

16 YEARS

PEPtalks

Summer 2020

Parents Empowering Parents



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

A Journey, Not a Sprint — a parent's story

Our journey began when our son was 14 years old and we discovered he had started using weed near the end of grade 8. We were shocked and devastated — this could not be happening to our family as we had done all the “right” things to oppose and discourage drug use within our home. This was only the start of a journey that has continued for over nine years.

We attempted to guide and support him going forward as best we could. He was assigned to mobile counsellors who met him outside of school. He continued to participate in community sports. Ever watchful, we kept a close eye on him, during after-school activities and through his friendship connections. We started to see changes. Once a popular child, he began to pull away from friends and appeared to be looking from the outside in.

At the start of high school, we were called one evening by the police due to shoplifting. He was placed in a holding cell for a period as the officer wanted him to learn a lesson. Both of us parents drove to pick him up and he was released without charges because of his “good” family and no prior history of dealings with the law.

Through his high school years, drug and alcohol use escalated. We were only partially aware of what was really going on. We tried to be hyper-vigilant, keeping an eye out for what he was doing but finding it impossible to cope under these circumstances. We were stressed all the time, could not sleep, constantly worrying and wondering what our son was up to, whether he was safe. Where was he? When would he get home?

I took him to the Emergency Department because he threatened

suicide. More counselling sessions. He was suspended from school a couple of times for fighting and alcohol use, leading to worries that he might not graduate. He did graduate but needed to upgrade. He was accepted into college but was not attending regularly and ultimately failing some classes.

We established conditions under which he could continue living in our home. Any drug use would not be tolerated. We set deadlines. He was unable to meet these deadlines, so he was told to move out. We went back and forth with him being out of the house and being allowed back in. There were calls to the police, individual counselling sessions, family counselling sessions, family/peer support workers and calls to the crisis line.

We had joined a support group but after a few months stopped going. Our issues were not as severe as other peoples' issues, as at that point, weed and nicotine were the main problems we were dealing with. We were so naïve to the big picture since addicts become quite skilled at hiding their true selves.

We started to notice he was losing weight, not keeping himself groomed, and sleeping all day and up all night. He confessed he was using cocaine. We were in utter despair. How could this have happened, except it had been happening gradually over several years.

The stakes were getting higher. There were trips to detox (he was never admitted). The crisis line suggested he withdraw from college unless he sought help. We continued to think and hope we could “fix” him. He was arrested, homeless, fired from jobs and the story goes on...

We were going down the path so many other families have been down, but we just were not aware who they were. Finally, two years ago, we found PEP through the recommendation of the crisis line. My initial reaction, at my first meeting, was that we are not alone. Unfortunately, there are other families struggling like we are. There is strength and security in numbers. The attitudes, behaviours, and incidents we all observe and share often have surprising similarities.

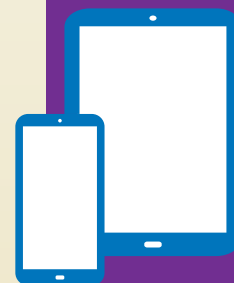
Over the past two years, we have gained so much from our PEP family. As I have said many times, the PEP meetings are the only thing that has worked. The professional facilitators provide a weekly lesson so we can learn about dealing with substance use disorder/addiction. They provide support and guidance during the “go around.” The recovered drug dealers

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Family Recovery Group Meetings

SEE YOU “ZOOM” Due to the ongoing challenges with physically connecting, PEP is joining the “Zoomers” and having ‘virtual’ Family Recovery Group and U-turn (16-24) meetings.

www.pepsociety.ca. See pop up and home page for times and links for both groups and calendar for dates. Check PEP website for when face-to-face meetings will resume.



A Journey...

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give us insight into a world we know little to nothing about. The seasoned parents give us hope and the new parents give us a chance to give back. The PEP support line allows us to reach out in times of need without retelling our story to yet another stranger.

We have learned that we did not cause it; we cannot control it; we cannot cure it. Because of PEP, our focus has changed from obsessing over our son to setting boundaries and looking after ourselves. We do not offer advice or try to solve his problems, but we continue to love him.

