Chapter 7
CROSS CASE ANALYSIS
DIFFERENT WORLDS, BUT SAME STORIES

The Adult children of alcoholic (ACOAs) are influenced by and have had a life time of living with the alcoholic father and in interacting with the family that may have enabled his alcoholism. This interaction with the father affects not only their personality but also their relation with others. The conflicting emotions of being an ACOA may result in adapting certain roles within the family system. The findings in the earlier section reveal that gender of the ACOA may also influence how alcoholism affects them. The following chapter has been built upon the framework of intelligence used by Thorndike (1920) quoted in Baron (2006) Wechsler also describes EI as non cognitive intelligence and later popularized by Howard Gardner in his theory of multiple intelligences as intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligence. The researcher has adapted this typology of intelligence into a framework of analysis to understand the world of the Indian ACOA.

Some of the trajectories are common across the case studies and some are poles apart. Some have traversed in the areas where EI may be affected depending on how the ACOA managed his or her EI. The following areas emerged as significant themes that seem to play out in the lives of all the ACOAs

- **Intrapersonal**: The ability to know oneself and understand oneself. It was also put forth to categorise how ACOAs understand emotions and the basic personality that emerged. Within this theme, some subthemes of how their personality was affected and their self-esteem was affected is highlighted.

*Let's not forget that the little emotions are the great captains of our lives and we obey them without realizing it.* ~Vincent Van Gogh, 1889
➤ **Interpersonal:** The ability to get along with others, have relationships that are meaningful. Within these themes one looks at the way relationships with the world affected the capability of how they managed themselves or did not manage themselves. Their relationships with their father who is the alcoholic, mother, significant others who influenced them and their neighbours or relatives. The community and their relationship with it and within which they lived was also explored. Abuse and violence emerged as significant in the area of interpersonal relationships. The abuse was not only physical, it was also emotional, verbal and lack of fulfilment of the parental duties. This came up in both the sections across different instruments that data was collected.

➤ **Management:** This section focuses on the effects of alcoholism and the roles played by the children. The ontology that guides one here is that the EI is managed by either adapting roles or following rules which then help to manage the stress that arises due to lack of structure and consistency that is found in homes with alcoholism (Black 1981, Weghscheider Cruse, 1981) Gender and how that is affected due to alcoholism in the family emerged as an important factor in this section of the study. EI was also explored.

**THEME 1: INTRAPERSONAL**

**Identity as a child of an alcoholic**

ACOA respondents reported that the stigma of being a child of alcoholic father was a core part of their identity. Everyone looks at identity from their subjective lens and parameters of who they think they should be or who they think others should be. The identity is closely linked to the individual sense of self-worth. ACOA report that the fathers drinking is a part of their life. Some reported that it was part of their identity and it made them who they were. ACOA report that being called a son/daughter of an “Alki1 / bewda/3 drunkard” is heard commonly. This also emerged in the section on emotional experiences. Some ACOAs share

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3 A short form of Alcoholic, used colloquially by people.
that initially it would affect them but later as the father’s alcoholism progresses they learnt to turn a deaf ear and do not pay attention. Others reported that they would go home and cry and be upset as they felt humiliated or hurt by these remarks that people made.

Howard reports how others treated him because his father was an alcoholic and how their perceptions changed as he chose not to drink or smoke at all:

“Because taking advantage of my house situation. Some people would pass comments; ‘his father is a drunkard so he will also turn out to be a drunkard like that only’. I would not listen to it because I don’t give importance to such .... Its up to me no, no one can control me I can control myself. Till today I don’t drink and I don’t smoke. Looking at me today people say okay this fellow has really controlled himself. They would say that looking at his background any day he could have become a spoilt child.” - Howard 23 years old ACOA had an abusive father who passed away as an active alcoholic.

Hari experienced embarrassment and anger at the people as he felt mocked and was upset about the way people looked at him and his father at social gatherings. He shares his growing shame at being an ACOA.

“He would be ...it became like one person who was my source of pride one point of time slowly, slowly would become a source of embarrassment. He did not know what he was speaking, he could not walk properly, talk properly. At that moment there were great feelings of anger because people would mock him, people would mock me.” --Hari 21 years ACOA has a degree in psychology.

There were some like Sheldon who had not even focussed on the identity of being an ACOA and did not respond by feeling ashamed or embarrassment. Instead he took action to work the problem and got help to deal with the alcoholism. The feeling that he was a victim did not occur to him at all. His sharing below reveals his identification with the alcoholism in the family and his understanding of the same.
For some like Nandita it became a part of their identity and who she had become. Their sharing are given below.

"Experience was normal, I did not know I had an alcoholic parent till about 2008 when I was 25-26, everything was normal. But on and off we had this thing when he would come on leave there was something amiss, he would get drunk very badly but we thought it was one off case and did not know it was alcoholism and after 2008 it became very regular but we still did not know what is alcoholism, after 1-2 yrs. it got more violent, leaving the house, falling down, it got to a point, he started abusing daily, waking me up in the middle of the night, sitting outside house and drinking, going out and drinking. We went to local church and we understood about alcoholism and we understood that it was a disease. To come to terms it is also a difficult we could not accept that my father could be an alcoholic and but he was a downright alcoholic, then we accepted and then solution to the problem". --Sheldon 30 years ACOA

It changes our ...ahhh.. I think that was the one factor in my life that became who I was, it became an identity thing not because I hold on to it. I never felt sorry for myself, I don’t do that. I understand that I am not suffering half as much as he was or my mum was but small things like you can’t have friends over or and I have always been very social and I always have a really large group, I really love my friends, I like to go out and do things, not only that but whenever I would see my mom alone and I would not know how it would be when I returned what would be happening ...............It was fairly nice, .....apart from the general with dad and in the process with mom, but for me it was really nice I did not know what was happening until I was 6, I did not know what the hell was going on, until ...then (we were) travelling all the time, being in the company of adults, being treated like an adult, on the ship and yeah I would not change a thing apart from you know .....smiles .... I wish people were happier”

-Nandita 21 years ACOA

Being an ACOA was an identity for many and a legacy for others. Their own experiences of being an ACOA varies from feeling neutral about being an ACOA to feeling upset about being an ACOA to feeling embarrassed, ashamed and at times humiliated that they were born to such parents. ACOAs reported feeling “why me” “Why was I born to this family”. This was a way to understand what they felt and reflects on the pain that children may go through when fathers become problem drinkers. Some were able to accept it while others found it
difficult. The emotions that arose varied from ACOA to ACOA but certain universal emotions commonly observed also emerged.

Emotions
ACOAs it was observed reported some of the emotions more often then others. Anger, shame, resentment, fear, insecurity came up in the interviews much more than positive emotions like happiness or contentment which was common in the non ACOA group when they recalled the emotional experiences of childhood. Some emotions like shame as such have been reported more in India due to the emphasis on shame in society. (Misra 2011)

Some felt intensely angry towards the father or towards how others reacted to them. Given below is a sharing of an ACOA who shared how his fathers progressing alcoholism affected his social relations.

“At that moment there were great feelings of anger because people would mock him people would mock me. They wouldn’t say anything on the face you know but yes they would like tell you like they would make some remarks in the middle, next time please come alone, oh is your father okay to be sitting here? Your father is sick shouldn’t he be going home? They would make some odd hackney statement like that so I also pretty much isolated myself from those events.” --Hari, 21 years ACOA.

The emotion of anger emerged more among the ACOAs. As such the anger was sometimes directed at self and sometimes at the parents, both the alcoholic and the non drinking parent. ACOAs anger was not only that the father was drinking but also that the mother did not protect them enough or did not address the drinking or the problems that they faced due to the alcoholism. The emotion of anger was closely connected to the feeling of powerlessness and as they felt nothing they did could stop his drinking. Some felt the anger was not acknowledged and this resulted in it building up and leading to resentments.

Nandita’s dad passed away when he was in active alcoholism. Her anger was directed towards her mother who she felt did not even take time to listen to her or talk about his death.
Research finding in this area also reveal that most relapse in alcoholics occurs due to inability to manage emotions and especially anger. (Kinney and Leaton 1987).

The emotion of fear was shared by ACOAs and emerged as the second most common. Fear was not only in the present but at least two reported fear that they experienced from pre-womb. The ACOAs reported that they had heard stories about their mother being beaten and two reported that their father had kicked them when they were in the womb. Tina shares that the basis of her fear emanated from much before her birth. In her own words:

“I don’t know how many years he had this problem, from the time I was in my mom’s womb I have suffered lot. My mom had shared that my dad used to hit her a lot and kick her on the stomach and I was in the womb. So even till now, I have this some kind of fear. Once my father in law hit me and I am not scared of him, but I am not able to talk to him and can’t face him. Some kind of fear holds me back, we had a fight and I told him that I ...would call the cops on him. He struck me once but I felt like all my childhood came back and I was like he is nobody to me, who is he, just my husband’s father and why should I take this from him.”

