



PEPtalks

Winter 2018

Parents Empowering Parents

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

And I'm still ok...

— a parent's story

I was a stay at home, homeschooling mother, with a two parent household so, this wasn't supposed to happen. I read all of the parenting books, worked on myself, and did everything I believed would make me a good mother so that this wouldn't happen. And while I wasn't perfect, I worked hard to cultivate a close relationship with my daughter and ultimately parent better than I was parented so that this definitely wouldn't happen. To us.

How could I have been so wrong?

I really thought that good parenting, whatever that is, guaranteed a certain outcome—or at least prevented certain outcomes. I've come to see how skewed that thinking is in reality. And arrogant.

It turns out that no matter how great a parent you think you are your child could still turn to drugs and other nefarious activities. Good or bad parenting play almost no role in the cause of substance abuse. Correlation is not causation.

That's just one of the many things I've learned this year. Another is the commonness and prevalence of our story!

Our daughter, 17 at the time, made a radical shift in behaviour, seemingly overnight. My experience was that one day she had aspirations for the future, friends, interests, and was close to her family. Then overnight, literally, she left home without warning; she dropped out of school, moved in with a guy she'd known a week, stopped communicating with us unless she wanted money, and started doing and selling cocaine.

That experience was devastating to me. And since being dragged into this new world kicking and screaming, I've heard this same story over and over and over.

Not vaguely similar. I mean almost exactly the same.

And, sadly, I found comfort in that because the first thing we do as parents, or characters in this repetitive tragic play, is blame ourselves. I made myself almost crazy with "what if" scenarios. What if I had been more strict? What if I had listened more? What if she hadn't been given a smart phone? What if she'd had more opportunities to travel or try exciting things? What if I had never yelled at her? What if, what if, what if? And when I was exhausted from what ifs I switched to, where did we go wrong? How did this happen? And how can I fix this? BUT in hearing my story over and over from other people, it solidified for me that we didn't cause this. No, we weren't perfect but we didn't make our daughter turn to drugs. She did that on her own.

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This year has been the hardest of my life. I experience grief for a daughter who is still alive but is gone. Not gone because she's traveling the world or going to school in another province. She's gone. And she's been replaced with some other person that I have no idea how to communicate with or be in relationship. It seems like every natural thing I did for almost 18 yrs is the opposite of what I should now do.

I'm relearning how to parent. Thank God for organizations like PEP because otherwise I'd be stuck in a tailspin.

When we heard reports of our daughter's increasing drug use, my husband and I were at a complete loss. This was a whole new world for which we had no preparation. When she first left I talked to the police but, of course, since she was over 16 there was nothing they could do for us. Then I heard about PCHAD, The Protection of Children Abusing Drugs Act. The PChAD program allowed us to ask the Court for a protection order. The order, if granted by the judge, meant that she would be taken against her will to a safe house for up to ten days for the purposes of detox and treatment assessment. Because it could only be enacted up to her eighteenth birthday, we had just a month to take action.

We weighed the decision carefully. In fact, I agonized over it. It became clear to me, however, that although it could mean irreversible damage to our relationship, I had to take this step. For my sake. So that I could sleep at night knowing that I'd done everything I could to help her.

There are no sufficient words to describe that moment on the witness stand as I made testimony about my child to a judge. My little girl, whom I could still see so clearly in my mind with her pig tails, bright smiles, squishy kisses, and long

Continued on next page



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

soft hugs, was haunting my mind. This same girl, who just two months before, lay snuggled next to me saying how much she loved me, seemed to be a figment of my imagination. It was near impossible to reconcile these two daughters: the one who was the loving, thoughtful girl and this other one, who did and sold drugs and lived a life of unpredictable hazards. All of my hopes and dreams for her future laid at my feet as I told the judge about her cocaine use; my ideals about being a good mom shattered as the judge suggested we go into counselling since there's got to be a cause for her choices.

After the protection order was approved, I handed it over to the police who went and apprehended her by force. And that solidified our new reality. It was done. She was locked up in a drug detox safe house.

Ironically, the ten days she spent in there was a lovely reprieve from the chaos. Since she was sober and couldn't speak to anyone but us, she seemed to return to her old self. Unfortunately, that was short lived. After the ten days was complete, without mandatory treatment available, she went right back to the boyfriend. And the situation worsened.

Listening to his biased perspective, she became very angry with us and turned aggressive in her communication. She began demanding money and was telling everyone how abusive we'd been to her. Another common thread in many stories.

PEP has been the lighthouse in a terrifying storm. They educate me and show me over and over that I did I not cause my daughter to use drugs and I can't fix her either. They've shown me that I can separate my daughter from her drug using behavior. They deliver hard truths such as my love is not going to be her catalyst for change. She HAS to find her own path through. All of this allows me to quit shouldering the burden of her choices and, instead, focus on me being healthy. That is the best way to help her.

I haven't seen my daughter in six months nor have I heard her voice. I love her, grieve for her, worry for her, and miss her terribly. And I'm still okay. With the help of PEP and other tools in my life, I've come to realize that her life is not my business to control or fix. With that I was able to finally let myself off of the good mothering/bad mothering hook. I did the best I knew how to do. The rest is truly up to her.

