



18 YEARS

PEPtalks

Spring 2022

Parents Empowering Parents

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

Choosing Hope While Facing Despair

— a parent's message

I thought I would start our story with the present day and work backwards in time; the present day is most fresh in our minds, and is a point where we do have hope for the future. Drug addiction has been a dark shadow disrupting our family for the past 10 years, starting when our son was in 8th grade.

Ben (not his real name) applied for admission to a drug rehab centre outside Edmonton about a month ago, and is presently waiting to be accepted for treatment. We are hoping he will be admitted soon, while he is receptive to the idea, and we really hope that he will

seem to be responsible for the number of seizures he's been having, and alcohol and nicotine seem to be just as hazardous as seizure triggers.

At the moment Ben is living at a downtown shelter (private room for a weekly fee). He implicitly made the choice recently to move out as we enforced our boundaries — his repeated failure to comply with no drug use while under our roof. At 24 he is old enough to be on his own, but removing one's child from one's own household after he has yet again violated the conditions for living at home is not easy. We love our son very much, but when he is not living with us we as a family feel so much more peace and positivity and less tension and suspicion. We now realize that having him live with us at age 24 was still enabling his lifestyle; his methods of hiding his purchases and use got more sophisticated, but we did get better at detecting the lies and the drug use. Drug deliveries from dealers were apparently happening right under our noses.

We as parents invited him to live with us again last summer, as we were concerned with him living alone and the potential of seizures. We were also concerned about his financial debt, so wanted to help him (with free room and board, not money) to try to pay down his debts by having him move back home for a few months. Again he was told no drug use would be tolerated in our home. We implemented intermittent drug-testing and room checks to keep him accountable; the living situation was tolerable, but we were finding that we were being pulled back into the supervisory parenting role

that we wanted to be done with years ago.

Seizures seem to be an ongoing symptom of his drug and alcohol use, and I believe has been misdiagnosed as epilepsy, taking the focus off of the significant part that drug addiction has played in his many seizure episodes. Our son, the addict, cannot seem to embrace the logical thinking that would suggest that if it's drugs causing the seizures, then just STOP, as if it were a severe allergy! Again, this is one of the many things that we have to let go of and allow him to discover on his own.

The positive thing in his life right now is that he has a job (server at a restaurant), and is motivated to work and pick up extra shifts, though we understand that working at restaurants is not a great choice for someone struggling with addictions — very risky and toxic environments.

He has expressed a desire to pursue post-secondary studies, though we aren't sure how committed he is to this goal. We believe that this would be a great thing for him to pursue, despite the amount of debt that he still has.

Four years ago, with increased drug

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Thank You Presentation

March 8, 2022

Priorities Committee
Strathcona County Council Chambers
Time to be determined.

Visit pepsociety.ca for updates

really embrace the treatment and turn his life around. Realistically, we know that many addicts end up needing more than one shot at a drug recovery centre.

He has made some attempts at recovery the last few years, but no program was fully completed, and he seemed to enter them less of his own choosing and more to attempt to placate his parents.

His addictions have been cannabis, alcohol, nicotine and cocaine. As far as we can tell he hasn't gotten into other drugs like heroin, crystal meth or fentanyl. However, the substances he's addicted to

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Choosing Hope While Facing Despair

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use Ben went through an uncharacteristic violent episode where we wouldn't let him in the house, and he reacted by banging on doors and windows, jumping up on the roof, and finally threatening to break down a door if we wouldn't give him his "stuff". We had to make the hard call to have him arrested and charged with uttering threats, and for a time had a restraining order to stay away from the house and not contact my wife. Following that was a rare period where he stayed very angry with my wife, but maintained civil contact with me. Eventually the charge was dropped and he was given 18 months' probation. We really hoped that he would realize how his addiction had control over him and had driven him to this behaviour, and that someday he may understand our actions in this matter.

Ben's addictions have had a hold on him for a long time, and it all started with weed at age 14. "Weed at age 14" seems to have been the familiar origin of drug use for so many families dealing with a child's addiction. It's impossible for us to be thrilled that the government finally legalized marijuana, knowing it was how our son got started in his addictions.

My wife was the first to attend PEP meetings, and I originally felt quite reluctant to attend meetings, I think mostly because of the anger and frustration I was feeling over how our son's addiction was disrupting our entire family. I was eventually persuaded to begin attending weekly PEP meetings, and found great instruction, insight and encouragement from both the facilitators and the parents of addicted children. PEP has indeed given us the assurance that we are not alone in our struggle as the family of an addict, and given us the strength and support we need to make the hard decisions.

We have learned especially that taking care of ourselves is not a selfish objective, but of critical importance to ensure that we as parents, and the rest of the family, do not become collateral damage of the addiction. Our son knows that we love him while we despise his substance use, and by now has also seen that the rest of the family will not allow his addiction to control our lives. We definitely hope that someday our son will realize the value of the empowering phrase, "Change begins with me."

PEP is Alberta-Wide

Parents Empowering Parents (PEP) Society is now a provincial organization.

PEP reaches 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 the PEP website for details – pepsociety.ca

A toll free Family Support Line 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.