-Tina 34 year ACOA.
Tina’s story sheds light on the fact that her fear maybe picked even before birth. This cycle of violence is exacerbated due to the presence of the alcohol in the family. The other kind of fear is the day to day fear of interacting with the alcoholic parent. Misha was afraid to tell her father that she wanted to study further and reports that she kept quiet and waited for someone to tell that her results were out and she should be sent to college. The fear of the father was so much that she does not feel comfortable to talk to him.

> “Everybody had started college. Nobody was bothered about me going to college or not, as I was staying with a relative who had lost her husband and I felt that someone should tell.”
> - Misha 38 years ACOA.

Some were afraid of doing something wrong and being punished for it. Parents as such punished the children in different ways but punitive measures were reported by the children and fathers beating with a stick or with a belt were also reported.

Fear of the terror unleashed by the alcoholic father when he was drunk was reported by some as he would do anything when he was angry. The fear was related to the security of self and of mother. ACOAs reported across socioeconomic status that they were fearful for their lives when the father was angry and drunk. Some have been scared that something would happen to the mother and this fear was present even when they went to school, where they report that being preoccupied with their thoughts was common as is revealed from the case studies.

ACOAs also reported various kinds of fears from fear of future, to fear of life, fear of loss of job, fear of being rejected as they were ACOAs and fear of being in intimate relationships.

Besides anger and fear, shame also emerged as one of the other dominant emotions in the ACOAs. The shame surrounded around the way the father behaved when he was drunk. The shame was also when people spoke to them about the father’s drinking and his behaviour. The shame of the father making a public spectacle of himself and spoiling birthdays, parties or other important occasions was reported in both the sections. One of the ACOAs shared that her father was drunk and yet insisted on dropping her to work on the first day. She yet
remembers the incident and she felt afraid somebody would see him like that and at the same
time a sense of shame that he was an alcoholic . Another ACOA shares how embarrassed she
felt about her father drinking.

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\text{“Somewhere dad was every time, no matter be any occasion, after everything he would start a}\n\text{fight, any birthday, any anniversary, after drinking he would start fighting. He had this thing in}\n\text{him that he was like really strong, physically you know strong. And for any reason he would}\n\text{start a fight. Like growing up as a child, as an adult, it was very embarrassing because my}\n\text{father has never changed, he is still the same. Because my sister in law came to know, even my}\n\text{younger brother is very embarrassed by what he used to.} \\
\text{Misha 38 years ACOA feels ashamed that her father is having an extra marital affair}\n\[
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The shame they felt was observed in areas where they had to interact in public with others.
This is also observed in when there is a mental illness in the family. Some children did not
take the father to the school or college as there was shame as well as fear of the father making
a scene or coming drunk. Reva shares her sense of shame and how she managed the same.

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\text{“One was fear and one was this one, nice one. And another memory as such would be the one}\n\text{of shame; I have always had that in me. I remember during my school days or during my}\n\text{college days also parents would come very proudly to the colleges of their students. But then}\n\text{somewhere somehow in me there was that element of shame I could not take him to my}\n\text{college though he used to come but I wanted him to be sober. That shame was there in me. I}\n\text{don’t know why I could not get that shame out. I could not proudly introduce him to my}\n\text{friends or bring my friends home because I would not know what the house condition would}\n\text{be. So that element of shame was there for a very very long time I would say. So I never took}\n\text{him to my school or my college even for my admission, for my school admission my sister}\n\text{used to come. For my college admission I went alone. --Reva 60 years ACOA}\n\[
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In the Indian context shame is an important emotion as we are a society that is focussed on
social appearances and the concept of pride is linked to family .(Misra,2011)
The feelings of anger, fear and shame, are closely linked to the need for security and feelings
of being insecure came up in different areas for ACOAs depending on what life stage they
were in. This insecurity is a constant feature in Misha’s life and waiting for God to do
something was a common way of coping for her.
Misha has been working from the age of 12 years helping her mom to run the house and also going to school. She recollects the sense of insecurity that she used to feel and still feels as today she is the one working and supporting her children as well as her alcoholic husband. In the above extract she narrates an incident where she did not have money to pay for her wedding dress and she was propositioned by her employers who told her that he would pay for her wedding dress if she agreed to sleep with one of them. The insecurity of not having a strong parental support made her vulnerable to abuse from her employers. In keeping with the injunction of Don’t Talk, she never spoke about this incident to anyone.

There was insecurity raised around school fees that were not paid or the fact that Howard shares that food was not enough or they went hungry to bed on many days. Rooney shared that there were so many of them 5 boys and not enough resources and this meant lack of many things including love. Children sense of security built by family was absent as here the father would not be around to provide them both financial and emotional security.

Parent’s fights created insecurity in the mind of the children and ACOAs reported that the fear was there about parents separating and this played on their mind. ACOAs did not report on the other relationships parents had and shared that they understood these only when they grew up or looked back now in retrospect.

**Self Esteem**

One of the intrapersonal areas that was affected due to the alcoholism was self esteem. Self esteem can be defined as an appraisal of an individuals efficacy and worth as influenced by what one thinks of oneself and what one thinks what others think of you. It came up strongly
in the narratives of many ACOAs. This ACOAs report affected them in different way. Given below are some of their sharing’s

“I don’t know what I was so conscious about, I had lot of inhibitions, though I was very good in everything, I told you that I always had an inferiority complex even if I was good or not, I always felt others were better than me, they are smarter than me, … I don’t know why I have such stupid inhibition.” –Dr. Janhavi .28 years

“May be I closed myself too much to them or they only did not want to interact with me. I still am searching for those answers.”

-Hari 21 year ACOA

“I don’t know if it is really complex and I would overcompensate for everything and I was good at what I did and that continued and today I am doing much better for myself than anybody else. Those are …..constant feeling of not being good enough “— Nandita 21 year ACOA , holds two jobs one as an advertising professional , one as a music composer and is also studying.

The above statements demonstrate the effects of self esteem on the ACOA. Janhavi is doctor but yet reports lack of self esteem and is constantly doubtful of herself. She shared an earlier incident that she did not feel confident even when she was playing simple games in the building and rechecking with Google was her way of being sure of herself. Hari’s self esteem resulted in him closing up and becoming introverted. He does report feeling lonely. ACOAs like Hari who were single also reported feeling low self esteem as they did not feel good enough and could not approach the opposite sex. Nandita is one of the youngest of the ACOAs interviewed. She is successful in a professional sphere, managing multiple roles, being a music composer, advertising professional yet her feelings of not being good enough are present. Some like Tina shared below that being an ACOA they felt that others would shun them or not want to be with them. This may be true to certain extent but feeling this as a
child means that the stigma or discrimination due to alcoholism in the family needs to be investigated further.

"My childhood was very bad. I faced a lot, I actually faced a lot. Seeing my dad beating up my mom. The nights were very crucial to me. At that point in time I did not understand how to deal with the situation. Although my mom was there. We used to go to A la tots and I did not understand it but we would go because we were told to go. I only realised that I was not the only one who had this problem at home. It was nice to ...... my school life was buggered up because of my dad drinking. I was not a good student. Full day at school, I would be thinking that I don’t want to go back home. Because nights would again be the same, getting up again. School become very secondary factor for and that is the reason I did not complete my education. I failed my class couple of times not that I was a good student because now when I teach my children I know, I get my education back from them. Yeah that was my childhood. Definitely I was an introvert and I would not want to did not want to talk to anybody and I would feel shy and feel that they will shun me away. I would ...of a lot because of that fright. So that was it. - Tina 34 year ACOA.

"There was something lacking because I wanted to hide my parent’s fights. ..................Then I went to a shell, inferiority complex I would not share with my peers I would not mix with friends. Just a lone guy, sometimes in school also when I was not a brilliant student but an average one.”

-Rooney 57 years ACOA

ACOAs like Rooney felt inhibited, shy, conscious, lacked self confidence and felt that they were not on par with other children in the peer group. This feeling of not being good enough was reported by other ACOAs also. It was observed that the parent also gave these messages and some children’s self esteem was not nurtured by the father. If one reads Misha’s case one observes that though she did not like it her father compared her to other children and this made her feel bad. Though this comparison is found in healthy homes, the difference here is that the parent does not nurture the strengths but does point out the weakness. Thus the
expressed negative emotions are higher than the positive emotions experienced by the ACOAs.

