

BREAK FREE

with

OSCAR BAMUHIGIRE

Help, my daughter is a drug addict!

Q Dear Counsellor,
My daughter is a drug addict, taking a combination of drugs, but she keeps to herself and does not have friends. She spends much of her time in her room. How can I help her? Does she have another problem? Can she be helped?

David, Kampala

A Dear David,
Your daughter's situation is not as complicated as you may think. Many addicts who have been in similar or worse situations have recovered, either fully or shown significant improvement. Your daughter may be suffering from depression, in addition to her addiction to drugs. Very often, such substances of abuse cause depression, but it will resolve after a certain period of abstinence.

Therefore, the first thing to do is to get her into treatment for addiction and wait to see what progress she makes with the depression. In most rehabilitation centres, there is a psychiatrist available to do a clinical assessment and determine the nature and severity of the

depression. Sometimes, patients have to be put on medication for a certain period of time.

Getting your daughter into treatment will be a challenge, because you have to either motivate or coerce her into it. In the case of motivation, you can approach her through those that are close to her, so that they can explain to her the importance of treatment.

Where this fails, you may have to utilise a technique called intervention, which involves her family, friends and a counsellor. This will either see her get into treatment voluntarily, or under coercion. Forcing one into treatment may sound a bit harsh or cruel, but sometimes that is the only option available. Left alone, most addicts will die or waste away over the years. A good place to start, where you can get important information and social support, would be the local AA meeting at Christ the King Church and Butabika Hospital's alcohol and drug unit.

Oscar has about 20 years of continuous sobriety and 18 years as an addiction counsellor