



15 YEARS

# PEPtalks

Summer 2019

Parents Empowering Parents

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

## We Are PEP'ers Too

— a parent's story

**W**e discovered Parents Empowering Parents through our family physician's recommendation. By then, we were 10 – 12 years into our teenage children's addictions. We wish we knew about PEP sooner. We felt the added guilt of having both our children in addiction. This must be due to bad parenting on our part? After all, none of our friends nor relatives had any kids in similar situations! This was just happening to us. Both children started smoking quite young, and then proceeded to marijuana, because "weed is the new beer". As Mom and Dad, we lived by a different axiom: "not every weed smoker descends to a homeless drug addict, but every homeless drug addict started with weed". Back then, how could we know which destination was ours? Over the next 10 years, things escalated to alcohol, cocaine, magic mushrooms, heroin and fentanyl (and goodness knows what else).

The children were brought home at all hours by loyal, but misguided friends, good Samaritans and sometimes, the police. Their personalities became altered into irrational, moody, abusive or self-destructive. We set no-drug boundaries that were broken regularly. We drug tested their urine. They lied, stole, cheated us and damaged our home. They failed school, lost jobs and lost friends. A number of times, we called the police in an attempt to arrest or protect our kids. I will never be able to erase the memory of an officer placing his boot on my son's head on the sidewalk in front of our home (also wondering what the neighbours were seeing) as he resisted going into the cruiser. Finally, the chaos was so intolerable; the children could no longer live in our home.

Today, our daughter is a homeless fentanyl addict we have not seen in 18 months and our son is halfway through his third round of drug/alcohol rehab.

We started going to PEP meetings and calling the support line in March of 2018 after hesitating a couple of years. It was actually our addicted daughter who urged us to go learn more and get support. We met a range of parents and supporters of addicted children: some suspecting their child, some in early stages, some in addiction for years, and some experiencing the ultimate loss – the death of their child.

The support from the group was instant! We were all together in a common crisis, no matter what the addiction. No one was judged a bad parent. We learned a tonne: how addicts reduce their relationships to only the addiction, setting effective boundaries, detaching with love, the 3 C's, that we did not cause, can't cure nor control the addiction, and how to better navigate the burdened/broken healthcare and legal systems. We also learned that PEP was not about how to "fix" the addicts in our children, but how to improve the quality of our lives. So, we changed our orientation and perceptions inward and spent more effort and energy on ourselves: healing, self-help, self-care and downplaying blame/shame/what ifs...

We have grown to respect and rely on our fellow PEP'ers to vent, to ask questions, for advice and share progress or ideas. We need the meetings for PEP periodic pick-me-ups because the chaos of addiction challenges and sometimes weakens our resolve. The lessons are valuable the first time or important again for reinforcement. Addiction can often be

a life of anarchy, chaos and a war at home. It affects relationships with the addict, the family, work, health and reduce your universe to nothing but addiction.

Two parents need to be on the same page and we started off in different books. We see ourselves in newcomers, and we want to help. The lessons at PEP arm us for our war on addiction. The expert facilitators, drug court-mandated former dealers, and fellow parents have profound insights, advice and support to give. We take what we need and try to give back. There are tears shared and surprisingly, laughs too. Just ask me about the empty 27 bottles of booze our basement contractor found above our drop ceiling tiles. We can laugh about that now because of PEP.

We have come a long way from arriving as "mad dad and sad mum". Life may never be *normal* as we would like, again, but can still be a life worth living. PEP'ers remind us to stay connected with family, friends and work and to nurture our passions: travel, food, music, etc. Come once, come often...you'll be glad you did...and learn why because...

CHANGE BEGINS WITH ME!



### FAMILY SUPPORT LINE

Did you know that PEP has a professionally managed support line available days, evenings, and weekends?

The number is 780.293.0737

# MEDD-X Alumni returns to tell her story!

**H**i my name is Brandi, and I am an addict in recovery! I am writing this on the day of my third year of sobriety! The Edmonton Drug Treatment Court introduced me to PEP and the MEDD-X program back in 2017. I truly did not know what to expect, as my story is a little different than some. I came from an entire family of addicts. Mom, dad, sister, aunt, uncle – the list goes on. I wasn't letting anyone down by being an addict. It was just in me to be like the others before me. Eventually I had a little girl who relied on me and for a while, I was able to put my addiction aside to raise her for the first year or so. I found myself caught in a situation after a night out at a bar that changed everything.