Feeling inadequate and not good was reported across gender though women reported more self-effacing behaviour than men.

When women reported a close relationship with their father in spite of drinking they did not have low self esteem but report some periods of feeling not good enough. Those who did not have a good relationship with the father, the sense of self efficacy was not present. The feeling that comes from being the loved one or special one of the father was a building block to feeling good about oneself and consequently having better self esteem. In this section of the study only one woman reported that her father was also loving and caring. Incidentally she was also the only woman who was not sexually abused. Among the men only two reported close relationship with the father that too before the worsening of the alcoholism. It is observed that the alcoholism meant that the father ceased taking the role of father and ACOAs reported that he became like child who they needed to watch out for or take care of.

Overcompensation was one of the ways children did cope and finding children who were achievers in the group was not uncommon. ACOAs had started working at younger ages and were doing reasonably well. On the other hand it was observed were children who had dropped out and did not even continue education or take steady jobs and who were alcoholics, drug addicts or both or gambled or had other addictive behaviours. It was observed that one of them had a food addiction and was severely overweight. He was one of those who had been in the Non-ACOA group but had moved himself to the ACOA group.

Thus how is this relationship with the father and how does it affect ACOAs is explored in the following section.

**THEME 2: INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS**

**Relationship with father**

Fathers are important in all children lives and the effects that this one relationship has on them is only gaining attention in recent times. Fatherhood and construction of role of fathers
and expectations from father are contextual and culture bases. In India traditionally father is not very involved but a distant figure who fulfils the needs of the child and is the breadwinner of the family. (Kakar 1978). In the present study, ACOA report on their relationship with the father as being very close to being not in contact at all. ACOAs report seeing two fathers one who is loving and kind and one who was drinking, could be abusive and aggressive. The extent of the damage that the alcoholism had done varied from child to child and their EI on how to deal with the father. Tina’s candid sharing on the kind of father she had.

“I have seen my mom sexually harassed by my dad. he would be drunk and not remember it and in the morning he was the nicest dad.” …………..I try to forget it and I have tried to forgive my dad but the only thing is I have this fear in my heart, it is sunk into my roots and I am just not able to open up and talk to anybody. You are hurting me but I cannot tell them, I let people take advantage of me and I am getting bold now, I am getting over this slowly, it is very slow and it is not easy “

-Tina 34 years ACOA has a husband in an extramarital relationship.

Very few, only one woman ACOA and one man ACOA in those interviewed at an in-depth level reported that they had very loving parents. One common factor that is observed is that both of these ACOAs are older in age. The men ACOA felt his alcoholism, addiction and gambling all was a result of too much love and no discipline resulting in him going “haywire”. His sharing:

“Mummy and Dad were very loving, that was sometimes I think too much of love”.

-Ronaldo 65 years ACOA.

Among the others, a few reported that they did not feel wanted or loved enough by the father. They had no reason to know if why they were unloved. One woman ACOA reported that her father was not happy when she was born as he wanted a boy. She contextualised it saying that they were keen on boy as they had an older girl and wanted to complete their family. She did not feel it was son preference, though her parent had another child after her . This was a boy . They did not have any children after that.
Fathers as Abuser

ACOAs also report that they had difficult and abusive fathers like Howard’s dad. Given below is his relationship with his sister which was affected.

“The reason was I think from first only. Because of my dad I never got to be close to my mom or my brother but with my sister I was close. And later on due to some drinking my dad would be like why are you talking to your sister like this way. Why you all are sitting like this way – that narrow mindedness. That also got creeped into my mind so whenever they would be away I would talk to my sister. There was a lot of narrow mindedness involved --. Basically whatever trouble I was having I never shared it with anybody in my home. Till today I don’t share. If I was sick also I would either tell my aunty I would go with her to the doctor or I would go by myself or with my friends. But at home I wouldn’t tell till now I don’t tell. Till today I can say I keep it within myself.” - Howard 23 years

Wanting to be loved and accepted by the father was constant yearning heard in narratives of women ACOAs. Misha recollects her own childhood very painfully.

“So those days there was a lot of pain, there was lot of wanting and longing for parent’s love at that point of time which I always feel as a child always you want to be loved by your parents. Wanted by parents ....and would be accepted and wanting that feeling of being accepted, like my father would say rude and hurtful words to me and he would always compare with other children. I am not a bad person and I did not like it. I felt I was what I was, you can’t compare people because you are completely different”.

-Misha 38 years ACOA

Father’s Premature Death

Premature death due to alcoholism also affected the children. Three young ACOAs, Hari and Nandita and Howard had lost their fathers to alcoholism and that too at a young age. They reported that this has affected them in different ways. Howard had started working at a much earlier age and has self-supported and worked his way through college. Nandita is independent and earning along with the studies. Hari is still studying while his mother is running the house and caring for his needs. Hari and Nandita both reported being close to the father and identification with the father was strong in both the cases. They both said they
were more like their father and not at all like their mothers. Both have reported thinking or being intellectually similar to the father. Though the difference is that Nandita is able to accept her father and sees him as whole person, Hari still feels that his home life was lacking and they did not do normal things like going out for lunches as a family.

Around 48% of ACOA reported in the study that their father was not around when they needed him and that he was not a support system to them when they were growing up. Though they reported that relationship was poor yet many were protective of the father too.

**Care Taking Behaviour**

Taking care of the father due to his alcoholism emerged in ACOAs narratives. This was especially so when he was drunk. They reported that they would go and wait for the father to come home, they would be worried for father’s safety and like one ACOAs said she was the one taking care for her dad and not the other way around. The worry was a constant feature in reported in ACOAs life.

“He was for a month in hospital, not active at all. He used to bunk, he used to miss his office. One, one, two, two months he just used to stay at home characterised by drinking, drinking bouts ranging , drinking twenty-four hours a day. He would drink in the middle of the night, he would drink at seven eight in the morning. He would say I am going for a walk, and we would be scared that if he goes for a walk in that kind of a state and some car knocks him down whatever. If he went for a walk and if you said I will accompany you it was not possible because he would shout at you and drive you away. It was not possible for me or for any of us to be with him twenty four seven right?”

-Hari ACOA 21 years old.

**Father as Authority Figure**

It was observed that father’s role as an authority figure also diminished as alcoholism increased especially where men ACOAs were concerned. For some grandparents were authority figures and they would approach them in case of difficulties. One ACOA shared that when her father would be drinking too much they would threaten him saying they would tell grandfather as he was very strict. Some have shared that they have also hit their father in
his alcoholism when they were older. It was observed that the relationship had deteriorated as alcoholism increased.

“Those three crucial years where his alcoholism increased there was a great change in the relationship. Earlier my father was like this, I would not say strict but I had some kind of fear of him. Fear but it would be very positive fear that when he would be around I would have no problem I would be safe. But later on it reduced.

-Hari 21 years ACOA

The picture that non- ACOA had of idealisation of father was absent in ACOA sharing. The vulnerabilities of an adult had to be dealt with from a young age so protectiveness or other responsibilities which are largely parental expectations were sometimes provided by the child as he realised or grew older.

The ACOAs in the earlier section of the study did report not having someone to look up to more than Non-ACOAs who reported father as primary role model. In fact one woman ACOA spoke of her father in following way

“I have my lines of what I will do and won’t do and how much of it I won’t do because I have an example of somebody who screwed up.”

-Nandita 21 year ACOA

**Father as Dependent**

Another area which was observed in this relationship of father and child is the lack of responsibility taken by the father towards the child and the family in general. ACOAs have reported that they started working at an earlier age compared to their peers from the same socioeconomic strata.
In the above sharing it is not only taking on a responsibility but also being subject to parental immaturity in the way they handled relationships. ACOAs did recognise as they grew older that the father had affairs or had other women in his life or was not responsible. The relationship was not consistent and they were not able to report any warm feelings of camaraderie or affection that one found in the sharing’s of the Non ACOAs. There was a respect and relationship was better in non-ACOAs though across the groups adolescent was reported as a turbulent time. Given below is the contrast in this sharing on the same question of how was emotional experience in childhood.

"Dad does not talk much but I know he cares and loves me."

I had a very happy childhood. I got everything I wanted. I was financially well off and grew up in a large joint family.

-34 years non ACOA working mother

"I have a good relationship with dad, and I can call him anytime"

-22 year non ACOA who is trying for modelling.
Relationship with Mother

This is the most significant relationship in an individual’s life and Freud has in fact positioned the relationship of the mother as the central relationship that affects the individual’s personality to a large extent.

