.co.uk](http://www.hihighwycombehotel.co.uk)

**Cost:** £30.00 (to include lunch, tea and beverages throughout the day)

Please apply to: [administrator@drugfam.co.uk](mailto:administrator@drugfam.co.uk)

## About our facilitators



### **Sarah Bromfield** Chief Executive of DrugFAM

Sarah is responsible for leading the delivery of DrugFAM's strategic plan to provide a lifeline to families, friends and carers affected by someone else's drug or alcohol misuse.

Sarah brings a wealth of expertise from the public, private and voluntary sector. Sarah's career initially started out as an Early Year's Leader and NVQ Assessor, including 3.5 years as a Childcare Director in Australia.

Sarah worked in Tower Hamlets as a Family Support Manager and Community Lead for 8 years, with a focus on early intervention and the impact of substance misuse on children and families. Sarah set ambitious targets for the team which was recognised when they were awarded the 'best team' in the local authority.

Sarah volunteers with COAP (Children of Addicted Parents) and is a trained M-PACT facilitator with Action on Addiction. She is a visiting lecturer at Buckinghamshire New University and delivers seminars and workshops to a range of students studying undergraduate and postgraduate courses. She has also completed an evaluation of a Women's Refuge on behalf of a local authority which informed policy and commissioning processes. Sarah graduated with a first class honours in Early Years Practice Development, a Postgrad Cert', NPQICL (National Professional Qualification in Integrated Centre Leadership) and has a Masters Degree in Child Protection and Adult Safeguarding.



### **Elizabeth Burton-Phillips** Founder, Bereaved Mum and Director/Trustee

Elizabeth is passionate about the need for support for those bereaved by addiction to drugs and alcohol. She moved to the role of director/trustee of DrugFAM in January 2016. She has been a full time volunteer and public speaker for the charity for the last ten years speaking at conferences, schools and prisons both in the UK and Europe. Elizabeth is delighted that this year celebrates the tenth birthday of the charity founded in her son's memory. This is the 8th Bereaved by Addiction National Conference organised by DrugFAM that she has attended. Elizabeth lost her twin son Nicholas in 2004.



## **Peter Cartwright**

### **Specialist Bereavement Counsellor**

Peter has worked with families affected by drug and alcohol use since 1999, mostly for the national charity Adfam. He has extensive experience of supporting family members through helpline work, outreach at London prisons, and both one-to-one and group counselling. Building on this work he now trains both families and professionals in all aspects of families and substance use. Peter also has a particular interest in bereavement through working as a specialist bereavement counsellor. Over the last six years these strands of his career have come together through his work on drug and alcohol related bereavements. This has entailed chairing a national working group that produced a set of good practice guidelines for any professional or worker who come into contact with a bereaved person through their work. He works with DrugFAM to train their staff and volunteers about supporting bereaved people, he contributed to the writing of their bereavement booklet, and facilitates the quarterly bereavement support group. He is currently writing a book on how to support people bereaved through a drug or alcohol related death, which is due for publication in 2018.



## **Gill Owen Conway**

Gill began working with DrugFAM in 2013 as a volunteer after attending a talk given by Elizabeth at the Chiltern branch of Samaritans where she had been a volunteer for 14 years, 3 of which she was privileged to be the Director.

During this time Gill concentrated on public speaking especially within schools and worked closely with the Listening Scheme that Samaritans provided for the HMP Aylesbury Young Offenders. On hearing about the work DrugFAM does Gill offered her services and now provides telephone and email support to those who contact us for information and help. Gill is a facilitator at our Thursday evening High Wycombe Support Group.