UPCOMING EVENTS

PEP's Christmas POTLUCK

**Tuesday
December 4th**
6:00 pm,
PEP Meeting to follow
Lower Level County Hall
Sherwood Park



Community Drug Strategy Committee of Strathcona County (including Lerena Greig, PEP Executive Director) with Minister Sarah Hoffman and MLA Annie McKittrick.

Tale of Two Stories!

by MEDD-X Alumni

My experience with PEP was one that had two stories. When I first came to PEP in the summer of 2017 I was mandated to go by my probation officer. I had not done anything my probation officer had asked and knowing there was no way to manipulate my way out of going, I decided to go. I had just been released from Remand and was still using drugs at the time. Right away when I came to PEP, my heart broke for the families that were attending the meetings. I realized the extent my parents suffered in the years my addiction took the son they had raised. I didn't realize or chose not to see, what my choices were doing to my loved ones. But my priorities were elsewhere and I continued on the path that I knew, and that path was destructive. Unbeknownst to me, inviting my dad to come to the meetings would eventually bring a change in me that I never knew was possible. Shortly after my dad started coming, I

was asked to leave the PEP meetings due to my actions and my ongoing drug use. (This was because other MEDD-X were attending whose recovery I may negatively impact because of my drug use) My dad learned about boundaries and learned ways in which to better help me and to not enable me. Unfortunately dad was the "Three Legged Zebra" (a lesson taught by PEP Facilitator) and I knew that I could have him rescue me whenever I spun a tale of despair. It was what I needed to get to a point where I realized my life was completely unmanageable. It wasn't until I got to the point of feeling so alone and defeated that I decided to make changes in my life. Then the second story... almost a year later when I got accepted into Drug Court, I was asked to go to PEP again in the summer of 2018. I came to that first meeting (for the second time) in a completely different mindset and my life was starting to turn around for the best. I

was saddened and yet also reassured as I got reacquainted with the PEP family; the journeys of some families had struck tragedy and yet others had success stories. I love to see how the cohesiveness of the group is its strength and the bond that they share is one of one family helping many other families. I truly enjoyed getting reacquainted with PEP and grew to love the countless families there. I can honestly say PEP has been a vital program in my recovery and I wish to keep connected with my family at PEP. The work that is done on a weekly basis is of great importance to many and my belief is that there are many more families that would benefit. My words cannot describe how grateful I am for the tools taught in PEP that were introduced to me and my family and the impact that it has had on me. From the bottom of my heart thank you. love my PEP family. Thank you for your support. From a grateful heart.. tale of two stories!

The Gift of Giving

by Lerena Greig

As Christmas approaches, many of us consider the gifts we will give to family, friends and those in need.

Those gifts may be purchased, created, or may be the gift of time and support.

This season can be very difficult for families in crisis, the crisis of addiction. The desire is to have loved ones included in the celebration of the Christmas season; a time of love, peace, hope and joy. This is not always possible when a child is lost in addiction. Addiction creates chaos, hopelessness and a broken spirit. As we reflect on the spirit of Christmas and of giving, please consider how you can help those in need.

At PEP our donors enable us to give all year around with free innovative programs and a support line to families who are in need of strength, knowledge and resources. Our parents struggle to keep their children safe from the chaos and sometimes life-threatening decisions they are making in

response to their substance use and/or addiction. We know that today's drugs are poisoning their minds and can even cause instant death. Our group, professionally facilitated, empowers parents and extended family members to discover the value of staying healthy and recovering in the midst of their loved ones substance use.. We exist for the family and many of our PEP parents have said that PEP gave them hope... powerful statement in a time of hopelessness.



Is that something you would support?

Parents Empowering Parents (PEP) Society is a registered charity and we ask you to consider "the gift of giving" this season with a one-time donation or becoming a monthly giver. Will you give hope?

Together we are stronger.

Lerena Greig
Executive Director

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?

$\$5 \times 4 \text{ weeks} = \$20 \text{ a month} \times 12 \text{ months} = \$240.00 = \text{No Small Feat}$

What about a regular coffee a week?

$\$2.50 \times 4 \text{ weeks} = \$10 \text{ a month} \times 12 \text{ months} = \$120.00 = \text{No Small Feat}$

Thank you for your consideration in regular monthly support.

Go to www.pepsociety.ca donations tab and click on Donate Now button...



Together we are stronger and there is No Small Feat.

Year End – Give & Save....



Taxman giveth and taketh.. but YOU can take back!

Support Hope this year with a taxable donation.

Go to www.pepsociety.ca, click on the **donation tab-DONATE Now button**

Secure web-site

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
Roger and Riet 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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Postal Code _____ Phone _____

Email _____

Gifts by: Cheque VISA Mastercard

Card Number _____

Expiry Date _____ Amount _____

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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:

Sherwood Park

Strathcona County Community Centre
2001 Sherwood Drive, Sherwood Park

December 4

Christmas Potluck, 6 pm, PEP meeting to follow (Lower level, County Hall)

December 18

January 1
NO MEETING

January 15

January 29

February 12

February 26

For more information visit our website at www.pepsociety.ca

Millwoods

Sunrise Community Church,
3303-37 Street NW (upstairs), Edmonton

December 11

December 25
NO MEETING

January 8

January 22

February 5

February 19

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

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



www.pepsociety.ca
pep@strathcona.ca
info@pepsociety.ca

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

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