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Mail form to: Parents Empowering Parents, 2001 Sherwood Drive, Sherwood Park, AB T8A 3W7 or Fax 780-449-1220

Education, innovative programming, support and hope **Recovery is a Family Journey**



Fall 2023

Life Altering Experiences and Transitions — a parent's message

As a new mother holding my beautiful newborn son, I had never thought that 30 years later I would be at this place. As parents, we have expectations, hope and love for our children. We hope our children will grow up to be healthy, happy and to reach their full potential in adulthood. Then why? How did this happen? What went wrong? Did I do something to cause this? These are some of the questions I was asking myself when I started to process what was happening with my son's addictions and mental illness.

My son started to struggle with anxiety and depression in his early teen years, but he managed to get through his school years and on to university. He earned a Bachelor of Science with an Honors Degree in June 2016. He then got a job (that he didn't

like) and moved into an apartment with a roommate.

In January 2021, his Dad and I started to worry about his excessive alcohol use. He met a girl, and this relationship was toxic and unhealthy for both of them. We later learned that he was abusing prescription medications while in this relationship. We didn't know the extent of his addictions until we found out that in June 2021, someone had saved his life by giving him Naloxone (Narcan) for an overdose. Someone also called EMS and he was taken to a hospital. He was told by a nurse in the ER that his heart stopped. We were in shock and devastated by the realization that his addictions had escalated. Even thinking and writing about this now, I am having a trauma response

thinking about how his life could have ended with that overdose.

As his parents we did everything possible to get help for his addictions and mental health. He continued to place himself at risk with his behaviors. He was abusing alcohol excessively, driving his car while under the influence, abusing medications not prescribed for him and walking around unsafe areas of town. We were asking the police to check on his welfare when he wasn't answering his cell phone, text messages or answering his apartment door. On the last welfare check, the police told us to wait outside of the apartment building while they gained access to the building. We waited in complete fear. Is he alive, Is

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PEP Programs

PEP meets weekly to provide support, education, strength, and hope to parents and families of youth, young adults, and/or adult children. Professionally facilitated discussion provides insight and direction for parents and families dealing with their child's substance abuse issues.

In-person resumes every Tuesday at alternate locations in South Edmonton and Sherwood Park (in person and virtual capability no limits at this time)

Bi-weekly Thursdays St. Albert is now in person, located at sponsored space St. Albert Alliance Church 200 Villeneuve Road St. Albert.

Permanent Virtual Wednesdays continue bi-weekly. See website for details.

IN-PERSON Family Recovery Group Meeting

SOUTH EDMONTON (in-person)

Sunrise Community Church 2nd flr 3303-37 Street, 7 pm - 9 pm

Sept 12, Sept 26, Oct 10, Oct 24, Nov 7, Nov 21

SHERWOOD PARK (in-person and virtual hybrid)

Alberta Room, 2nd flr, 401 Festival Lane (Family and Community Services) in-person and virtual (hybrid). No limitations for in person attendance at this time. This room is equipped with the ability to also join the meeting by zoom, 7 pm - 9 pm

Sept 5, Sept 19, Oct 3, Oct 17, Oct 31, Nov 14, Nov 28

ST. ALBERT (in-person)

St. Albert Alliance Church, 200 Villeneuve Road, 7 pm - 9 pm

Sept 14, Sept 28, Oct 12, Oct 26, Nov 9, Nov 23

VIRTUAL Family Recovery Group Meeting

PERMANENT VIRTUAL WEDNESDAYS (via Zoom) continue bi-weekly

Via Zoom, 7 pm - 9 pm

Sept 6, Sept 20, Oct 4, Oct 18, Nov 1, Nov 15, Nov 29

MONDAY U-TURN As of May 15th, 2023 U-Turn is no longer available

We are currently revisiting our youth program based on the needs of our families and the communities we serve. Watch for opportunities to serve our youth in the future with U-Rise

QUARTERLY WEBINARS Next Webinar Monday November 27, 7pm

pre-registration required: <https://pepsociety.ca/free-webinars/>

MEDD-X

The Motivational Education for Ex-Drug Dealers (MEDD-X) is a recognized program that provides convicted drug dealers an opportunity to gain an understanding of their impact on individuals, families, and the community, while supporting parents/families with insight into the drug/street world. Participants for this program must be referred and approved by staff via phone 780.410.8516 or email info@pepsociety.ca

Rebuilding Hope Through Giving

PEP Society relies on individual donations, grants, corporate and community group support. This equips us to support more families dealing with the effects of substance abuse and allows growth in the professionally facilitated programs that we offer.