In this study relationship with the mother was reported on a range from being funny, distance, close or she being a pillar of support to mother herself becoming an alcoholic. ACOAs relationship with the mother also revealed the lack of trust that many felt especially it came across in the women that mother was not to be trusted as she did not protect, did not care or did not stand up for them when they needed her.

Some of their thoughts on the relationship with their mother and parenting provided.

“I love my mother a lot she worked a lot for us when we were children but the thing is, to some extent I would never open up to her or trust her. The reason being that ………. I will tell you. The reason was …when my mother never stopped my father, once I had gone to Lonavala, one uncle when I was in the sixth std he just molested me but that time she never had the guts, even when my father did this (sexual molestation) to tell my father that she was frightened of him, she told, she was telling me you don’t want to have a boyfriend when you grow up. So… I never understood because at that time I did not have feelings or understand about liking boys.” --Misha 38 years ACOA

Sometimes even normal developmental events in the life of any teenager requiring care and support were treated as not normal. The ACOA learnt to not talk about this feeling and felt she was different when mother’s role was to just be there and teach the child how to manage this change in her life. The way the adolescent handled it is by hiding it and keeping it a secret which was actually not required. One could argue that this is an associated learning from keeping the alcoholism as a family secret.
In her words this is how her mother’s reaction affected her,

“She was quite funny, like when I first got my periods, I remember she was not like taking care of me or something, she told me that, I told you don’t have so much fish, I told you don’t eat this”, I used to feel guilty that I got my chums very early, that was very weird, I found it very very weird, I am just sharing this with you. I mean that was stupid, I got my chums very young at the age of 11. Today of course kids get it early, much earlier. As I was very young, 10 and a half or 11… she was angry with me not very angry, she took care of me but psychologically she never told me that it is ok it happens, after that when it used to happen I used to hide about it. In school also when they would ask did you get it, I would say NO, I would hide it and for about 2 yrs I hid it because I used to think that maturing so early is not a good sign. - Janhavi 28 years ACOA

My relationship with my mother has been very funny to be honest. - Hari 21 years

Because I had never had a sharing I could not tell my mother and kept this to myself. There was nobody I had, I was the eldest and had two younger brothers and …….. Yeah........................thinking quiet. - Misha 38 on being sexually abused

7 out of 10 in the in-depth interview who shared across the cases, reported that relationships with mother were strained. Only one men and two women ACOAs mentioned that they had a good relationship. The others felt that mother was accountable in some ways for what they were going through. One mentioned that his mother also started drinking as they grew older and this meant that they were unable to have both parent’s time or attention. One aspect that emerged was that mother was preoccupied with father. Mother did not have time to really care about them was also reported and they grew up just by themselves. Mother was busy with father and his alcoholism.
“My mom’s world was my father she was obsessive with his drinking and with him. So that is why probably we siblings we took care of ourselves. She gave us the basic attention which any mother gives but I don’t think she was really after any one of us, never breathed down our neck. So all three of us my - brothers and myself I think we were on our own. We studied alone, we went to school alone even for admission and in all that my sister came not my mother because that time my sister was already married so she played the mother’s role even at that time. Because there is a lot of difference between me and my sister, about 16 years of difference between me and my sister so she was like a mother figure to me. I don’t think my mother was so actively involved in my school or college life. She was not actively involved because as I said I went alone did my things my brothers also did, if my brothers needed anything they would ask me so I would take them to school, so it was like that”

- Reva 60 years ACOA.

Mother was too loving and for those who became alcoholics themselves reported a lot of love and a lack of monitoring both by mother and father.

“I got a little scared but mummy and dad were very loving. That was sometimes I think too much of love like go late sometimes and all. Once mom became very angry when I came drunk, completely drunk, the boys had to reach me, I vomited and all. She said “go you lie in your vomit I am not going to clean you” but in the night I felt myself being cleaned my shirt taken out, putting a new bed sheet I really feel the love of my mother. Then I stopped for two years.”

- Ronaldo 65 years.

Mother was looked upon as needing protection from Dad and ACOA irrespective for gender tried to protect the mother especially when father was violent and abusive.
ACOA also report that they realised that mother was going through a lot more and the bonding was felt much more towards her than to others, though layers of resentment were also present.

As Reva shared her relationship with her mother,

Yeah that being a case it became sort of like an identity thing but no matter what I do I was always scared that some harm would come on them some harm, because dad being had been abusive and before I was born and very vehemently so, I was what 6, 5 that time we stayed in Andheri and so I have always also seen my mum, as a little child I felt protective to my mum as well, there were times but, I am sorry this is too candid, there were times when my dad would be beating my mum and I would come in between and say ‘beat me but don’t touch her’. At that time it didn’t seem traumatic and it seemed like it the right thing to do, it seemed like happened in every house and you don’t know what happened.” --Nandita 21 years ACOA.

I don’t know whether my mother was interested but I would say more than that she was very deeply affected by my father’s drinking I would say. Probably she was more into keeping house making both ends meet, all those things were there. So I guess she was into that, upbringing, we just grew up. I would say we just grew up but then the initial, the values which were there were there within us because both the parents by themselves were good they did not ill treat us in any way, so we had good memories of them in that way. My mother she was a terrific cook she would cook good good things, whatever she could buy and whatever she could afford she would give us -. So that way we had good memories of our parents but she was obsessed I would say looking back she was more obsessed with my father than with the children. Because he would fall sick and she had the same fear just like we children were waiting at the window waiting whether he would come or not she used to do the same. She used to be at the window looking for him, trying to hear foot steps or looking for him or if he is late mind you she would go out, she would go out without her chappals she would not bother about her appearance she would just go to hunt where my father is. It used to be that bad, whether he is fallen anywhere on the road, near the gutter or to his liquor den she would go there looking for him. As I said she was more obsessed about him so I don’t think she paid attention to what about our growing years, the only good memory which I have is that I had very good hair in those days very long and very thick hair so she used to plait my hair.” - - Reva 60 years ACOA.
**Parental Relationships**

The relationship between the parents was marred by not only alcoholism but also infidelity and fights. ACOAs report that mother was sometimes very busy caring for the father and the entire family was focussed on the father’s alcoholism which meant that they got very little time and attention and appreciation.

The ACOAs one found were accepting of the fights but failed to report if they had happy moments in the family. It was observed that the family atmosphere was set by the parental relationship and parental involvement and financial problems faced as a family. The fights were less if the father was able to provide for the needs of the family. Lower socio economic strata reported more fights between parents due to lack of economic security to satisfy family needs. Even fees would not be paid for some and ACOA also as they grew older reported funding themselves through college. Some did not pursue further education and academic performance was affected by regular fights at home. Drop in their ability due to home environment was reported by many of them as they shared they just could not concentrate.

Parental extramarital relationships have also affected the ACOAs, in one case it positively affected him and the ACOA has a good relationship with this person as he provided him a perspective on the alcoholism in the father . In this study one cannot assert that it helped women ACOAs in fact it increased chances of vulnerability.

I recall one incident when my father was abroad where I saw my mother with this man she was in a relationship with this man. He told me that when you are big I will do it to you but I never understood as I was very small, in the 1 or 2 Standard.. Because of that I mean I could never trust to her. that was one thing , I love my mother a lot she worked a lot for us when we were children but the thing is , to some extent I would never open up to her or trust her.”

-Misha 38 years ACOA.

ACOA report that sometimes the fight between the parents was due to the children’s needs not being met. Howard’s dad had problems even when he would eat food at home. His sharing
Others also reported that there were fights and parents fought in front of them. Further they were a witness to physical abuse.

Fights did result in violence and abuse and this is looked at in a separated section in the study as it emerged within the family and across gender and across cases.

**Love Relationships**

Intimate relations with partners emerged as areas of significant importance and some observations were found.

Women reported being with or marrying people that needed care and support. They supported the spouse/partner even if they did not work.

“*When I was growing up, for me..... I always wanted somebody who could take care of me, a boy. When I was in my 11th std I met him*”

- Misha 38 years ACOA
Being rescued from parental homes was an important aspect in the relationship that was observed in women when they choose their partners. Women just wanted to get out from the home environment and were impulsive in the choice of partners. Both sexes reported that when they fell in love they did not realise or check anything about the prospective person they loved. In the study, the women ACOAs who were married were married to partners who drank or smoked. Of the ACOAs who had ever been in relationship reported that they had girlfriends or boyfriends who were smoking or drinking. They reported that the break ups in the relationship was because they were drinking or because the partners were drinking or were abusive. Even though the awareness was there that alcoholism was problematic for relationship, women could not avoid being with partners who were alcoholic. Sometimes the fathers or other male relatives had selected the groom due to the norm of arranged marriage. This was seen amongst the Hindus ACOAs and not as much among the Christians in the sample group. Some Christian ACOAS reported that the mother or father was not concerned about their marriage or did not really provide support in finding a partner or in marriage.

