

	STAGE ONE (Immersion)	STAGE TWO (Confusion)	STAGE THREE (Collaboration)	STAGE FOUR (Solution)
	This stage begins on the day the family member begins using drugs and ends on the day that the family (as a whole) discovers the drug use.	This stage begins on the day that the family (as a whole) discovers the drug use and ends on the day that they decide that they cannot cope with the problem and ask for outside help (as a family)	This stage begins on the day that the family (as a whole) or the addicted member ask for help and begin new (informed) strategies for themselves and ends on the day that they adopt those strategies.	This stage begins on the day that the outside strategies are accepted and practiced. It has no ending position.
RESPONSE ONE	DENIAL	COVERING UP	OPENING UP	RECOVERY
BASED ON	Lack of communication. Pride	Shame issues.	Acknowledgement that old ideas are not working. Working with outside agencies as a family.	Acknowledgement that the new ideas will work.
RESULTS IN	Acceleration in the stage symptoms	Acceleration in the stage symptoms. Stress, frustration and feuds	Shortening of stage. Defining of new boundaries and relationships.	Trust developed. Relationships improved
RESPONSE TWO	IGNORANCE	SELF RELIANCE	SURVIVAL	RECOVERY
BASED ON	Lack of communication. Absence.	Previous success with issues.	Acknowledgement that old ideas are not working	Acknowledgement that the new ideas will work.
RESULTS IN	Extension of stage symptoms	Extension of stage symptoms. Depression, loss of self belief and trust	Extension of stage symptoms. Isolation. Worry and frustration	Trust developed. Relationships improved

STAGE ONE (Immersion)

This is a stage to be understood rather than worked with since it is always a stage where not even the family usually know how the family member is becoming immersed in the addictive behaviour. Just like all these phases, this one can be long or short depending upon the nature of the addiction and the family relationships. It can be very useful to explore as it connects with secrecy and deceit and how we get into a position where we feel we cannot trust people. From a family perspective the phase is signified by **denial** or **ignorance**. Lots of families have a 'sense' that drugs are involved but do not want to face it. This sense can tell us a lot about the 'close' relationships within the family. This phase can also involve more than one member of the family.

STAGE TWO (Confusion)

This stage is more often about combustion and explosiveness as the phase of secrecy gives way to a phase of family resources. These resources are often signified by **covering up** or **self reliance**. Covering up can entail paying off dealers, not telling other members of the family and supplying the addicted family members with money (or drugs). Self reliance is more about 'we can handle it' and includes things like becoming very strict with the addicted member, threatening drug dealers or addicted friends of the family. It is a very explosive stage as frustration gives way to anger as the family discovers that no matter how well they have dealt with other issues in life, this one is different. Like the first stage, this stage is also 'pre-treatment' although there may have been some individual involvement with services or fellowship meetings.

STAGE THREE (Collaboration)

This is one of the most delicate and important stages as it marks the beginning of a collaboration between the family and services. The family are admitting at this stage that they cannot cope with this difficulty but have not yet decided to trust in any particular route through the problem. Some families come into this stage out of a **survival** instinct as their money and patience and relationships are at breaking point. Some enter it as part of **opening up** as they recognise that their ways are not working but are making things worse. Of all the stages, this one calls for the most patience and careful handling as it is possible to turn families away from a collaborative approach. Working with the whole family is the key here as it makes success much more likely, informing parents and grandparents of the tried and tested approaches of 'tough love'. Helping them work on their 'boundaries' and the need for them.

STAGE FOUR (Solution)

Recovery looks similar however it is achieved. Illicit drug taking often ceases or is medically managed and relationships are improved as well as financial situations. It is possible to enter this phase as a family without the agreement of the addicted family member. The family as a whole is still able to recover.

As a phase this one is signified by the idea of the collaborative circle becoming wider and including a real commitment to outside agency strategies as well as the idea that this phase has no ending. The importance of working with families comes to fruition at this point as recovery brings a willingness to help others and can become the energy that helps fuel community building.