A background photograph showing a group of people in a supportive setting. A woman in the foreground is being embraced by another woman. Other people are visible in the background, some looking towards the camera and others looking away. The image has a soft, slightly blurred quality.

Tone of Voice & Messaging Guidelines

Writing Guidelines for
Addiction Family Support

Vision

A world where no one faces a loved one's addiction alone.

Mission

To support people affected or bereaved by a loved one's harmful use of alcohol, drugs, or gambling.

Approach

Listen

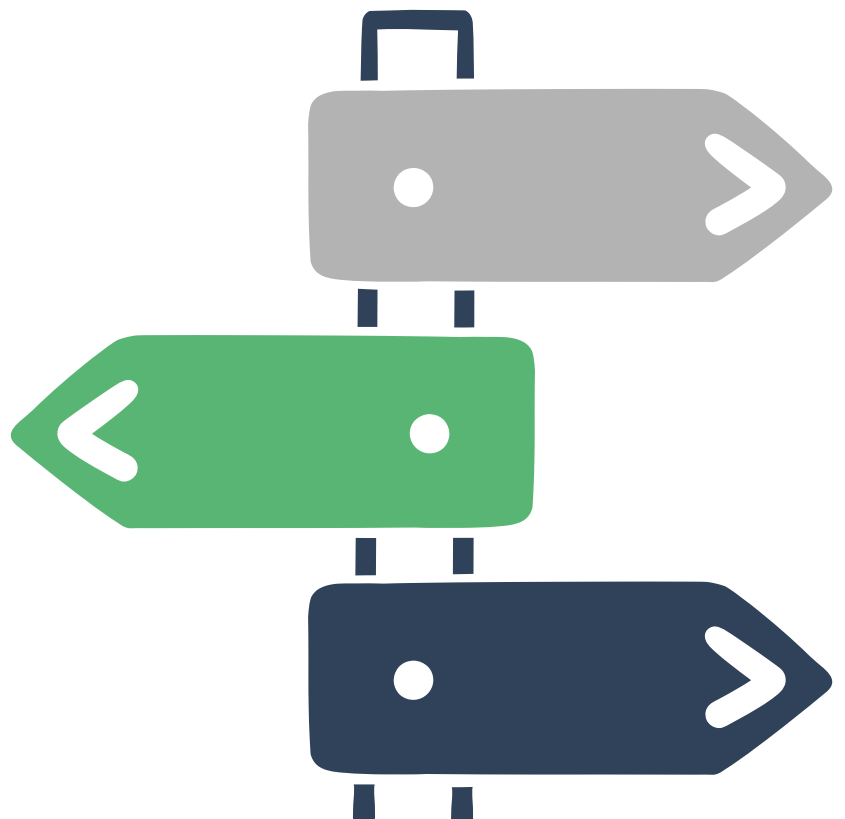
Listening is the first step. We provide a safe, non-judgmental space for people to share their stories and emotions openly. By actively listening, we acknowledge their situation's complexities and the emotional weight they carry, ensuring they feel heard and validated.

Understand

Understanding is central to our approach. After listening, we strive to fully comprehend the unique challenges people face. Our team, many with lived experiences of similar issues, appreciate the depth of people's emotional and practical needs.

Support

Our final step is to support. By understanding people's needs, we can tailor our support to suit their unique circumstances, helping them navigate their journey more effectively.



Language Guidelines

To ensure consistency, clarity, and warmth in our communications, please adhere to the following guidelines when discussing our services, target audiences, and the issues we address.

Addiction

Referencing Addiction

We use the term “addiction” as it is immediately understood and clarifies to our audience what lies at the heart of the issue we address.

“Harmful Use”

While we use “addiction” for clarity, we recognise the stigma attached to the word and prefer to use “harmful use” when talking about alcohol, drugs, or gambling.

Here are three examples:

- Affected by a loved one’s harmful alcohol use
- Affected by a loved one’s harmful drug use
- Affected by a loved one’s harmful gambling use

Avoiding Stigmatising Language

We strictly avoid terms like “addict”, “alcoholic”, “compulsive gambler”, or any other labels that could be stigmatising or dehumanising. Such terms not only negatively impact our clients and their loved ones but also reinforce harmful stereotypes about addiction.

Order of Addictions

When listing the addictions, always maintain the order: 1. Alcohol, 2. Drugs, 3. Gambling. This consistency helps maintain clarity and focus in our communications.

Services

Describing Our Services

When first describing our services, it is crucial to specify that they are designed for people affected or bereaved by a loved one’s addiction to alcohol, drugs, or gambling. This initial mention clearly defines the scope of our support and the specific addictions we address.

Simplified References

After clearly outlining the scope of service, using “impacted by a loved one’s addiction” and “addictions” is appropriate in longer texts such as articles and case studies.

Avoiding Certain Terms

We avoid providing “guidance” and “advice” for safeguarding reasons. Instead of prescribing actions, we focus on providing support and information that enables people to make informed decisions tailored to their unique circumstances.

Tone of Voice

Addiction Family Support strives to communicate with warmth, empathy, and professionalism in all our written communications. Our tone of voice reflects our commitment to supporting people with compassion and understanding.

Compassionate and Supportive

- Our tone offers a comforting presence to people seeking assistance and understanding.

Empathetic and Non-Judgmental

- We treat all clients with empathy, recognising the complexity of addiction and its impact.
- We maintain a non-judgmental approach, fostering an environment of acceptance and understanding for those seeking help.

Clear and Informative

- We communicate clearly and concisely, ensuring all audiences easily understand our messages.
- We provide accurate and up-to-date information about our services, resources, and support options to help people in their healing journey.

Authentic and Genuine

- Our authentic and genuine voice reflects our clients' experiences and emotions.

Respectful and Inclusive

- We ensure that our communications respect the diversity of experiences and perspectives within our community.

Positive and Hopeful

- While acknowledging the challenges, we maintain a positive and hopeful outlook, emphasising the possibilities of coping.
- Our messages inspire optimism and resilience, offering encouragement and support.

Imagery and Photography

Addiction Family Support believes in the power of visual storytelling to convey our mission. Our imagery and photography guidelines ensure that our visual content remains sensitive, authentic and impactful.

Preference for Lifestyle Images

- We prioritise using photography to depict genuine moments of support and connection within families and communities.
- In cases where suitable photography is unavailable, illustrations are used and modified to align with our brand colours for consistency.

Privacy Considerations

- We always offer clients the option to have stock imagery next to their case study or testimonial to respect their privacy.
- We will only use photos of clients if we have their written consent.

Avoiding Stereotypes

- We strive to avoid stereotypes, ensuring our stock images portray genuine and relatable scenarios.
- Stock images are carefully selected to represent the diverse experiences of our clients.

Avoiding Artificial Images

- We aim to steer clear of stock images that appear staged or artificial.

Diversity and Inclusivity

- Our imagery reflects the diversity of our clients, encompassing various backgrounds, ages, and ethnicities.



Get in Touch

We hope you'll find these guidelines clear and helpful. But if you need any further help or information on any aspect of our design, please contact our Marketing & Communications Manager:

matty@addictionfamilysupport.org.uk