One of the other areas that some ACOA reported that they faced difficulty was to approach opposite sex or were not able to establish relationships. In this study, it could be culturally
different and women were approached more and men did make the first move in the relationships.

“I said I want to marry a good man who is not given to drinking, I don’t care whether he is not good looking or not well educated or the only condition I made was he should not drink. The best part is I got everything but that the family background was very good, he was well educated, handsome well to do, and good business but he was drinking. I was to discover much later that he was an alcoholic even in those days I don’t know.” - - Reva 60 years ACOA

“lot of heartbreaks, and I don’t why I have been through so many heartbreaks, actually I used to fall in love very easily, yeah it all started at a young age, it started very early, in the 11th std it started, I had somebody, he was a maniac, he used to torture me, he used to hit me and I just wanted to go away, and 11 standard was like after 10 toh. He used to threaten me that I will rape you. I was so scared that finally told (my sister) and I got my sister and then he got scared and ran away, he was a coward. Somehow I got rid of him” - - Janhavi 28 years ACOA on her first boyfriend

“When I proposed to another girl she said, no, I am not ready. That time I was not drinking as such but in my resentment that day I went for a drink and to show her I got married as early as possible. ----- ultimately she also turned out to be an alcoholic like me”. --Rooney, 57 years ACOA on his first wife who died due to liver cirrhosis caused due to drinking.

“I had a same sex relationship; it was lovely, beautiful and my growing up. I had only dated women till my dad passed away, only after that I dated men. I was 16 when I dated her. She was 22. I got to play the part of the man and it gave me control over the relationship. Though, it was in my head as I would do things for her. Even pampering her and looking after. She died ...she killed herself and that is why the “damaged goods” thing. I have never had a problem with her death and have never been sad about it, I always felt it was not ok to feel sorry or create a scene. In fact, I did not cry when my father died. He was suffering and he was a great man but... for her...it was a year before my dad died. I was never close to my family and she was the only person. That impacted me, made me cynical and made me angry. But apart from that, I am not angry anymore. I will always love and be fond of her. I felt cheated and we were happy and we were together and I don’t even know why you killed yourself. That was not cool. Everyone felt it was my fault and you just quit”
Only one person reported that she was bisexual and this person described that she was attracted to “damaged goods” that is people who needed looking after and care. She was in a relationship with someone and that person had committed suicide. She has not been dating since then which is about 2 years now. Some of them reported that they were unhappy in the relationship and were thinking of leaving and had considered taking professional help. Some like Misha reported that they were staying on in the relationship as they think God will

“I have now decided that I just want to get out of this life. We have just one life and after 10 years of marriage, I don’t deserve all this. I have been thinking of counselling whether I am making this right decision or not, because even if I move out my dad is not well. He is out of alcoholism but there are other things, I would dread to go back home”.

-Tina 34 years ACOA

Deprivation, Abuse and Violence
ACOAs reported that they experienced varying levels of deprivation, abuse and violence. The deprivation ranged in various ways and as one can infer from table 7.1, it was reported in different areas.

Table 7.1: Areas of Parenting Neglect observed as per what was shared by the ACOAs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas of Parenting</th>
<th>Neglect observed as per what was shared by the ACOAs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>Not providing food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not providing clothing or other basic requirements.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Educational</td>
<td>Child not having educational access</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not paying fees or other school related materials deprived.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Child not going to school</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Child having incomplete things for school like no books or papers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Child not reporting about school</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>Parent not following up with school requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parent not attending school meetings or report days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parent not available to solve problems faced by child</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parent not available for guidance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disregard of child need for safety, security</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mothers preoccupation with the alcoholism in the father at cost of child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parent emotionally distressed/depressed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parent suicidal or homicidal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exposing child to parental attempts of suicide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parent not teaching emotional skills to deal with alcoholic father</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Discipline | Discipline is inconsistent  
| Abusive behaviour beating or punitive punishment  
| Sadistic disciplining when drunk  
| Use of belt or other items to discipline  

- Lack of monitoring of child in areas like peers group activities that child is involved in.

Alcohol Related | Leaving alcohol or drugs around the house for child to experiment  
| Using child for fetching alcohol  
| Asking child to fix a drink  
| Drinking in front of children  
| Introducing alcohol at younger age than needed  

Sexual | Exposing child to sexually inappropriate behaviour of parents  
| Exposing child to sexual affairs of either parents.  
| Sexual molestation of child  
| Using child for sexual abuse  
| Using child for sexual activity / actual intercourse.

Financially deprivation was reported by the ACOAs and as such was class dependent so not all were affected equally but were affected because they did not have what their friends had.

*"Financially we were not doing all that well but then I was already into a scholarship. The scholarship money came in handy well sometimes it came handy for my fees or even for some other things for my clothes or something like that. We had uniform in college actually so that way I suppose it was a saving grace because if I had to wear outside clothes I don’t know whether I would have been able to dress well. It was a saving grace I would say one of the benefits. (The money) it used to be spent on household purposes also. Sometimes it would be difficult to find ten paisa or twenty paisa for my bus it was that bad. I would keep asking my mother for it because I would only ask my mother I would never ask my father."

- Reva 60 years ACOA.

Other areas that they were deprived was like basic needs like not giving enough food to going for picnics, outing, or buying new clothes or new shoes. Only one person reported having a very indulgent childhood. This has been categorised with abuse as one can categorise in this context the continued deprivation as abuse. The humanistic frame work of Maslow helped to
understand the different levels and different areas where children reported feeling abused. The lower the level of deprivation experienced, the more the effects on the EI.

The more needs deprived at the lower level higher the disturbances in the personality and consequently the effects on the emotional intelligence and subsequently on the characteristics of the ACOA. Those who had been deprived at the basic needs are seen to have more problems than those who have been deprived at higher needs. Though core need such as love and belongingness emerge as most important as those children who were deprived of food, shelter or even education but had a core belief of being loved and wanted and accepted were able to manage themselves better. The ones who did not feel loved and accepted did not have grounding in self efficacy and felt less psychological well being. Lesser the deprivation the better the individuals stress management.

Abuse emerged as an important variable in alcoholic homes though the kind of abuse was different depending on socioeconomic status as reported by ACOAs. Some homes were marked by verbal abuse, others emotional abuse, in yet others there was physical abuse and in yet others there was sexual abuse. The form changed but the damage to the individual left its scars. ACOAs reported that even if they were not beaten the kind of talk the father did when he drank was hurtful and affected them. Hari was attached to his father but his alcoholism drove them apart.

“In that there are clear differences because a relationship which was very friendly, which was very close, intimate changed a lot. Because though he used to never hit me or hurl abuses that way he was a thorough gentleman but there used to be a kind of talk that used to happen between us that quality in the relationship deteriorated because as he would come home he would just switch off instantly”--Hari 21 years ACOA

Some of them reported that they were beaten and routinely at that.

“Beating I don’t remember, I took lot of pasting(means the same as beating ) from my dad, I was the one who took the most beating. I was not rebellious but I was scared and he used to take advantage of me, as a fear factor he knew she would not do anything, whereas my other sisters they would do anything to bash him up. So he is very scared of them, till today, sometimes he does hallucinate and even in his sickness he wants my mom.”

-Tina 34 years.
Some of them reported that there was no peace at home and father was abusive.

I would feel neglected na. I would feel I am not wanted over here. At times I would feel like I should just go away. –I would go to Goa my grand mother would take good care of me. But my school was here so I did not want to drop out of my education. That’s the reason and my mom because my mom would do anything for me. Although we wouldn’t share much she would not bear to see me hungry………. Long time and it was also this that he would close the gas and say don’t use my gas. Not only this no putting the light, no putting the fan. It was so hot he would put off the fan and keep(it off) full night. Actually drinks is what made him mad. Otherwise when he was sober he was good.. Drinks is the only thing that was a problem for him. He would drink this Desi Daru, liquor. Not this international, branded alcohol. That affected him and ultimately that was only his downfall.

-Howard 23 years old ACOA.

Once the father had become angry his behaviour was unpredictable like he would throw everyone from the house.

