

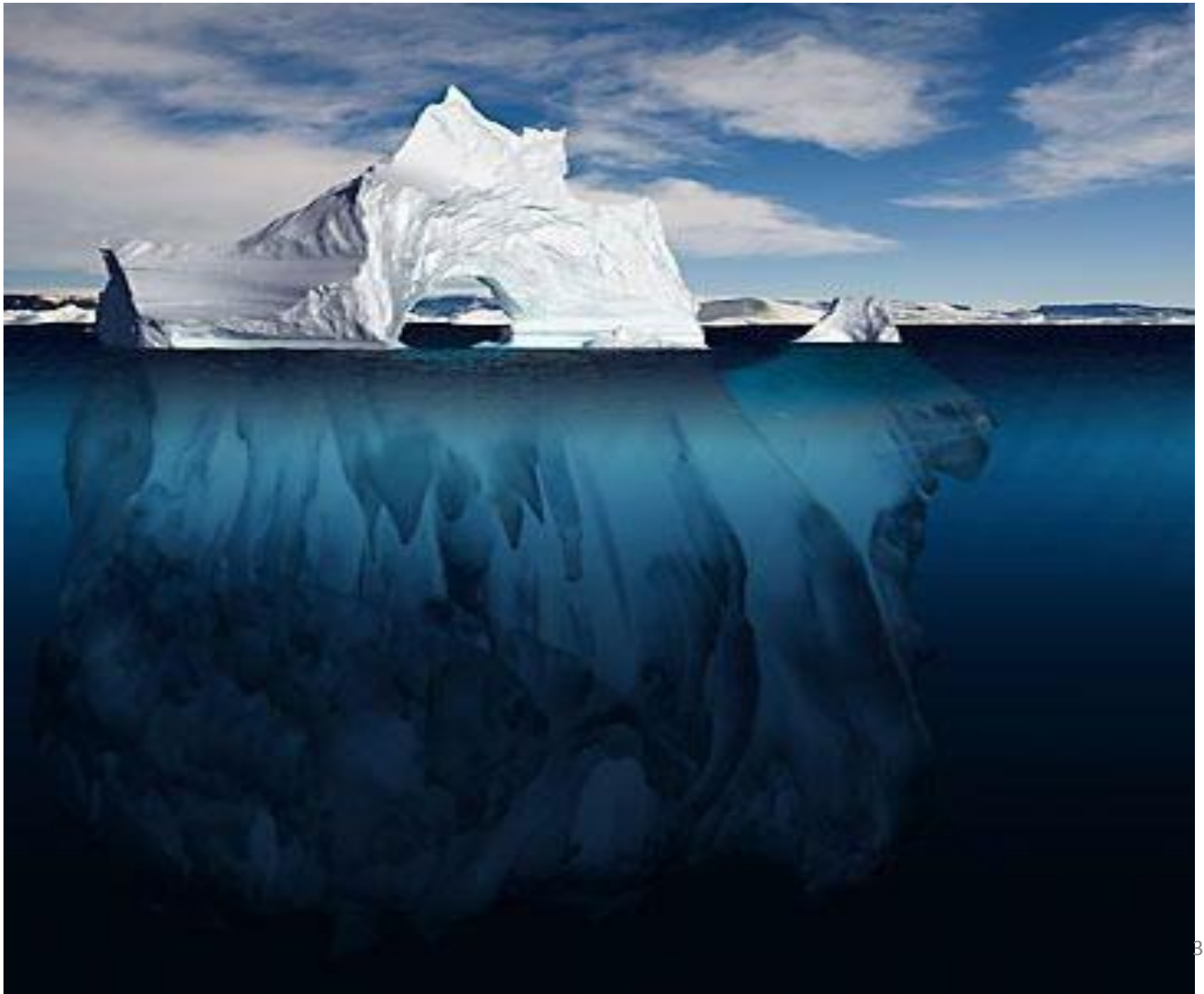


Getting Our Priorities Right for Children Affected by Parental Substance Use

What's the problem?

The children who live with parents who have drug and alcohol problems are among the most vulnerable in society

Scottish Government (2008:3) The Road to Recovery



Argyll and Bute

Concern Type	Oct	Nov	Dec
Child exploitation	0	0	0
Children placing themselves at risk	0	0	0
Domestic abuse	21	20	19
Emotional abuse	4	2	5
Neglect	10	6	7
Non-engaging family	5	4	4
Other concern(s)	18	18	17
Parental alcohol misuse	7	10	9
Parental drug misuse	13	11	11
Parental mental health problems	10	8	9
Physical abuse	5	3	1
Sexual abuse	2	2	2

Around 300 - 350 children in Scotland lose a parent in drug-related death every year .

Alcohol related deaths

There were 1,150 alcohol-related deaths in 2015

Children's Experiences

Loss

Unsafe

Trauma

Loyalty

Shame

Embarrassment

Secrecy and denial

Confusion

Anxiety

Neglected

Angry

Isolated

Lonely

Responsible

Responsibility

Love

Guilt

Powerless

Vigilant

Protective

Substance use can and does diminish parenting capacity.

Capacity changes rapidly as a result of:

Different styles and patterns, e.g. bingeing, poly-substance use, dependent

Type of substance use and its effects

Levels of intoxication / comedown

Withdrawals and tolerance

AMOUNTS of a substance will in itself not give an understanding of the impact on children

Parents often attempt to hide their use to offer a degree of protection to their children.

However, children are very often aware of parents' use.

“I did use in front of her when she was younger, thinking she didn't cop, but she did, I'm not going to lie. When she was about three or four she put a piece of string round her arm and started tapping her arm, mimicking me”

(Hogan, 2001:12)

Impact

Neglect and emotional unavailability

Parental denial of problems

Inconsistent care responses, boundary setting

Assuming parenting responsibility

Increased risk of physical, verbal and emotional and /or sexual abuse

(Forrester & Harwin 2000, Velleman and Reuber, 2007, Velleman and Templeton, 2007 Forrester et al 2016)



