



DODGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Dale J Schmidt Sheriff Scott Smith Chief Deputy

Responsibility and Enablers

Law enforcement struggles with the fact that some people have a hard time accepting personal responsibility. We see people that don't take personal responsibility are often allowed to be that way because they have an enabler in their life. But what do personal responsibility and enabling mean?

Personal responsibility means that you take responsibility for your own actions, do what you say you will and not placing blame on others when you yourself are ultimately responsible. It really boils down to being an honest and honorable person who earns respect from others.

An enabler is one who enables another to persist in self-destructive behavior (such as substance abuse) by providing excuses, financing or helping that individual avoid the consequences of such behavior. While most in our society are responsible, there are some who are enablers without realizing it.

The lack of personal responsibility shown by those who are caught red handed committing a crime or being in possession of illegal substances amazes me. They often shirk responsibility and place blame anywhere else they can. This is especially true with heroin and other illicit drug users. In fact, these individuals get to a point where they become incapable of telling the truth. Heroin users will frequently tell lies to their loved ones in order to avoid confrontation or as a means to deceitfully obtain money to supply their habit.

Many heroin users take advantage of anyone they can and will turn their families, friends and loved ones into enablers. Too often I see parents and grandparents who say those famous words, "My child or grandchild would never do something like that." Unfortunately, sometimes they do not realize that they are being played. That gas or grocery money may be legitimate but it may also be a ruse to buy drugs.

A family that I helped through one of these tough times had just that type of problem with one of their children. She was a heroin addict that stole from her parents, her brother, her sister and other relatives. She didn't stop at money. It escalated to firearms, DVDs, children's toys and even vehicles. I made trips to several pawn shops and recovered merchandise that was sold for about \$600. Imagine how much merchandise there was if a pawn shop was willing to pay \$600 for it. The vehicles that were "borrowed" were taken to a local scrap yard. The scrap yard turned the vehicles into a square box of metal before we could recover them. The family was devastated. How much did she get for the cars? \$300 each.

In conclusion, I ask that you ask yourself a question and answer honestly. Do you hold yourself personally responsible? If the answer is yes, you are in good shape. Next, don't be afraid to evaluate others in your life. If they are begging for money or you start catching them in lies, it may actually be a cry for help. Sometimes the hardest thing to do is to admit your son or daughter may have a problem. That is when they need your support and tough love to get them through that low point in their life. The last thing they need is an enabler as it could mean the difference between having a productive life or a tragic overdose.

We need to pull together as a community to combat these deadly issues of drug abuse. The government alone will never be able to solve society's drug woes. If we work together, Dodge County will continue to be a great place to live work and visit.