# Morning Session

## Your grief, your journey – experiencing the same thing differently

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- From 9.15am      Registration and coffee
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- 10.00am      **Peter Cartwright** will welcome all participants and will link and introduce all subsequent parts of the day
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- 10.10am      **Key note speaker 1:**  
Dr Robert Le Fever speaking on Loss
- 
- 10.40am      **Presentation 1:**  
Dean Phillips will talk about the death of his brother Shane and the impact on his whole family
- 
- 11.10am      **Break**
- 
- 11.25am      **Elizabeth Burton-Phillips**, DrugFAM's Founder will speak briefly about the next session at 11.30am
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- 11.30am      **'Their lives are worth talking about'** sharing time with music in background
- 
- 11.50am      **Gill Owen-Conway** email and telephone volunteer at DrugFAM will speak about her work supporting people who are bereaved
- 
- 12.10am      **Presentation 2:**  
Carmen Cachia will share her story about the loss of her son Ian Cachia

# Afternoon Session

12.30pm

**Lunch**

1.30pm

**Presentation 3:**

Sophie Tickle and Clem Pentlow will present their report and experiences working with the Nicholas Mills Memorial Project for young people

1.55pm

**Presentation 4:**

Kathy Wade will share her story about the loss of her daughter Erif

2.20pm

**Break**

2.35pm

**Presentation 5:**

Sheena Matheson will explain her trauma in grief raising the subject of PTSD

2.50pm

**Key note speaker 2:**

Christina Thatcher 'I will never forget' - An Introduction to Creative Writing, Grief and Memory

3.40pm

**Peter's summing up**

4.00pm

**Reflection:** with slides of our loved ones, candles and soloists singing

4.20pm

Free time to sit quietly, talk together or say goodbye. Peter will invite people to leave when they are ready. DrugFAM staff and volunteers will be available to sit and chat to at the end of the conference.

4.45pm

End

## About our Speakers



### Dr Robert Lefever

I specialise in treating addiction because it causes the greatest damage. Through the use of nicotine, sugar, alcohol and drugs, it lies behind all the major illnesses such as cancer, heart disease, liver disease and diabetes.

Addicts often find that they can't live with their substance or process of addiction but also can't live without it. Their innate sense of inner emptiness leads to them to crave for mood-alteration. But the damaging consequences of addictive use cause more pain. For some, the only perceived relief from this emotional and spiritual double-bind is suicide. Not all people who drink alcohol suffer from alcoholism and not all people who commit suicide have addiction problems. But many do. My professional life is centred on trying to help addicts and their families to avoid that outcome. But I would not feel entitled to address this meeting unless I had the same personal qualification for attendance as all of you.

Please do visit my website for further information  
<http://www.real-recovery.co.uk/>



### Christina Thatcher

I am Christina Thatcher and I am a PhD student and postgraduate tutor at Cardiff University where I study how creative writing can impact the lives of people bereaved by addiction. My interest in this research is both academic and deeply personal. In July 2013 I lost my father to a drug overdose. I wrote to understand what came after and I have now completed a full-length poetry collection, entitled *More than you were*, which explores my grief and my relationship with my father. The poems cover a wide range of memories, experiences and situations – from the day my father killed a turkey in their backyard to being asked for money after his death by the women who cleaned his house. In 2015, my collection was shortlisted in Bare Fiction's Debut Poetry Collection Competition. It has now been accepted for publication by Parthian and will be published in 2017.

Losing my father not only motivated me to write but also encouraged me to reach out to others. To do this, I set up a series of 'Death Writing' workshops in Cardiff in October 2013. These free, four-part workshop series are run twice a year and aim to provide a safe space for people to discuss death and write about their experiences of fear, grief, and loss. Each session focuses on a different topic and aims to create an environment where the usual taboos placed on discussing and writing about death are temporarily lifted. So far more than 70 different people have attended these workshops, with more coming to multiple sessions. In 2014 I delivered a talk to over 400 people for Ignite Cardiff which discussed what 'Writing Grief' meant and how setting up the Death Writing workshops benefitted me and the community. The video for this can be found here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Lk\\_d2rvolM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Lk_d2rvolM)



**Ado Matheson**  
Songs from the Heart

Ado Matheson is a Celtic singer and songwriter inspired by his family tradition of music especially his late Grandfather who was crowned 'Celtic Bard' in the 50's for his writing.

