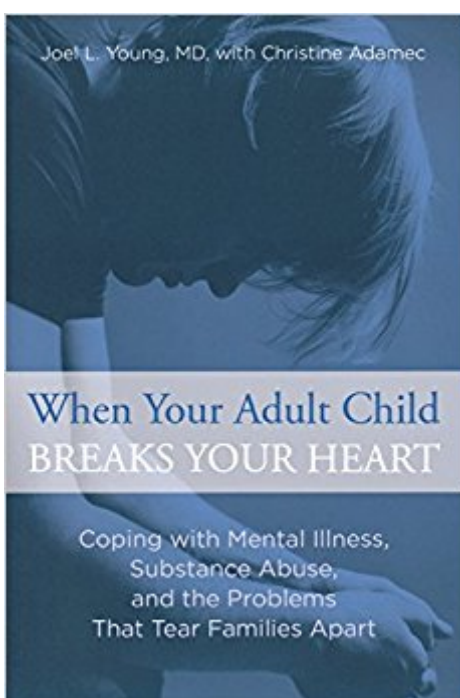


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# When Your Adult Child Breaks Your Heart: Coping With Mental Illness, Substance Abuse, And The Problems That Tear Families Apart



## Synopsis

Behind nearly every adult who is accused of a crime, becomes addicted to drugs or alcohol, or who is severely mentally ill and acting out in public, there is usually at least one extremely stressed-out parent. This parent may initially react with the bad news of their adult child behaving badly with, "Oh no!" followed by, "How can I help to fix this?" A very common third reaction is the thought, "Where did I go wrong--was it something I said or did, or that I failed to do when my child was growing up that caused these issues? Is this really somehow all my fault?" These parents then open their homes, their pocketbooks, their hearts, and their futures to "saving" their adult child--who may go on to leave them financially and emotionally broken. Sometimes these families also raise the children their adult children leave behind: 1.6 million grandparents in the U.S. are in this situation. This helpful book presents families with quotations and scenarios from real suffering parents (who are not identified), practical advice, and tested strategies for coping. It also discusses the fact that parents of adult children may themselves need therapy and medications, especially antidepressants. The book is written in a clear, reassuring manner by Dr. Joel L. Young, medical director of the Rochester Center for Behavioral Medicine in Rochester Hills, Michigan; with noted medical writer Christine Adamec, author of many books in the field. In the wake of the Newtown shooting and the viral popularity of the post "I Am Adam Lanza's Mother," America is now taking a fresh look, not only at gun control, but also on how we treat mental illness. Another major issue is our support or stigmatization of those with adult children who are a major risk to their families as well to society itself. This book is part of that conversation.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“At a time when we have a veritable crisis of adult children coping with mental illness, substance abuse, or their combination” coupled with a lack of resources for their concerned parents “this book provides understandable, practical advice for parents that is useful in real life. Dr. Young is a member of the new generation of psychiatrists unburdened by the tradition of a hierarchy and stereotype and is to be commended for the effort he expended in putting together this concise and practical summary in this important, underserved area. Any parent and clinician would benefit greatly from reading this book.”

—David R. Rosenberg, MD, professor and chairman, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Neurosciences, Wayne State University; and psychiatrist in chief, Detroit Medical Center

“It is often very hard to find help for despairing parents of adult children with mental illness and substance abuse. Easily understood and clearly written, replete with anecdotes, advice and quotations from real people, this unusually helpful book offers timely and practical information.”

—Mark S. Gold, MD, distinguished professor and chairman, Department of Psychiatry, University of Florida

“This authoritative guide couples practical, no-nonsense information with support and reassurance. A must-read book for parents who wonder what went wrong and who mistakenly blame themselves.”

—Irene S. Levine, PhD, professor of psychiatry, NYU Langone School of Medicine

“Parents struggling to understand and support their adult children in distress now have this engaging, comprehensive, and practical book. In *When Your Adult Child Breaks Your Heart*, Dr. Joel Young provides invaluable information, stories, and strategies. He has given us an essential go-to-resource for families and those who work with them.”

—Steve Weine, MD, professor, Department of Psychiatry, University of Illinois at Chicago

“Brain-behavior illnesses almost always become family issues. Family and friends are impacted, play crucial roles in assisting children of any age in finding and adhering to treatment plans, and are always in need of guidance about how to navigate the predictable hurdles. This book by Dr. Young provides a road map that help parents along often-rocky roads.”

—John Greden, MD, executive director, University of Michigan Depression Center, University of Michigan Medical School

“This book addresses an often overlooked cost of mental illness—the agonizing suffering of family members who make every attempt to support and love the impaired adult child. You will appreciate the ‘in the trenches’ insights and guidance these knowledgeable authors offer.”