“I can only picturise every time fights and my mom would get pissed. Half the time we would get pasting and my mom would come and protect us whenever mom would get pasting we would go – and protect her. ……thrown out of the house means my dad would fight and latch the door and say get out of the house. There are many nights we had actually slept out of the house literally out. if he would become sober he would take us in by four o clock five o clock or next day morning at nine o clock whenever he would get up. School, after that I would have bath and go to school, my teachers would understand my problem.”

-Howard 23 years

For some the abuse was real and had been narrated to them by their mothers when they were growing up.

When I was very small I remember my parents used to fight a lot and fight a lot. My mom used to be very angry. Once I remember they locked me in the bathroom when they were fighting. Hearing of stories of when my dad used to drink when I was in mother’s stomach, he used to hit her bad, very bad, on her stomach. When my dad used to drink, then I was with my mother, he used to hit my mother and beat her, like hit her real bad.

-Misha 38 years ACOA.
Some reported seeing their dad sexually abuse mom and this had left a mark on their psyche like Tina shared. A rare sharing by her was of father-in-law trying to sexually abuse her which she resisted.

I have had lots of problem from him. He tried to abuse me sexually after telling my husband he did not do anything about it. So that was another factor. After he had this bypass, he has controlled himself and has another mistress. That’s why I called you now as he is not at home.

-Tina 34 years ACOA

One other area was that for being victim of violence the ACOA sons became perpetrators of violence as they grew up. A few of the ACOAs reported that when they grew up and there were fights at home after drinking they would hit the father.

Given below is Ronaldo’s sharing

“They had some family problem both used to fight. Mom and dad that one thing ---. After that they used to fight a lot between both. Ya, we didn’t know what to do my brother pushing my mummy aside telling her to keep quiet, telling my daddy to keep quiet but both. Ya, I was the younger, I mean 2 years difference. So both of us used to raise hand, also my daddy would not stop talking and there that side my mummy had the habit she always wanted to have the last word we couldn’t tell her to keep quiet. This carried on four five years house was not at peace. But at the same time there was a ‘don’t care’ attitude with me, as long as drinks were with me. – drinking”.

-Ronaldo 65 years ACOA Recovering Alcoholic

More women than men reported that they were sexually abused by either father, uncle, or others. This means that the father role as protector of the children is transgressed as he violates this relationship. ACOAs are vulnerable to sexual exploitation due to the lack of parental presence in their life or due to parental over involvement with each other.

**Relationships With Significant Others**

**Grandparents**
The ACOAs have shared in the study the unique role of their grandparents who stood by them, comforted them, loved them and protected them. It was not always that they physically stayed with the grandparents but grandparent’s home was a haven for many ACOAs. Some of the happy memories that the ACOAS reported came from this indulgent and happy relationship that they had. Grandmothers were looked up to and many reported being highly attached to them.

\textit{For me that only my grandmother was there for me, I would share with her, I did not share with my mother, I would share with her} - Misha 38 years loved her grandmother and wanted to follow her grandmothers profession

\subsection*{Siblings}

The other important relationship was with siblings and this became for many a closed group who knew the alcoholism. They supported each other. It was also observed that few ACOAs had siblings who had some problems with alcoholism, addiction or other high risk behaviours and a few reported that they had passed away due to the same. The siblings were also doing alcohol or drugs in the case of some of the ACOAs. 4 of the ACOAs had brothers who were alcoholic; one had a brother who was a recovering alcoholic. It was observed that those who had sisters did not report alcoholism, they did report having a very close bond. This was unlike the men ACOAs where they reported the relationship being marked by fights and disagreements.

\section*{THEME 3: MANAGEMENT OF EI}

Dealing with alcoholism on a day to day can affect emotional intelligence and one learns to manage the EI by coping and adopting different roles that work. Sometimes these roles changed as the ACOA grew older and sometimes they were in the same role throughout. The study revealed that the roles did change as ACOA became aware of consequences and gained insight. Some of the sub themes focus on ways the EI was managed in the area of stress management and role taking behaviour. Stress management is a crucial component of EI
regulation skills (Baron 2006, Mayer and Salcovey 2008,) and individuals who manage their stress seem to have higher EI than those who are unable to manage this.

1. Stress Management
Stress is defined as a non-specific result of any demand upon the body be it mental or somatic demand for survival and for the accomplishment of our aims. People manage stress differently in their life. They may use active coping or passive coping. Active coping involves task focus and passive coping is emotion focussed, it maybe escapist using alcohol or drugs or then use of religion or spirituality.

In the study it was observed that the ACOA use different types of coping and thus manage their EI, given in the following section.

Some ACOAs reported just pretending that the problem did not exist and this helped them cope. Fantasizing about the situation helped them to cope with what was happening in their lives.
Nandita shares how she managed EI when her father was drinking and family life was affected.

“…And I am a child and you can’t see that you feel you don’t want to do that and you feel victimized and I am glad I never felt like that because I had my own support system and I had to create this imaginary support system, I was like things is(are) not happening everything is fine and things are not healthy but what do you do, what else do you do even today if something terrible happens the best thing to do is pretend that it did not... happen because sure, things happen but you can’t talk to people about what is bothering you, I am not the person to go around and talk to people and talk, I think that is because I never had anyone who I could talk to, I couldn’t talk to my mom, I can’t talk to my mom, now the only person I really talk to is my sister”- Nandita 21 years ACOA.

Some coped by withdrawal. This meant either withdrawing in their own worlds by using books, or listening to music or going and working and not being around. (Black 1981, Weghscheider- Cruse 1981)This was observed in maximum numbers of individuals in the
socio-demographic section and it was also found among ACOAs in the in-depth interview. As one key informant put it, “taking up courses outside the house, or jobs keeps them away from the alcoholic father and also they don’t have to deal with the situation at home” As one ACOA shares

“Working helped me to be out of home and I needed to be doing things and also I got a job at that age. It was overwhelming being on a team”

-Nandita 21 years ACOA

Some simply managed their EI by lying about the situation or about things happening in their lives and this did help them cope. In the study it was observed while triangulating data that in the ACOA index people who reported having lied often also had been dishonest in their ESAP and they had higher scores of EI. The lying may not be conscious and done in awareness but maybe to cover up feelings of inadequacy. This was one of the commonest way to manage EI especially in homes where the pattern of relationship is inconsistent the individual managed themselves by simply avoiding confrontation or fights by making up stories or lying. There was also a fear of society and what others though which prompted ACOA to lie.

“to be honest we were in poverty and mom salary was not sufficient and bringing up 3 of us and troubling her for money and my dad would be drinking he would not go for work half the time and his bosses would come home. it was an embarrassing moment, i would never be at home. till today I don’t bring friends home as I have this phobia that (1) have a small house, I would tell lies that I have a big bungalow and I have a good sense of .... I used to make a lot of friends and I have this all top, rich friends and if they wanted to come home, I would say no.”- Tina 34 years.

One common way of dealing with the stress was to deny it existed. This was a strategy used by ACOAs, without awareness and only a few were aware that they were using denial. Rooney shares his denial as he has been a part of the support group program and he had been working with some of his own issues. This is also reflected in the sharing below.
It was observed that some may truly not be affected by alcoholism or be in denial or be detached like Sheldon below.

I had good relationships, friendships, no deprivations nothing, career choices maybe I am disappointing but it had absolutely no affect. Day to day basis there was a fear and what is going to happen. I was not affected; I completed my M Com when he was in alcoholism. He woke me in the middle of the night and it was 3 O’ clock, it did not affect me even though I had exam the next day. -Sheldon 30 years ACOA

One of the contradictory ways to look at this denial in the context of this study was that he had become a follower of the yoga way of life. Yoga is more about being present in the here and now and as he put it, “to leave things instead of carrying them with you”. This spiritual perspective helped him to cope. Some in the interview managed their EI by using the yoga way of life and said it helped them to cope with what was happening in their life.

“When you know your purpose it does not matter, today it is my father, tomorrow it will be my wife or my child. Today it is alcoholism tomorrow it is something else .So you keep on getting affected. You do your duty .......... I have a higher purpose in life, it may sound rather philosophical, and you know what, you have to have meaning in life. So at the moment you may be down but you realise that this too shall pass. It is easy to say that but difficult to practise it. If you are under a situation you won’t be under it for a long time and......if you are over a period for a long time you won’t be over it for a long time . You have to be balanced. And that is what yoga teaches you.”

-Sheldon 30 years old ACOA.
This spiritual or religious way of coping was reported by many of the other ACOAs. Given below is how they managed their EI.

"Because today I know after the AA programme that you act positively you get positive results. Sometimes you know now I don’t remember I read a lot and I forgot a lot. One thing, you can do it. That’s it you know just do it. Act, let go of the past. The past cannot change but the present is there in your hand. Live one day at a time like today. One more – god will do it for me provided I do it for myself.”