Ado has lost many members of his family and friends through addiction. However the greatest tragedy was losing his dear younger son William to heroin in 2013.

His music and writing are helping him to heal and come to terms with his grief. He hopes above all else that his music will reach out and touch the hearts of those who have been there regardless of time and circumstances.



**Sheena Matheson**  
'Grief and Trauma'

I am a humanistic psychologist with 25 years experience as a counsellor and trainer including working in human resources as a manager. We lost our beautiful son and brother William in August 2013 to an accidental heroin overdose which has broken all our hearts and changed our lives forever. I am passionate about sharing truth and love and want to reach out to others suffering in a similar way. Grieving is so hard and it is ongoing but what i want to address is the effect of trauma in grief which has affected me hugely and which can often be overlooked or go unrecognised for many others. My hope for us all is acceptance peace and healing.

## About our Speakers



### **Carmen Cachia**

Mother of my first born son – Ian – 5th June 1988 – 2nd July 2015

My name is Carmen. I am a mother of 3 children and I am Maltese. Currently I am the Administration Manager of a Medical Clinic and Media Company. I have a Masters in Business Administration and a Diploma in Internet Journalism. Looking back at my life as I introduce myself I smile ironically as I observe how perspectives change!

At 24, I got married to my childhood sweetheart a few months after he graduated as an engineer. I had Ian when I was 28 and since my husband used to travel a lot we grew very close. Cheryl was born six years later and after another six years Jeremy, my youngest, was born. I always had an intuition that something wrong was going to happen to Ian. Everyone used to reassure me. I even tried to seek professional help but this proved also to be in vain.

My life drastically changed when finally I realised that Ian was taking drugs. From here my family and I – including Ian - evolved from the standard ignorant persons to taking a bumpy trip down the addiction trail. Both we as a family and also Ian fought this monster addiction. Oh what a battle! – our powers ripped off, the shame, the anger, the fear, the struggles, sleepless nights, life values broken down, valuables taken away, endless lies and lies but our love never ebbed away.

Then we started breathing again. I was so proud of Ian's efforts and improvement. However, the monster was dormant, not dead and rose once more to conquer. It was too much for Ian.

"Ma, I love you so much more than you do" – Ian's last words... yet addiction proved to be more powerful...

I am now feeling the grief of a mother. After such a tragic experience, losing my son is so much worse. Yes I do have two other children who I also love extremely but not having Ian around I am now a crippled mother.

I do thank my friends of the Facebook private group – Bereaved by Addiction, as they have understood my sorrow and comforted me whenever I needed. I also thank Elizabeth who, through her persistent work at DrugFAM, shows me that there is still a purpose in life.





**Kathy Wade**  
Mother of Erif Wade

"Remember that we deal with alcohol, cunning, baffling, powerful!" Quote from AA Big Book.

Elizabeth asked me to think about a theme for my presentation. It has been difficult but one thing which stands out through the years of Erif's addiction is how naïve we all were (I include Erif and the whole family in that) and how many times we believed we had beaten the dreadful scourge of alcoholism.

About me: I am just an ordinary mother whose life has been turned upside-down by the loss of my beautiful and dearly beloved daughter at the tragically young age of 30.

After gaining a degree in chemistry I worked in the chemical industry for many years doing research and new product development. Travelling was a part of this work which I loved and I have seen, and made friends in, many parts of the world.

Erif was my first born, conceived after 11 years of marriage and several years of trying to get pregnant. She was born on All Saint's Day 1984

Before Erif's death in 2015, I led a busy, sometimes stressful, but ultimately ordinary and enjoyable life juggling work, travelling, hobbies, charity work and helping Erif with her baby.

It was a life made much happier because, after several turbulent years when Erif, and the whole family with her, battled alcoholism, we had reached an oasis of calm where she was sober, seemed happy, was in a relationship and had a baby, Little did we know that alcoholism, as the quote above implies, is not so easy to defeat and it still had one last devastating blow to deal us.

