

Honoring All Our Feelings

As the holidays draw near, it may be difficult to imagine what to expect. It may even feel as if there is not much to celebrate. Sickness, relapse and quarantine could be keeping your loved ones away. Differing beliefs within the family may leave you feeling defeated. Economic hardship may impact the ability to celebrate with one another in traditional ways. It has been a hard and heavy year, and the “holiday spirit” may be in short supply.

As you begin your preparations and planning, remember that your children will take their cues from you. They love you, look up to you and follow your lead. Though so much may seem different, this relational pattern has not changed. You are their example of how to process this strange time.

We know that what you most want your children to feel are the joy, excitement and gratitude typical of the season. It may be tempting to try and shield your children from your own uneasiness, stress or grief. While it’s essential to share your authentic feelings of “holiday spirit,” it would likely be very confusing for your children if you only shared that side of the story. Just like with addiction, living through a global pandemic will affect the children whether we want it to or not. As they anticipate the holidays, they have the same fears, anxieties and disappointments you do, and they need your help and guidance.

Hiding how you feel teaches kids to hide how they feel. Practicing recovery means honoring all our feelings, even the more uncomfortable ones. Show them how to courageously ask for help by reaching out to your safe people. Show them that it is important to feel our feelings. Show them how to safely express disappointment, anger or grief. It takes courage to be vulnerable, and sharing these things with your children will lead to deeper connection and will teach them how to manage their uncomfortable feelings. And that is a gift that will help them weather whatever storm may come next.

Remember, the most important gifts you give your child are your love, your attention and your recovery. We are here to support you and your family—and we’re cheering you on every step of the way.

CAREGIVER'S CORNER

We're Here for You

All of us at the Children’s Program are super happy to continue our annual **Holiday Hotline** tradition. The **Holiday Hotline** is available to all alumni of the Children’s Program.

When: Friday, December 18 through Sunday, January 3

Who: A Children’s Program counselor from one of our sites in California, Colorado or Minnesota will be available to talk and provide you with extra support.

How: Call us at 760-773-4291 or 303-745-2275.

Looking for something fun to do during the holidays?
Visit our website to find activities designed just for you.

HazeldenBettyFord.org/Kids

Have a happy and safe holiday season!

Please reach out if you ever need us.

California Team

760-773-4291
ChildrensCA@HazeldenBettyFord.org

Colorado Team

303-745-2275
ChildrensCO@HazeldenBettyFord.org

Minnesota Team

651-213-4720
ChildrensMN@HazeldenBettyFord.org

The Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation is a force of healing and hope for individuals, families and communities affected by addiction to alcohol and other drugs.

116159 (12/20)
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News and Activities from Your Friends at the Children's Program

Beamer's Buddies

WINTER 2020

Counting Our Blessings

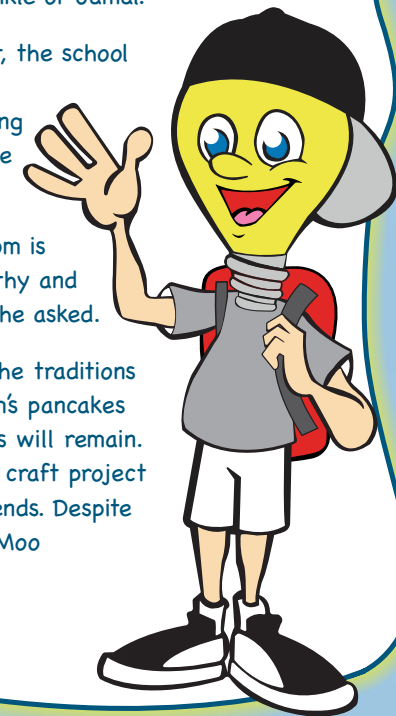
These are strange times. Beamer uses his laptop for school. His mom attends T & R (Treatment and Recovery) meetings on her computer. He hasn't heard from his dad in many weeks. It's been months since Beamer got to hang out in person with Carlos, Twinkle or Jamal.

Beamer shared his feelings with Miss Light, the school counselor, when they talked on the phone. "I hate the coronavirus," he said. "It's ruining everything. Now I only get to celebrate the holidays with my mom and grandma."

"I understand," Miss Light replied. "Your mom is doing everything possible to keep you healthy and safe. How can you make the best of this?" she asked.

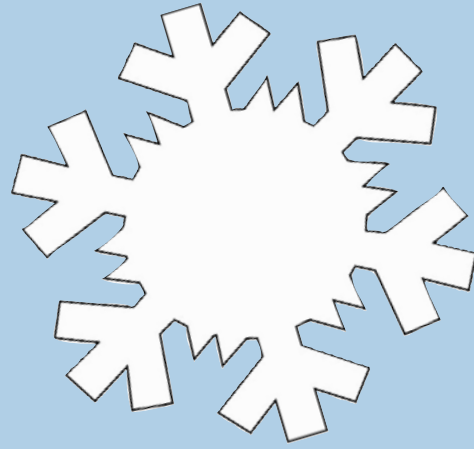
Beamer and Mom decide to make a plan. The traditions of making hot chocolate, waking up to Mom's pancakes and listening to MooMoo sing holiday carols will remain. Beamer will spend extra time on a special craft project with them. He will pray for family and friends. Despite these tough times, Beamer, Mom and MooMoo will count their blessings.

Happy Holidays!