-Rooney 57 years recovering alcoholic, ACOA.

“There is peace of mind and I think as long as I am working in this programme, working on my emotions things are working smoothly and there are better things to come. I have to strengthen my faith and my prayer --- because I believe this programme is a spiritual programme. And the willingness is there of course I took long I took 18 years after having this beautiful place. Like I tell you Mr X came after me and Mr. Y came after me and they are neat 26 years each. I am still only 11 or 12 years. All in all life is good its been kind to me now. I did a lot of mistakes and a lot of rash things I know. All because of alcohol.”

-Ronaldo 65 years

“The only thing, after my marriage was like prayer, which kept me going, there is going to be you know, that is waiting for god to make things better, that is the ray of hope and that my husband will change. That is what is making me wait so long; sometimes it gets very tiring and frustrating. I tell my husband that if you are not going to change I will go but the thing is that I am so used to him. Now also when we have fights and I have gone away I am only able to be away for I day, not longer than that.

It is only god, who really makes you, first of all helps you keep your sanity which is very important thinking about it you cannot function, only god helps you help to function in the different part you play in different walks of life”.

-Misha 38 years ACOA married to an alcoholic

The debate on spiritual or religious way of coping is not discussed in this study. Both spiritual and religious coping are looked at ways that helped people manage their EI.
belief in god is a strong belief which was reported across religions in the study. The belief that there is something higher than oneself and something that will help me to cope was what helped many ACOA reconcile to their life situation. Alcoholics Anonymous a support group also focussed on spiritual growth. Other religious and spiritual beliefs system which talk about equanimity, maintaining balance and being unaffected by events in ones life were also seen as coping. (Synder and Lopez 2007) AA was not found helpful by a few individual who had been for the program and they felt it did not help coping as some individual may not have the motivation and may never end up going for AA.

ACOAs report that they coped using yoga, meditation, prayers, going to temple or church, reading self help books, following spiritual leaders and applying 12 step program. Given below are some of the ways in which ACOAs manage their EI.

Table 7.2 : Coping Behaviours shared in the in-depth interviews.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>India Specific Coping Behaviours</th>
<th>Other Common Behaviours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>➢ God</td>
<td>➢ Withdrawal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Yoga</td>
<td>➢ Lying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Visiting temples</td>
<td>➢ Detachment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Church</td>
<td>➢ Pretending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Fasting /Upwas</td>
<td>➢ Fantasizing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Bhakti movement</td>
<td>➢ Detachment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Sufism</td>
<td>➢ Abandonment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Spiritual way of living</td>
<td>➢ Reading self help books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Support group membership</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
In spite of the alcoholism many of the ACOA report being happy with their life and satisfied about how it was. This also implies that no matter how tough a life the management of one self influence better outcomes and coping. Happiness is another core factor which emotionally intelligent people have as a way of managing their EI. Eudomonia, as Aristotle put forth a life lived with meaning and purpose emerged as increasing happiness (Synder and Lopez 2007)

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“Till I die. I want to make a difference and I think I can. I am grateful for life and I want to give back. People who expect me to be resentful which I am but I have worked on it. I don’t blame them for I am; I blame them for the way they are. It is good not to have anyone to talk to and you learn to process it internally. My mom told me this story when I was young about an alcoholic and he used to beat his wife, he has 2 children and one becomes an alcoholic because that is the only way he knows and the other does not become an alcoholic and one becomes a photographer and one becomes an criminal. It is how you take it. I wanted to be an example to my sister, with her she is like my baby and my best friend too.

- Nandita, 21 years ACOA.
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ACOAs have reported different ways in which they coped. Some felt that they took things as a challenge and worked hard by focusing on what they wanted. Others reported that they simply did not sulk over things that were wrong and kept a focus on what was right. Silence, reading, philosophy and some movements like Bhakti movement, Sufism and existentialism influenced others.

Fantasizing about how they want things to be as also used by ACOAS as a means to cope and to motivate themselves to do the things they needed to do.

The problematic style of coping that emerged was of those who themselves drank or smoked or had other compulsive behaviours like overeating. These behaviours were not helpful in managing EI. The awareness of how these behaviours affected did not exist but they felt that they did not drink like their father. Those who reported that they had become alcoholics had seen their father drink and role modelled them.
Another problematic way that they reported coping was keeping things within themselves, and at times when things were too painful then blocking things out. They reported that this helped them to function normally.

One can conclude from the above data that way they coped was also influenced by the unspoken rules that govern the alcoholic family and the roles they took to influenced the way they managed their EI.

2. Rules in Alcoholic home

Don’t talk, Don’t feel and Don’t trust

"There were uncles there were aunts but generally one didn’t share these things with these people. Except one uncle, that uncle who was my father’s friend. Because at that time I was given strict warning that whatever is happening in the house should remain in the house only. No telling anyone that I go to Alcoholics Anonymous, no telling anyone that I am an alcoholic or I do this stuff because naturally the shame factor” - Hari 21 years ACOA

ACOAs have grown up seeing the alcoholism. This is not addressed in the home as a problem or a disease and talk on this was not encouraged. Children realised that they could not tell
their friends as it was betrayal of the family secret. Children did share with grandparents but within the family everyone pretended that things were fine.

“It was a bit unfair and I am a child and you cant see that you feel you don’t want to do that and you feel victimized and I am glad I never felt like that because I had my own support system and I had to create this imaginary support system, I was like things are not happening everything is fine and things are not healthy but what do you do, what else do you do even today if something terrible happens the best thing to do, pretend that it did not happen because sure things happen but you can’t talk to people about what is bothering you, I am not the person to go around and talk to people and talk, I think that is because I never had anyone who I could talk to, I couldn’t talk to my mom, I can’t talk to my mom, now the only person I really talk to is my sister” -Nandita 21 years ACOA.

Another reason children did not share was that they did not feel the parent kept their secret. ACOAs report feeling let down or feeling upset that if they did talk to the mother she would use it against them. ACOAs learnt that sometimes asking things did not result in any answers and many have reported that they were introverted as children having no one to talk to or share with. The disease has a strong component of denial and parent’s role model this denial by not talking about the things that affect them. The child also models this behaviour and discounting and minimizing are common defence mechanisms which are used to address the drinking in the family. Like Nandita pretending that the problem does not exist helps her to cope. Don’t talk about what is happening is reported by other researchers like Black (1981) and Weghscheider –Cruse (1981) and Ackerman (1985) and Woititz (1983). Here it was observed that the children did not talk about many of the things they faced or did. Misha, Dr Janhavi, Nandita and Tina chose not to even talk about the sexual abuse they faced. Rooney never spoke to his parents that he was not going to school but playing truant. Misha did not feel her family or her father will protect her when she was propositioned by her employer. She shared that she learnt to keep it all in. This bottling up of emotions is reported by some women ACOA as compared to men ACOAs. It was also observed that men ACOA did not really share or have an intimate relationship with the father. Sibling relationships were misinterpreted and not looked upon as such and lack of trust from the parent lead to this ACOA not talking with anyone at home.
“The reason was I think from first only. Because of my dad I never got to be close to my mom or my brother but with my sister I was close. And later on due to some drinking my dad would be like why are you talking to your sister like this way. Why you all are sitting like this way – that narrow mindedness. That also got creeped into my mind so whenever they would be away I would talk to my sister. There was a lot of narrow mindedness involved --. Basically whatever trouble I was having I never shared it with anybody in my home. Till today I don’t share. If I was sick also I would either tell my aunty I would go with her to the doctor or I would go by myself or with my friends. But at home I wouldn’t tell till now I don’t tell. Till today I can say I keep it within myself.” -Howard 23 years

The “Don’t talk” injunction is to the extent that some did not talk with the father about what they wanted to do in life or who they were dating or what were their future plans. It was observed that some of the ACOAs did not talk about or had not shared with their friends or their girlfriends or boyfriends that their father had alcoholism. They said that they never shared this though the drinking was apparent to the partner and it was not something important.

The other area that came up was “Don’t trust” or trust too much. Since parents have not modelled trust to the children, they found it difficult to understand who they should be trusting and who is not trustworthy. Almost all the ACOAs report trust as an issue even in the other sections. The trust is not only for the parent child relationships but also other areas where they felt a lack of trust, like a lack of trust in men due to the sexual abuse in the case of Tina and Janhavi. The women who had been sexually abused shared about mistrusting men, and lack of faith in relationships.

Given below is an example of the both mistrust as well too much trust.