Now I fill my life by trying to make sense of my loss on a grief journey which has been devastatingly hard but softened a little by the friends I have made at The Compassionate Friends and DrugFAM.

I also share looking after my grandson with his father's parents and I am working on memory books and boxes for him so he will have something to let him know how special his mum was and how much she loved him.

## About our Speakers

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### Dean Phillips

I am a men's coach, musician and author.

I started my journey after life dealt me a card from the very bottom of the pack. Throughout my teens, I was homeless, and struggled with depression and the direction this life was taking me.

I made it my mission to help 10.000 guys by 2020 level up their life, find their way and align themselves with their lives purpose.

In 2014 I lost my brother Shane, after a long battle with drug abuse. In my talk I will share my personal experience with losing family, and the lessons I have taught myself and others on how to get through mentally tough times and towards a brighter future.

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### Sophie Tickle

I graduated from Exeter University with a 1st Class BA (Hons) degree in Drama. Over the last six years I have worked as a freelance dance and drama artist across the UK. My work has given me the opportunity to produce and facilitate workshops for various companies and organisations and work with companies who provide arts programs for those with disabilities, including the Citadel Arts Centre and inclusive dance charity DanceSyndrome - where I am the Lead Artist and Project Manager. I produce solo performance work for UK festivals, perform as a dancer on Cbeebies and I was in the Closing Ceremony of the 2012 Olympic Games. I direct, write, choreograph and manage funded projects. I have worked with DrugFAM over the last four years, performing in 'Mum, Can You Lend Me £20? What drugs did to my family' and I am currently working closely with DrugFAM to develop the Nicholas Mills Memorial Project and support young people bereaved by addiction.

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### Clem Pentlow

I have had addiction in my life through both drug and alcohol abuse within family members. After understanding and learning about alcohol addiction from the early age of nine I thought I knew what to do for the best and how to help for most situations. What the drug addiction of my beloved younger brother has taught me is that the addiction is owned by the addict themselves and you can only do what is best for them, without putting yourself and loved ones around you last. My beautiful brother Kit died in November of 2015. DrugFAM has helped me enormously through the shock and to have the courage to be brave throughout the grief of losing someone that was so much a part of you.

# The Nicholas Mills Memorial Project

DrugFAM is supporting Young People (aged 18 – 30) who are bereaved by addiction

The aim of the project is to support young people to develop ways to process and cope with their loss so they can move forward with their lives, not feel so alone and challenge the stigma which is often associated with bereavement through drugs and alcohol.



Sophie Tickle



“Sometimes you don’t have to just sit and talk about the issue; time spent with people who understand is just as beneficial”

If you would like more information regarding this project contact:

**Elizabeth Burton-Phillips**

Email: [bereavement@drugfam.co.uk](mailto:bereavement@drugfam.co.uk)



**Drug and Alcohol Addiction  
Families need support too**



DrugFAM is a member of  
National Suicide Prevention Alliance



### **The Weight of Grief**

This amazing artist has found a way to depict the physical form of grief. "Rising Cairn" a 4,000 lb stone sculpture is the work of artist Celeste Roberge. Roberge says that she didn't necessarily intend to depict anguish in the piece but doesn't mind the alternative reading of her work. "I imagine her in the process of rising up from her crouching position... when she is ready," she explains. "I am not disturbed by individual interpretations of the sculpture because I think it is really wonderful for people to connect with works of art in whatever way is meaningful to them."

Our mission is to be a lifeline for families,  
friends and carers who are struggling to cope  
with the nightmare of addiction.

**Tel: 01494 442777**

**Helpline: 0300 888 3853 (9am-9pm)**

**7 days a week**

**[bereavement@drugfam.co.uk](mailto:bereavement@drugfam.co.uk)**

**[www.drugfam.co.uk](http://www.drugfam.co.uk)**

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