The many ways to provide hope:

Monthly Giving Visit pepsociety.ca and go to donations tab and click on Donate Now button (secure web-site through Canada Helps)

Donations via Cheque Mail to: 2001 Sherwood Drive, Sherwood Park, AB, T8A 3W7

Year-end Donation for tax reasons.

Employee Giving Through payroll deductions. Directed by your request through the United Way (Alberta Capital Region)

Corporate Sponsorship

Third Party Fundraisers

Legacy Gifts

Thank you for supporting your community and rebuilding hope for families. PEP Society is a registered charity

Here is the Zoom Link

for all Family Recovery Group meetings to <https://pepsociety.ca/family-recovery-group-meetings/#>

For dates confirmed, you can also visit <https://pepsociety.ca/calendar/pep-family-recovery-meeting/> Make sure you have calendar set to "month" view.

Family Recovery Meetings

We respect our participants' levels of comfort regarding their personal choice on face coverings and physical distancing.

Tuesday Bi-Weekly	Sherwood Park Alberta Room, 2nd floor, 401 Festival Lane	* Virtual & In-Person
Tuesday Bi-Weekly	South Edmonton Sunrise Community Church, 3303 37 Street	* In-Person Only
Thursday Bi-Weekly	St. Albert St. Albert Alliance Church, 200 Villeneuve Road	* In-Person Only
Wednesday Bi-Weekly	Virtual Wednesdays will continue Bi-Weekly on Zoom	* Virtual Only

TOLL FREE FAMILY SUPPORT LINE

Days/evening/weekends. Professionally managed Added to our local Family Support Line

Toll Free 1.877.991.2737
Local 780.293.0737



Providing education, innovative programming, support and hope for individuals or families dealing with or concerned about substance abuse/addiction.

www.pepsociety.ca
info@pepsociety.ca

Family Support Line: 1.877.991.2737
tel: 780-410-8516
2001 Sherwood Drive
Sherwood Park, AB T8A 3W7



Are you and your family concerned? We can help.

he ok? Is this happening? The police came and told us that he was there but had been badly assaulted. We were relieved that he was alive but devastated to see him, severely beaten and so broken. Seeing my son in this state, broke my heart. He told us that he was beaten by some gang members who thought he was an undercover police officer when he asked them to sell him methadone. We took him to the ER to get examined for his injuries. Our hopes were the ER staff would admit him into a program that could help him detox and get into treatment. Unfortunately, this did not happen.

We went to court and were granted a Form 10 (under the Mental Health Act) but he was released before the 48 hours (we were warned that this would happen). We moved him back home. We took him to Detox, supported him and had hope when he attended an addictions treatment center, He was admitted to a psychiatric hospital and then later admitted into a dual diagnosis (addictions and mental health) program. Each time he came home from treatment, he would stay sober and do well for a period of time but he would not follow up on the discharge plans and there were

relapses. This was a very difficult time. Sleepless nights when he would leave the house, not answer my text messages and not come home. I was physically sick with worry and fear. He was abusing substances in the home. When he was under the influence, he would say awful and hurtful things, and would have suicidal ideation, resulting in EMS being called to my home. This all had a huge impact on my mental health and well-being.

There was safety for me to talk about my grief and experiences without judgment.

By March 2022, with medical leave from work, medication for depression, and individual therapy I was able to begin processing. I had to figure out how to cope and adjust to all of this and I recognized that I couldn't do this alone. I learned about PEP when I called a support line. Talking with some family members and a few friends helped but there are limits to what

people can understand unless they have been through something similar.