—David W. Goodman, MD, assistant professor, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences; and director, Adult Attention Deficit Disorder Center of Maryland

“Mental illness and substance use disorders are highly prevalent, cause enormous personal suffering and disability, and pose extreme strains on even the

best-functioning families. There are no guidebooks or other educational materials available to parents of adult children with these conditions. *When Your Adult Child Breaks Your Heart* admirably fills this enormous void. Clearly written by Dr. Young and Ms. Adamec, this timely book provides extremely useful information and practical advice to parents of adult children with mental illness and substance use disorders. I found the book inspiring and comforting and would highly recommend it to all parents who struggle to understand their adult child with mental illness, cope with the knowledge of their adult child's problematic behaviors, and strive to help their child while retaining their own sanity.

—Rajiv Tandon, MD, professor of psychiatry, University of Florida College of Medicine

Christine Adamec has written more than 30 self-help books and encyclopedias, most recently *Amphetamines and Methamphetamine* (Chelsea House, 2012) and *The Encyclopedia of Kidney Diseases and Disorders* (Facts On File, 2011). In addition, she coauthored *Fibromyalgia for Dummies* (Wiley, 2007), which has sold 100,000 copies in two editions. Adamec has also written or coauthored numerous books on substance abuse and mental illness, including, *The Encyclopedia of Alcoholism and Alcohol Abuse* (Facts On File, 2010), *The Encyclopedia of Drug Abuse* (Facts On File, 2008) and *How to Live with a Mentally Ill Person* (Wiley, 1996). Adamec lives near Orlando, Florida. Read more at [christineadamec.com](http://christineadamec.com)

My beautiful adult daughter has been suffering with mental illness (ADHD, depression, bi-polar, OCD, suicide threats/attempts and oppositional defiance disorder) for most of her life which of course has affected my family, friends and her boyfriends - not to mention has involved schools, universities, police and social workers throughout the years. Like so many, we've taken her to counselors, doctors, psychiatrists, and sought help from mental health groups. She's been on and off medication to the point that we can't even keep track. Most of the time she's good to be around and we just hope it lasts; yet when she tanks it happens fast and furiously. And by furiously, yes, she is violent. Her last episode was over a year ago and resulted in her being arrested. With much counseling and advice - and without going into details - I'm not sure that I will ever see her again. This breaks my heart and even though I believe what my husband and I are doing is the best, this book really has helped me. It is written by professionals, gives case examples and is probably the first book I've come across that cites actual studies involving mental illness patients! Finally I had some numbers behind statements. Of course, mental illness is extremely difficult to study; yet the studies cited help to at least see if situations are occurring more or less than average for similar

situations. Of course, this doesn't give "answers" but gosh it was helpful to me. It is written from a very balanced perspective, good logic behind comments/statements and really approaches mental health situations holistically. I would recommend it to anyone that is experiencing mental health situations with someone you love who breaks your heart. What I like is that it helps bring balance and understanding to when one can help, and some guidance when there's really not much more you can do. I've read a lot of books, blogs and etc for years which have been helpful yet not like this book has been - which I almost feel has been life-changing. This book has really helped me to see that these situations happen to more than just our family (which I knew but for some reason this book really gave me real clarity), it's not just me or my fault (because people suffering from mental illness often blame everyone else except themselves for their problems), and that things can get so bad that you can/should just move on with your life without that person being involved or at least limited interactions. Even though we'd pretty much gotten to that point with our situation, this book helped me feel more confident with our decision and helped me understand how I can handle the situation should my daughter ever decide to get help and want to come back into my life. Historically when she's done that, I've just accepted her and pretended like nothing bad ever happened. Evidently that hasn't worked :) so I need to change how I interact with her in the future. This wasn't a new idea to me; yet this book helped me see that I really wasn't helping the situation despite my "fixer" tendencies (I always think situations can be fixed and some simply can't - especially when dealing with mental illness). Even though I'm a person that overall has a great life - wonderful husband, family and career; is very active, helps others regularly, volunteers and etc - and am pretty much in control of my emotions, this situation has been a true kick to my soul. So I cannot adequately express the emotional relief/stability this book has given me. A huge thank you to the authors for writing this book.

A must read for parents of children with substance abuse, mental health issues, or legal problems. We are not alone and it (usually) isn't our fault.

This book gives a lot of information. I found it very helpful. It does not get extremely detailed and hard to follow. I was able to read and digest it.

This book is a must read for parents that suspect or know their child is doing Drugs. It will give you the courage to deal with the problems in a sensible way instead of thinking of them still as a child.

Well written. Gives perspective on adult children w/mental illnesses which often leads into substance & alcohol abuse. Also good information on teaching parents that rescuing is enabling the adult child to continue the maladaptive behaviors & the importance of setting boundaries.

Very helpful. This was recommended by my therapist.

informative

Fantastic book. A must read for anyone with a problem child!

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