

pep talks

Spring 2024

The Endless Journey

— a parent's message

The definition of Addiction is, *"exhibiting a compulsive, chronic, physiological, or psychological need for a habit-forming substance, behavior or activity. Strongly inclined to do, use, or indulge in something repeatedly."* It does not tell you anything about the living and breathing side of the disease. If you're reading this, I'm sure you've experienced some of it, if not directly then indirectly through your loved one.

Addiction deceives, manipulates, lies, steals, it is singularly focused, it's complicated. Addiction has no partiality; it touches every age and socio-economic group. To the unassuming it can hide in isolation and secrecy undetected for long periods of time. When it finally comes out of the shadows, it can shake the entire foundation of your being. I'm sharing my story of a loved one in addiction in hopes that you are able to take something away from it, so you know you are not alone on this endless journey, and make no mistake this journey is never ending. I'd like nothing better than to tell you my son is on the road to recovery, he's not. It's not without his trying, but it hasn't happened for him yet, I say yet because I cling to an everlasting hope that day will come.

Let me start at my beginning, which is different from my 44-year-old sons. I will give you some background so you know how I arrived at my beginning.

In 2008, my son had a significant knee injury. He was working on the pipeline in Fort McMurray. He went to the Dr and was prescribed Oxycontin and put in a brace. You should know that there

was a period of time where Doctors were prescribing Oxy (heroin in a pill) without advising patients of the addictiveness of the drug and big pharma was paying them handsomely to do so. I tell you this not as a reason or excuse for my son's addiction but merely as a fact of what was happening at that time. We have seen the results of this in recent years with big pharma paying out billions in class action suits for the damages the drug did. He should have had surgery (shouda ,coulda, woulda) however, he didn't. The pain continued and when the script ran out and no refill was available, he chose to obtain it on the streets.

While working in Ft. McMurray, my son had a situation occur that lost him his current residence and he required a place to live. The practical side of me said it made sense for us to get a 2 bdrm/2 bath apt. I presented this to him knowing it was not cool for a grown man to have his mom as a room mate. To my surprise he accepted. This would be the beginning of my enabling journey. We shared an apt from September 2016 until August 2023. Unbeknownst to me, he was in his active addiction.

My son loves fishing and it brings him much joy. On the September long weekend 2020, his joy was stolen due to his addiction. He called his brother because he had rolled his truck and boat trailer, the RCMP were called and his truck and trailer were impounded. He spent the night in jail and needed help to get his boat as he lost the means to do that. That night some of the truth came

out. And so, the endless journey began. I imagine you're thinking how could she not have known /seen his addiction, he was living with her. Believe me I've asked myself that question. Well, I certainly wasn't looking for it, it wasn't on my radar. I had no tell-tale clues, I hadn't endured the abuse, theft or destruction of property we so often hear families talk about. Keep in mind, they are very adept at hiding their disease.

While all this is going on, I'm crumbling emotionally, my heart physically ached and was heavy in my chest. I couldn't talk about it without tears flowing.

Thankfully, I have a trusted circle of long-time friends that God had placed in my life years earlier. I confided in them. I believe that God places certain people in our lives for a purpose. They were well equipped to support me on my unsolicited

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journey. They had already walked the road I was about to embark on. I'm so grateful and blessed to have them in my life.

Back to some of my son's journey which of course is intertwined with mine. He has attempted treatment a few times, even had to inform his employer based on some of the consequences of his behaviour. They got the ball rolling to get him into detox and rehab the first time. He was accepted into Thorpe, a residential treatment facility. He was high when we left to get him to treatment. I was thankful that I had a friend travelling with me because I was a complete mess and felt helpless.

While my son was there, I joined an AHS family support group and through them, I was introduced to PEP. Through both groups I began to learn the complexity of addiction and how it effects not only our loved one but the entire family. It wasn't that I hadn't been exposed to addiction and the damage it could do, but I was ignorant of the depth and grasp it could have on both the addict and the family.

MEDD-X Alumni

A Connection to Community

I am part of the Edmonton Drug Court program. I grew up in poverty and a broken home and spent 14 years in addiction. I'm now 11 months sober and the new father to a beautiful baby girl. I'm attending classes from Grant MacEwen as part of their university prep course. School is so much different for me now than when I was in high school and I'm gaining new skills and knowledge.

I was a participant in the MEDD-X program with PEP for 15 sessions. I enjoyed attending the meetings every Tuesday night and I learned a lot from the group. PEP taught me about the destruction of drugs and alcohol in the community. I also saw the other side of addiction and how it impacts families. The program gave me back a connection to the community. I got to help the families understand addiction and recovery and provide a message of hope.

Well, 8 weeks passed quickly and the day had finally come to bring my son home. We had a great conversation on the ride home. He stayed sober for about 3 weeks, the pull of the drug was just too powerful and he was soon back in its clutches.

Fast forward a year. He recognized again that he needed help and entered Detox through ARCH. Midway through he was experiencing psychosis and needed to be admitted to the Royal Alex and was even under suicide watch for three days.

He did manage to stay clean and was able to test clean of drugs before heading to Thorpe again. Before the trip I took him for a hair cut and new shoes. I believe the small things do matter and truth is that it was just as much for me as it was for him. I'm glad to say that this time I was a bit less of a mess, an improvement for me and he was sober, an improvement for him. We take these small moments and find slivers of hope in them.

Today, I wish I could say my son is in recovery, he's not. I don't know what it will take for him to choose sobriety and the road to recovery over the powerful drugs that have him in their grip. My son moved out last August, a wise move for both of our mental health. I made it clear I would support him in any effort he made toward sobriety, I could no longer enable him in his addiction. We have a good relationship; he knows he's welcome in my home if he's sober. Most importantly of all, he knows I love him and hate the addiction.