I started attending PEP in April 2022. What works best for me is the virtual bi-weekly Wednesday group. PEP allowed me to talk with other people who knew exactly what I was going through and how I felt. There was safety for me to talk about my grief and experiences without judgment. I have learned so much from the webinars, resources, the facilitators and from the other participants in the group. I learned that my recovery is independent from my son's recovery. I learned that I didn't cause my son's addiction, nor can I cure, control or change it. I learned the importance of taking care of myself. I learned to let go of my expectations of what I thought my son's life would be like and to embrace and accept his new potential. With the support of PEP, I am taking my life altering experiences and transitioning into a life of acceptance, healing and hope.

In October 2022, my son went into his fourth residential treatment program. Aside from two relapses, his recovery has been solid. When last we spoke, I heard hope in his voice and in his words.



Debbie Bridge, PEP's Family Recovery Group Facilitator and Program Manager, seen here on graduation day, having received her Bachelor of Business Administration With a Major in Human Resources Management.

Next Webinar Monday, Nov. 27, 7pm

Watch web-site for **NEW Educational Webinars**

Free Registration

Pre-registration required at <https://pepsociety.ca/free-webinars/> or by email: info@pepsociety.ca

Previous Webinars posted and available for viewing

New Understanding MEDD-X Alumni

Hello, my name is Lexy, and I joined the Edmonton Drug Treatment Court program in June of 2020, and I graduated from the program in February of 2022. The 18 months I spent in Drug Court provided me with the knowledge, skills, and tools to build a solid foundation for my life and my recovery. It has changed my outlook on life and how I perceive myself and those around me. I have learned to manage and cope with my mental health and have started a career in Social Work. I just completed my first year of Social Work in June of 2023 and I completed my year one practicum with the new Drug Treatment Court program in Grande Prairie. During my practicum I was offered a job with the Drug Treatment Court in Grande Prairie full time as a peer support worker. I will be starting my training to become their life skills and recovery coach starting in September as I begin my second year of Social Work.

While I was in Edmonton Drug Treatment Court other participants in EDTC spoke highly of PEP and stated that it was one of their favorite programs that they attended. I was unsure what the purpose of the program was and what I was going to get out of it. During the first session I cried a lot when listening to the parents share about their experiences with their children and their current circumstances. I was finally able to understand the pain and suffering I caused to the families and individuals that I used drugs with or that I sold drugs to. I caused my

community a lot of pain and suffering and put them in danger. My time in PEP gave me a whole new perspective on the impacts of my previous lifestyle, actions, and behaviours.

I now recognize the impact I had on my own family and my parents, especially my mother and my brother. I called my mom after my first PEP session and told her how sorry I was for the stress, pain, and suffering that I have caused her. I wish that when my family was struggling with my addiction

I now understand how my past drug use and drug dealing impacted the people I associated with and their families.

and unhealthy behaviours that they would have had PEP to support them through it. My family did not have a lot of support and often suffered on their own in silence. Thanks to PEP I now understand how my past drug use and drug dealing impacted the people I associated with and their families. During my time in the program, I was able to relate to many of the situations and circumstances that the families in PEP were experiencing. I realized that most families struggle alone in silence.

I have a new appreciation and understanding of the struggles the families are facing and the strength and resilience they hold.

I am grateful for the parents I met during my time in PEP. I saw and experienced much growth in the group during my time with them through the sharing of our stories, our lived experience and the knowledgeable facilitators. I am happy to say that PEP will always be a powerful part of my recovery journey.

Our stakeholders met with Dan Williams, Alberta Minister of Mental Health and Addictions.



Minister of Mental Health and Addictions Dan Williams (third from left)

PEP is Alberta-wide

PEP is now a provincial organization. We are Alberta-wide, removing barriers of location to support all municipalities across Alberta and their families. Supported by the Alberta Government, Alberta Health COVID-19 Community Grant.

Permanent Virtual Wednesdays Group

Visit pepsociety.ca for details

Family Support Line Toll Free 1-877-991-2737

This professionally managed support line is active days/evening/weekends. This line is in addition to our local Family Support Line.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Board Election & AGM

Tuesday October 3, 6:00 pm

2nd floor (FCS) Alberta Room, 401 Festival Lane Sherwood Park, AB (elevator to the left of Vicky's by the Library)

PEP Family Recovery Group to follow at 7 pm

THANK YOU

Thank you to our supporters

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Strathcona County

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Also, thank you to our regular monthly donors.

Working together to empower families in crisis towards health and wellness.