

MSP adds his story to alcohol and drugs campaign

Lothians MSP Miles Briggs has opened up for the first time about his father's alcohol use.

He used the opportunity of backing a campaign to alcohol and drugs to tell his own story.

In a candid and moving letter to his father as part of the [See Beyond – See the Lives – Scotland](#) campaign, Miles shared his experiences as the son of a single parent who drank. He lost his mother to breast cancer at an early age and he talks of the loss and pain he feels due to his late father missing spending time with his children and grandchildren.

Miles wrote: “We all miss you but also know the pain watching you try to deal with and hide your drink problem from family and friends – from bottles hidden in the garden and around the house, the difficulty in holding down a job and for the family the worry and concerns we all felt over what would come next.

“We probably don't speak enough about you as a family – that's partly because it can often return to what was a difficult few final years of your life. Dad, you know you weren't perfect, but then which one of us is?”

Also backing See Beyond – See the Lives – Scotland is Monica Lennon, Scottish Labour MSP for Central Scotland. A long-time campaigner against the stigma surrounding substance use, Monica lost her father to alcohol in 2015. Miles' and Monica's letters to their fathers are included with 14 others

who share letters to their loved ones on the campaign's website.

The two MSPs will lead a Scottish Parliament reception this week in Holyrood where those who helped to create the website campaign will talk about their experiences. They will stress the importance of showing kindness and offering support to everyone affected.

'Everyone knows someone' is the message behind See Beyond – See the Lives – Scotland, launched last month by the University of Stirling, Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol and Drugs, Scottish Health Action on Alcohol Problems (SHAAP), and The Salvation Army.

As well as hard-hitting stories and videos from family members and friends of people who have died, the website includes resources and advice for those harmed by substance use, whether for themselves or a family member or friend.

Since its launch, the campaign has gained national attention and support for its mission to shatter myths surrounding drug and alcohol use and deaths, and to encourage the public to show compassion for those experiencing problems with substance use and the people left behind when a loved one dies.

Miles said: "The important message with See Beyond – See the Lives – Scotland is that there is still stigma attached to alcohol and drug use, from how people talk about it to the judgements they bring to it.

"Each of these letters is a rallying cry to make a change.

"Everyone knows someone, and we can all help steer each other towards more of an understanding of substance use and its effects on people's lives."



Miles Briggs, Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party MSP for Lothian. Photo: © 2023, Martin P. McAdam www.martinmcadam.com