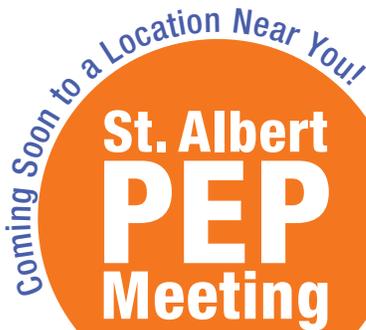
My time in MEDD-X opened my eyes to a lot of things. I truly did not realize the hurt and pain I, and other drug dealers alike had put these families through. I

looked into the eyes of so many parents, family members and close kin and saw pain. I saw eyes that wanted to ask me "why?" over and over again in hopes to receive answers; to why their loved one has chosen the path less travelled.

I'll never get the same things I received from MEDD-X anywhere else. In all my time spent there, I learned that my impact on the community was greater than I thought. I learned for the first time the pain that my drug use had caused others. This was both devastating and eye opening for me.

At the end of my volunteering for MEDD-X program, I knew I had become a better person; a more understanding and empathic person. Thank you to the MEDD-X program and Parents Empowering Parents (PEP) Society... you were a valuable part of my recovery journey - thank you...

*I learned that my impact on the community was greater than I thought. I learned for the first time the pain that my drug use had caused others. This was both devastating and eye opening for me.*



*By request:*

Bi-Weekly Thursdays  
6:30 pm – 8:30 pm  
St. Albert Food Bank and  
Community Village  
#20, 50 Bellerose Drive  
St. Albert, AB  
For more information contact  
780.410.8516  
info@pepsociety.ca  
www.pepsociety.ca

## Sponsorship Spotlight



With long-time friend Rick Zejda, we created the Bugle 'on paper', in April 2017. I had just left the newspaper business and was looking to try to connect with the community in a way which wasn't available at that time. Mainstream media was a mess, delivering negative, discouraging and seemingly only 'Bad' news. The Bugle was to be a 'Good News Only' paper, with a strong local vibe. We printed our 1st edition on September 27th, 2017, and over the next 20 months, we had grown from zero readers to over 13,000, plus another 4000 online visitors and friends from countries all over the world. We continue to maintain our fun, community-first attitude, as well as being the only locally-owned and published newspaper in Strathcona County.

We still believe we are on the right track....

*Local paper gives back...  
Community-First Attitude*

## Annual General Meeting

**Tuesday June 4, 6 pm**

Alberta Room, #200, 501 Festival Ave.,  
Sherwood Park

### Director/Board Positions

**Are you passionate about making  
a difference in the families in your  
community?**

For over 15 years, PEP has supported, informed, and educated families in crisis of addiction. With your commitment, expertise and skills, you can make a difference. For more information, contact Lerena Greig Executive Director 780.410.8516 or info@pepsociety.ca

*Join a diversified team....  
Together we ARE stronger.*



## You're Invited!

Members, Friends and family, join us for light refreshments to celebrate PEP's

### 15 Year Anniversary and Founders Recognition Event

**Saturday June 15th 1 pm - 3 pm**

With vision and commitment, our Founders empowered 100's of families towards health, knowledge and change. Thank you Maralyn Benay, Tina Dow & Audrey Holliday. Your legacy continues....

Sherwood Park Chamber of Commerce Bldg,  
Main floor, 100 Ordze Avenue, Sherwood Park  
No reservation required, your presence is requested!

If you require more details  
info@pepsociety.ca or 780.410.8516

## SAVE THE DATE

**Tuesday, September 17, 5:30 pm**

Presentation to Strathcona County  
Mayor and Council

**Come on Down, join us...the price-TIME is Right!**

We are requesting your butt in a seat...recognize and celebrate 15 years of PEP in your community. If you, your family, neighbour or employee has been helped with PEP's innovative programs or you just want to celebrate with over 750 families in your community, COME ON DOWN

For more information about upcoming events,  
call 780.410.8516 or visit www.pepsociety.ca

# What IF?

by Lerena Greig

At PEP meetings, we often hear the question What if? It can be based on the fear of the unknown or even the fear of the known. Today's crisis with drugs and mental health is real and so are the possible outcomes. What if it's my fault; what if others blame me; what if I fail to help; what if my child never recovers; what if my child dies? Can you hear the pain in these questions; this is the reality of a family who has a child, youth or adult, struggling with substance or behavioural use disorder.

Questions, uncertainty and fear are evident when a new parent or family member arrives at our PEP meetings. It is heartbreaking to see the pain and the "what ifs" on their faces. We have a broken system when it comes to mental health and addiction and that brokenness can create a hole that our loved ones fall into, a hole that is filled with "what ifs"...