MEDD-X Alumni My PEP Story

My name is Lori, I am a participant in the Edmonton drug court program. When I was first told about the program from my lawyer I was headed down a very dark path, he told me it was a great opportunity if I can get in; not using EDTC as a source to stay out of jail but to change the course of my life. I took his advice and fought hard to get into the program.

My addiction started when I was 14 yrs old with alcohol & pot. At 15 I got pregnant and at 16 I had my son, Austin. He was my world but he tragically died when I was 17 in the care of my ex boyfriend while I was at school. This destroyed me in every way possible, I was angry, hurt, confused. I started drinking more and when that didn't work anymore I found a substance to bury those feelings. Before I knew it I was completely numb and I lost control.

I had no idea who I was, I was empty inside. However, over the last 12 months that I have been in the program I have done a huge amount of painful work. I am now on my healing journey with the many programs that I have been in and worked through. I feel that change inside. There are 2 programs that I am truly grateful for: Dragonflies and PEP.

Joining PEP I was both excited and scared because I thought going in as an ex-dealer these parents were going to really dislike me, but my first night at PEP is one that I'll never forget! We were introduced and the families shared their story; it was an instant emotion for me. When I shared my story of addiction to recovery, the emotion was intense also. I thought to myself "man this is going to be some kind of 15 weeks"

Being introduced to the PEP family was a turning point for me. I thought in my addiction, as long as my family doesn't see me like this or if I just stay away the better it will be for us all. I couldn't have been more wrong. Sitting with those parents every Tuesday showed me how much pain I had put myself and my family through. I hadn't seen the damage till I heard their voices; I heard their pain when they didn't really know what was going on with their loved ones. I saw such amazing strength within the PEP family, the support and love that's shown to each other in their time of need is beautiful. I'm so grateful for the experience.

The raw heartfelt emotion of PEP is something that I will hold onto for the rest of my life. It helped me realize that my addiction didn't affect just me, it affected my family and loved ones as well.

Your Voice Matters! Change the Story

by Lereña Greig

Martin Niemoller: “First they came for the Socialists and I did not speak out – because I was not a Socialist. Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not speak out – because I was not a Trade Unionist. Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out – because I was not a Jew. Then they came for me – and there was no one left to speak for me.”

These powerful words came at a time in history when some of the world’s leaders had been complicit through their silence in the Nazi imprisonment, persecution and terrible deaths of millions of people.

Your voice matters. We can change the story; change the stigma of addiction.

PEP is working towards, in partnership

with the Alberta government and other agencies, an anti-stigma campaign and we are hopeful for the funding to accommodate this.

You have a voice and your voice matters. At PEP, our mantra continues to be spoken in unison, one voice, at the end of our meetings. “Change begins with me”. This is the time to implement change in prevention and treatment of addiction and mental health. It is a crisis and your child’s life matters, your family matters and your community needs to know. You can speak for your family.

Then they came for me and I had a whole community to speak for me...

Lereña Greig
Executive Director



Watch web-site for
NEW Educational Webinars
Quarterly, last Monday of the month

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

You didn't miss out....
Previous Webinars posted and available for viewing

PARTNERSHIP SPOTLIGHT

Removing Barriers



In partnership with Alberta Government Assoc. Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, Honorable Mike Ellis, Edmonton Fire Department lead by Fire Chief Joe Zatylny, Virtual Opioid Dependency Program (VODP) Dr. Nathaniel Day and Parents Empowering Parents (PEP) Society Executive Director Lereña Greig. We are removing barriers for individuals and families impacted by addiction.

Together we ARE stronger and recovery works!

Thank you to our supporters

THANK YOU

- Abrasive Blast & Paint Inc.
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 - Sturgeon Valley Baptist Church
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- Also, thank you to our regular monthly donors.

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

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

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 (maximum attendance 11 persons due to social distancing - must register to info@pepsociety.ca)

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

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

Mar 1, Mar 15, Mar 29, Apr 12, Apr 26, May 10, May 24

SHERWOOD PARK

Alberta Room, 2nd flr, 401 Festival Lane (Family
and Community Services) (max 11 persons), 7 pm
- 9 pm

Mar 8, Mar 22, Apr 5, Apr 19, May 3, May 17, May 31

ST. ALBERT (NOW IN PERSON)

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

**Mar 3, Mar 17, Mar 31, Apr 14, Apr 28, May 12,
May 26**

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

VIRTUAL Family Recovery Group Meeting

VIRTUAL WEDNESDAYS BI-WEEKLY MEETING

Via Zoom, 7 pm - 9 pm

Mar 9, Mar 23, Apr 6, April 20, May 4, May 18

MONDAY U-TURN Ongoing Virtual Biweekly

U-turn (youth/young adults at risk) 16-24
every second Monday

**Mar 7, Mar 21, Apr 4, Apr 18, May 2, May 16,
May 30**

QUARTERLY WEBINARS Next Webinar Monday March 28

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. 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
<https://pepsociety.ca/covid-19-notice/>

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

For upcoming events, visit www.pepsociety.ca



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info@pepsociety.ca

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

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