Just for Fun

THE ONE-AND-ONLY YOU



Did you know that every single snowflake is different and unique? Just like us! It's important to celebrate our differences and the things we like about ourselves, especially during the holidays.

In each of the four snowflakes, write in something that's unique about you!

Ask the Counselor

Answers to Your Questions about Addiction & Other Stuff

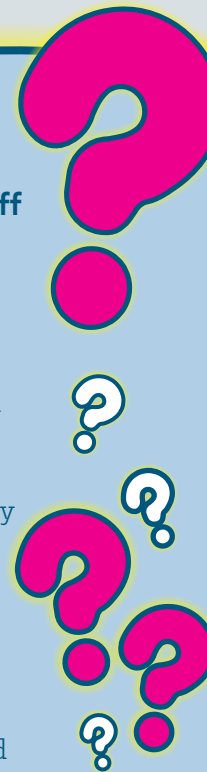
My dad was trapped by addiction, and now he is with T&R. But during the holidays I see other family members drinking. Are they hooked by addiction too?

That's such a great question. In fact, many other kids are probably wondering about this question, too.

Here's how it works. Some people can drink and not get trapped by addiction. (Remember, the definition of addiction is when people want more and more, and they can't stop.) When someone is trapped by addiction, they are no longer in control, and they may act different.

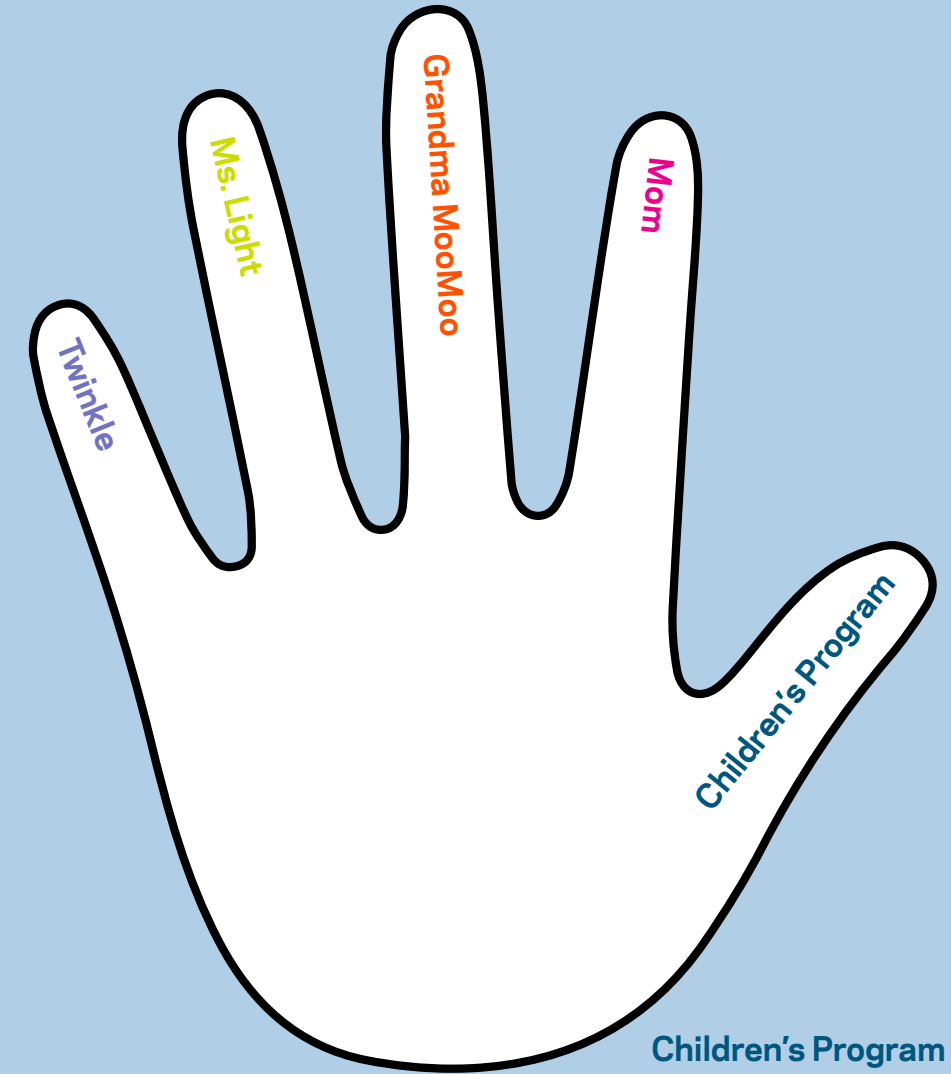
It's also important to remember that we might feel unsafe when we are around someone who is drinking a lot. So if you are around someone who is drinking and you do not feel safe, it is okay to ask for help from a safe person.

Even though you have learned a lot about addiction, it's not your job to decide who has a problem with alcohol or drugs. Your job is to be a kid and have fun!



Beamer's Helping Hand

Beamer created his own "Helping Hand" to use whenever he needs to talk with someone for support. What would your Helping Hand look like?



Get to Know Ana

How she has fun: Hiking and listening to music

Favorite food: Mexican food, especially carne asada tacos

Super hero she would like to meet: Wonder Woman and Batman

What makes her happy: Laughing with friends and family



Contact me at
AHoyt@HazeldenBettyFord.org
or 760-773-4360

Children's Program

Minnesota 651-213-4720
California 760-773-4291
Colorado 303-745-2275