What have I learned so far on this journey? A key thing for me was learning to release what I don't own and can't control. The more I learn the better equipped I am to cope with the challenges that confront me. In the meantime, I'm taking care of myself and doing the best I can on this never-ending journey.

My support system, my circle of long-time trusted friends is invaluable to me. We accept one another unconditionally without judgement, we have been and will continue to be there for each other though the good and bad. My AHS online family support group has provided information and teachings that have challenged me to want to dig deeper and learn more. It's a safe place of trust and respect, for that I'm thankful.

My PEP family, who have embraced and accepted me from my first meeting, have listened patiently while I cried through my sharing time. They made me feel safe,

Innovative Ways of Support



Thank you Lorraine Yoneda for your annual Christmas Wreath Fundraiser. Producing sweets to support families in your community



Thank you Task Guru for donating \$20 per new client to PEP Society. Laura Sherrer-Townsend presenting cheque to Lerena Greig


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allowing me to share my inner thoughts and be vulnerable without judgment. The educational topics discussed get my wheels turning, they can be very thought provoking. I've changed since I started coming. I've recognized an inner strength. I truly don't know what to attribute it to but I thank my PEP family for it. My greatest sustainer is my faith, and the power of prayer. I don't know what God's plan is for my son or me. I have faith and trust in God's promises (sometimes no small feat). I know I have no control so I chose to "Let Go and Let God". I have deliberately chosen to never give up HOPE on this seemingly endless journey.

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



Not in My Family

PEP Talks Recovery

pepsociety.ca/events

Hosted by Sunrise Community Church 3303-37 Street Edmonton

An educational forum



An educational forum featuring a discussion panel on supporting loved ones struggling with addiction.

Greetings from Minister of Mental Health and Addiction, Hon. Dan Williams.

Doors open 6:30pm

April 23

7pm - 9pm

Power of Support

by Lerena Greig

In PEP's Family Recovery Group, there are two components: 1. Education 2. Support

Education has its many benefits. To name a few: knowledge, change in mindset, direction and leading, improved well-being, clarity and even forms of relief in the new understanding.

For this article, I would like to talk about the power of support. Support is a fundamental aspect of connection which is crucial in building relationships and personal growth. By actively listening without judgement, providing a safe place to share emotions and your present situation, PEP's Family Recovery Group establishes trust and a bond. When we offer our support, we show compassion, value and respect for the individual and the group. This offers a sense of connection, allowing for open and honest conversations, having a profound impact on emotional well-being.

In PEP's Family Recovery Group, the strength and power of support is evident in every meeting. Tough times and challenges can occur for our families every day. Knowing that PEP is a safe and supportive environment allows

our family members to step into those difficult conversations and situations with a sense of hope and empowerment, reducing the stress and anxiety. Confidence grows in their ability to get well even when the chaos with their loved one is still evident. There is a sense of belonging and this can equip them to thrive instead of just surviving. With a good support system, we can reconnect to our families, our friends, our community. We can rediscover moments of joy and step into our own recovery. There is power in support.

Reach out, you are not alone.

Join a PEP Family Recovery Group at <https://pepsociety.ca/programs/family-recovery>

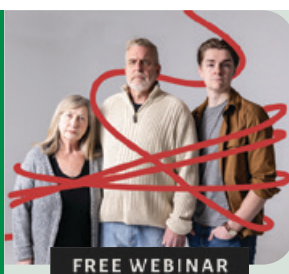
Call our professionally managed support line 1.877.991.2737

Connect and find the power in support.

Lerena Greig
Executive Director

Virtual Zoom Meetings

Starting February 21, we are offering our virtual meeting via zoom weekly, every Wednesday. visit pepsociety.ca/programs/family-recovery



FREE WEBINAR

Pre-registration required
Email: info@pepsociety.ca or pepsociety.ca/free-webinars



FAMILY RECOVERY MATTERS

Monday, May 27, 7pm

As part of the PEP family, you are invited
PEP Society is Celebrating 20 years

Saturday June 8, 2 pm - 4pm

Join us for refreshments and cake. Program starts at 2 pm. Sherwood Park Chamber of Commerce, 100 Ordze Avenue.

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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, 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 - NEW 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

**Mar 12, Mar 26, April 9, April 23 (Not In My
Family Event) May 7, May 21**

SHERWOOD PARK (in-person)

Alberta Room, 2nd flr, 401 Festival Lane (Family
and Community Services), 7 pm - 9 pm.

**Mar 5, Mar 19, April 2, April 16, April 30,
May 14, May 28**

ST. ALBERT (in-person)

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

Mar 14, Mar 28, April 11, April 25, May 9, May 23

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

VIRTUAL Family Recovery Group Meeting

New Weekly
PERMANENT VIRTUAL
WEDNESDAYS (via Zoom)

Via Zoom, 7 pm - 9 pm

**Mar 6, Mar 13, Mar 20, Mar 27, Apr 3,
Apr 10, Apr 17, Apr 24, May 1, May 8,
May 15, May 22, May 29**

QUARTERLY WEBINARS

Watch our website for the
next webinar

<https://pepsociety.ca/free-webinars/>

U-Turn is no longer available. Watch for

URise Youth Program

8 week program starting this spring
(April/May)

Youth family Recovery Group for 12-18 yr olds.
Registration required. contact info@pepsociety.ca
for more information.

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 and U-turn 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.



*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
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