Currently, he is in supportive housing (after a brief time in rehab, a program he did not complete) and we hope he is taking the necessary steps to become a fully functioning member of society. We have done our best raising him, we do not blame ourselves. He reaches out and we see him on a regular basis. This is not the vision we had for our son, but we have hope. If not for PEP, we do not know where we would be today. We remind ourselves often that he is an adult now and responsible for himself.

PEP taught us to look after ourselves more and obsess far less about our addict child. They have provided us a community for that to take place. We are profoundly grateful for the services they provide to families in and around Edmonton. We are on a journey none of us chose to be on, a journey, not a sprint.

Watch our web-site for
New educational webinars
Free registration
Family Recovery stories

All to be uploaded on
our web-site
www.pepsociety.ca

If you want to be added
to our email list contact
info@pepsociety.ca

MEDD-X Alumni – Strength to Reach out

I started attending Parents Empowering Parents through MEDD-X as well as through being a participant through the Edmonton Drug Treatment Court Program.

When I attended my first PEP meeting and sat at the table with parents with children in addiction, I saw the fear and love in each parent's eyes.

It gave me a realization of how my addiction and actions impacted others. Before PEP I thought I was only hurting myself, but that is so untrue; it affected so many more – my own family, the community, other addicts and their own families.

Listening to how the PEP team provided positive feedback to the parents it really became clear to me that my experiences before and after my recovery can help others.

I once was ashamed and full of guilt for what I had done, but now I can use my experiences to help others. I believe in my heart that this program has really impacted me, and given me strength to reach out.

I will “reach out” to volunteer my time to PEP and other organizations, so I may continually help others. Thank you to the PEP team for their dedication and time, you really make a difference.

Sponsorship Spotlight



Financial support from Financial Experts...

On behalf of our PEP families and their loved ones.. thank you!
Your support moves individuals and families towards recovery.

UPCOMING EVENT

Virtual Annual General Meeting

Tuesday, September 22, 6pm

ZOOM LINK <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7804108516?pwd=cVBGZE1qQ29FUS9VVFmZC8yb290dz09>

Membership/ Board Elections

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

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

For more information, contact Lerena Greig Executive Director 780.410.8516 or info@pepsociety.ca

You are NOT ALONE!

by Lerena Greig

Since Mid- March 2020, we have been staying connected – not physically but virtually.

This has been challenging to adapt to. We recognize that is not the best way to meet but we are created to be in relation with one another and it is unhealthy to stay isolated, to not connect with one another.

At our Family Recovery Group, we discuss isolation and the negative impact of that with the person in addiction and the family who needs support and knowledge to take steps to recover.

Now, we are being asked to “mask up” in public to help curtail the COVID-19 spread. This is based on some knowledge but it is a new virus that we don’t yet understand completely.

Masks can protect but they can also hinder another aspect of relationship. Have you tried talking with your mask on, it muffles and makes communication more difficult.

These are added stressors to the struggle with our loved one’s addiction and can take you back to an unhealthy place in your healing. You need to be intentional with your health and stay connected. Remember change is challenging and remember your past successes. You needed to learn to move into change and you can learn to adapt to this one also. There is strength in numbers and power in knowledge.

Please remember YOU ARE NOT ALONE!

Join us virtually and be supported, educated and empowered.

Visit www.pepsociety.ca for special announcements, updates and upcoming events.

Lerena Greig
Executive Director



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



Recently PEP and our stakeholders (parents and medd-X alumni) were invited to meet with Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, Jason Luan



Our Executive Director, Lerena Greig was asked to participate in a press conference in regards to the new City of Red Deer Drug Court joined by Minister of Justice and Solicitor General Doug Schweitzer, Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, Jason Luan, Mayor of Red Deer Tara Veer and Provincial Liaison for Drug Court Development Grace Froese and persons with lived experience

Thank You To Our Supporters

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



Felix and Pat Kuefler Fund
Roger & Reit Bland Family 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: \$ _____

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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

Family Recovery Group 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 'virtual' meetings.

WEEKLY Tuesdays 7pm to 9pm
BI-WEEKLY Thursdays 7pm to 9pm

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September 1, 3, 8, 15, 17, 22 (AGM 6 pm), 29

October 1, 6, 13, 15, 20, 27, 29

November 3, 10, 12, 17, 24, 26

Stay Connected –You are not alone!

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/ Young Adults (15-24)

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 pepmeddx@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 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 for upcoming events and collaborations with community partners



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info@pepsociety.ca

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