“Hmmm..... me and my sister same, but with her eventually he stopped doing this with her I don’t know why, because he though I can try with the younger one. Mmmmmmm Now also if I meet him, I am not very comfortable, I am not very comfortable, if he is giving me an injection or something I always make sure my aunt is around. because I don’t know I just don’t ....but though I know I am old enough now , I still you know , I don’t think he is ok , I think he is a still a pervert . So that s how because of this I was .... I used to not like when I used to grow ....(breasts) , I used to lie down on the stomach , I did not want it to grow , …Contd.
The findings reveal that ACOAs have a difficulty in understanding boundaries in relationships and also assessment of individuals who may not be safe for them. This could be difficult as in their own life their parents have role modelled behaviours which may be harmful or they are exposed to certain individuals early in life who may be problematic like friends of father who themselves maybe alcoholic or drug addicts. Both Ackerman (1989) and Woititz(1981) have reported that these boundaries are not set by parents for children and there is inconsistency.

3. Roles

The roles differed from ACOA to ACOA but it was observed that a large number of ACOAs took the role of the family hero or the responsible one. (Black 1981, Weghscheider-Cruse, 1981)

"As a person I feel, for me, somebody who is not good also I feel they are good. I think it is way one perceives something in life, I perceive people in that way, I trust people easily and that is not good as people they may not be good. I went out with a boy who had only bad intentions." -Misha 38 years ACOA.

"That is where I really shone, I was a prefect, I was a house captain so I had so many diversions. So I was not given to any depression only the home scene was a little sad for me, but even then I got lost in books and studies. You spent most of the time in school isn’t it? That took over my life. –Reva 60 years"
They found islands of competence and built on it. For some it was academics, others took over the family responsibility and became breadwinners. They realised what they had not got and wanted to provide for their mother and siblings. It was observed that a few of them were not oldest children as put forth by Cruse (1981) and Black (1981) but were second or even third born in the family.

One other role that emerged was of lost child. These ACOAS characteristically demonstrated indecisiveness and confusion about their life and what they wanted from it. (Weghscheider – Cruse 1981)

The sharing of Dr Janhavi who though very intelligent reported that she was always unsure about herself. This pattern one can observe runs through her life and she is still not sure of what she wants to pursue in life. She has just joined dance classes and shared that she wanted to start a dance class and not a clinic of her own which is a dream that doctors have. She is unsure about whether she will marry her boyfriend of five years but is still in the relationship. Even for something as simple as a game played in her building she would be unsure if she was right. Her sharing:

“I had been a son, it was like Zeus complex. This is like a Hero complex of protecting like overachieving. So it had more positive effects.” – Nandita 21 years ACOA

“I also wanted to show myself so one kind of defence I used was would be like Freudian sublimation one can say, I studied extremely hard for my tenth standard. And I topped my school. That was a time – that I wanted to show somewhere that look I am also someone, don’t think that I have fallen down I don’t want your sympathy. Because as usual the first thing that happens is people who used to ten days ago give galis (bad words) to that man, he drinks, he doesn’t look after his family, he is in such a bad state. One fine day and after his death they would come (he makes sympathetic noises, made at a funeral) very bad happened” – Hari 21 years ACOA.
Others became like their parents and role modelled their behaviour by using alcohol or drugs or both. Ronaldo reports how his parents loved him too much which he thinks is a cause for him going out and indulging in anti social activities.

“\textit{I don’t call anyone bad company...we always wanted to be in the herd, if you smoke, you having to be with them, if you don’t smoke they would call you a sissy and all that. In that way, I left school early just in my tenth standard or so. That time tenth standard was now 11th, anyway, Chapel Hood is a place where there were always fights. We were a gang, we made a gang of 4-5 guys, we were a dancing crowd, and we loved music and dancing. At the same time we boys being hot blooded, we were ready to have scraps and all that. We even formed a group called Lunics. A teenage gang and it even came in the papers, ‘Teenage Gang Bullies Bandra’ Alcohol was there, the main subject was alcohol. If it’s a party or a wedding, first thing to see how much booze is there.”}

Some took on this role of a scapegoat initially but then changed. The scapegoat typically acts out negative behaviour and tries to take attention away for the father’s alcoholism. Howard role is of a scapegoat. He faced much abuse for his father and the family blame was constantly on his shoulders. The realisation that what he had done was wrong lead him to change his role and he now supports his family and is the major breadwinner. One can say he is now the family hero. For a short while he did become scapegoat but his insight into his life helped him to change his role to family hero.

Howard shares how he wanted a mobile phone and his realisation on the wrong he did,
The roles that children adapted sometimes changed as the insight increased. Rooney is the family hero but he also abuses alcohol to cope with his emotions at work place. Weghscheider –Cruse reports that the family hero becomes lonely and this may push him into drinking


“I had committed a robbery which I had accepted. It was around 750 dollars that was from my friend’s house only. After a week I –so I accepted it. The reason was I was blind and I did a mistake. May be I was craving for more money, fast money. This was the reason. This had happened, I had gone into a shell obviously I couldn’t face anybody. It took a lot of time to get that trust back from people............................... Later on everybody came to know after; I started gaining trust from people again. Right now I can tell you I am the most trusted boy in the lane. Among friends, among teachers and among neighbours. I have managed; God has been good to me that I have got back people’s trust again”.
-Howard 23 years

The moment of insight pushes the ACOAs and if there is awareness they did bring about the change.

Some were unaffected by the alcoholism in the family. In the case of Sheldon he is not affected. He could be in denial or then the late onset of alcoholism in the parent may not have affected him as deeply as the others. The understanding that emerged from his interview was his role taking behaviour of using the yoga way of life. He can be termed as “the invulnerable one” the one who did not get affected because of the alcoholism in the family.
Gender Affecting Emotional Management.

This was seen in the crucial area of sexuality. Four women in in-depth interview reported being sexually molested or abused. The persons who molested them ranged for father to uncle to other men relatives in the family or friends. These women did not report to the mother about it because they did feel their mother would believe them. One of them had shared about this abuse but her mothers response made her not share this again. As such the parental roles of providing security, or protection in many of the families was observed as inadequate or absent.

Nandita shares her remote memories of being sexually molested but feels that it did not impact her much.

“I have these flashes of memory of like facing sexual abuse at his hands but you can’t be sure, because for so long I could not talk about it to my mom. To me maybe it happened, maybe it did not happen... if I can’t talk to her who I can talk to. I am not sure. But if it did happened it did not impact me much. I am not traumatized by it. I do not know if I imagined but I think you can’t imagine it at 4 or 5 years. Like I did not know what is supposed to be “

- Nandita 21 years.

Self Parenting

Some of the ACOAS managed their EI by self parenting or looking after themselves and their own needs as they realised or became aware of or were forced due to circumstance to look after themselves. This comes as thread in almost all the cases that one interviewed in both the sections especially in families which were nuclear as they had lesser systems of support in the form of relatives and grandparents. Some of the thoughts that were shared by ACOA reflect the areas where they just had to look after themselves. Some of their sharing on the self parenting

“I don’t remember that was when I have no idea as such some I started some odd jobs nobody was there in my life. No significant person that’s why that coaching which comes na that mentor type that tutorship was not there. So I had to look after my own self.” -Rooney 57 years ACOA
Conclusion

The cross case analysis revealed the depth of the phenomenon of being an ACOA. The emotional intelligence is managed by ACOAs who do get affected in the intrapersonal as well as interpersonal areas but they also manage to enhance their functioning. A few are unable to cope and unable to manage their lives in spite of the fact that they may have a higher EI on the scale, in dealing with actual problems they may not have as much understanding or competence and management of EI was poor.

The findings reveal that the areas that are affected are identity emotions, self esteem in intrapersonal management. In the area of interpersonal relationship ACOAs manage their EI by building relationships with caring adults who nurture and support them and also enhance their functioning. Grandparents and a good support system emerges as a key to managing relationship better and enhancing EI. Higher EI is found in collectivistic cultures compared to individualistic cultures as there is a larger network of persons who are available to enhance pro-social behaviour (Baron 2006, Sunder and Lopez 2007). Management of EI by ACOAs in Indian context are use of spirituality, yoga, God and Bhakti movement, Sufism, Prayers as coping with the stress of alcoholism at home. Others observed in the west as well in this study are lying, withdrawal, AA support membership. The rules hindered ACOAs from living life fully. They restricted the EI by imposing unconscious barriers and affected intimacy and well being. The roles did not emerge as fixed but were fluid and the same ACOA used different roles at different times. Thus ACOAs in this study have made choices
which allowed them to manage their EI or then have made choices which did not enhance their EI.