But 'what if' there were organizations that were changing that brokenness to healing through support, hope and truth. What if knowledge and strength came from a group that empowers change and advocates for recovery... Connected people do get better; quality of life for families can improve. What if the pain empowers a healthy changed mindset?

*The "what ifs" are changed to I am and I believe I can, I will and most importantly I hope...*

What if stigma and misunderstanding was changed to understanding, no judgement, and knowledge? This happens in PEP's innovative programs; we support parents, extended family and the person in recovery. The "what ifs" are changed to I am and I believe I can, I will and most importantly I hope...

What if this is happening in your family, in your home, in your community? Our team of qualified staff and facilitators can help, guided by a team of leaders and visionaries on our Board of Directors. Together we can empower each other to change the "what ifs" from chaos to calm, from misunderstanding to knowledge and from hopelessness to hope.

Let's connect and change the outcomes for our families...

What can you do in our current economy to support your community?



Parents Empowering Parents continues to offer free innovative programs to families in this community and surrounding areas. Last year PEP averaged 30 parents a meeting x 52 weeks = 1560 with support, education and resources = *No Small Feat*.

There are small ways you can help. Would you give up just one specialty coffee a week for one year?

**\$5 x 4 weeks = \$20 a month x 12 months = \$240.00 = No Small Feat**

What about a regular coffee a week?  
**\$2.50 x 4 weeks = \$10 a month x 12 months = \$120.00 = No Small Feat**

Thank you for your consideration in regular monthly support. Go to [www.pepsociety.ca](http://www.pepsociety.ca) donations tab and click on Donate Now button...



*Together we are stronger and there is No Small Feat.*

## Thank You To Our Supporters

With your help, we are working together to empower families in crisis towards health and wellness.



Felix and Pat Kuefler Fund

Also, thank you to our regular monthly donors.

## With a one-time gift

- \$25  \$50  \$100  \$250  
 \$500  \$1000  Other: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## With a monthly gift

- \$25  \$50  \$100  \$250  
 \$500  \$1000  Other: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Yes, I would like to subscribe to your email notifications

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Email \_\_\_\_\_

Gifts by:  Cheque  VISA  Mastercard

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_

Expiry Date \_\_\_\_\_ Amount \_\_\_\_\_

Security Code \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Charity Number 8432300270RR0001

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

## PEP Programs

### Parent Support Meetings

PEP convenes 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. No registration is required to attend these drop in meetings, which are held:

**Weekly on Tuesdays from 7pm to 9pm alternating locations each week**

#### New Location

#### Sherwood Park Millwoods

Alberta Room Sunrise Community Church,  
 #200, 501 Festival Ave 3303-37 Street NW  
 (FCS) Sherwood Park (upstairs), Edmonton

**June 4**  
 AGM 6 pm,  
 meeting to follow

**June 18**

**July 2**

**July 16**

**July 30**

**August 13**

**August 27**

**June 11**

**June 25**

**July 9**

**July 23**

**August 6**

**August 20**

For more information visit our website at [www.pepsociety.ca](http://www.pepsociety.ca)

### Parent Mentorship Program

This program connects parents with parents. Mentors selected to listen, relate, share hope, share ideas, and provide additional support to parents new to PEP. Request for this service can be made with the meeting facilitator.

### U-Turn for youth

U-Turn supports youth & young adults involved in substance use to explore their situations through casual discussion and education in a no-pressure environment. Runs concurrently to the Sherwood Park PEP meetings. See website for schedule. Drop in Meeting. No registration required.

### 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 [pepmedd@gmail.com](mailto:pepmedd@gmail.com)

## 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.

### There are many ways to provide hope:

1. Monthly giving visit [www.pepsociety.ca](http://www.pepsociety.ca) and go to donations tab and click on Donate Now button (secure web-site through Canada Helps)
2. Donations via cheque or newsletter – can also be mailed directly to 2001 Sherwood Drive, Sherwood Park, AB T8A 3W7
3. Year-end donation for tax reasons.
4. Directed by your request through the United Way (Alberta Capital Region)
5. Corporate Sponsorship
6. Third Party Fundraisers
7. Legacy Gifts

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

Visit [www.pepsociety.ca](http://www.pepsociety.ca) for upcoming events and collaborations with community partners



[www.pepsociety.ca](http://www.pepsociety.ca)  
[info@pepsociety.ca](mailto:info@pepsociety.ca)

support line: 780-293-0737  
 tel: 780-410-8516  
 fax: 780-449-1220

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