



16 YEARS

PEPtalks

Winter 2020

Parents Empowering Parents

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

Regaining Joy

— a parent's message

It was March 2018 and we thought we would never be able to feel joy again. How could we? Both of our children were suffering from addictions. Our 27 year old daughter had become addicted to Fentanyl, homeless and living on the streets of Calgary and our 25 year old son was spiralling out of control with his addictions to alcohol and cocaine.

Like most parents, this was not the life we had envisioned for our children. They both did well in school, had lots of friends, participated in extra-curricular activities and had all the love and support we could give them. Then the teenage years were upon us. They both started smoking, drinking at parties and experimenting with marijuana. We did everything we could think of to try to curtail this behaviour including grounding, taking privileges away, and tough love. We even cancelled our daughter's sweet 16 birthday party at the very last minute because we caught her getting high in the bathroom. Nothing seemed to get through to them. We hoped it was just teenagers pushing the boundaries, but the drugs got worse - cocaine, magic mushrooms, and who knows what else. As the drug use escalated, my husband and I found ourselves living from crisis to crisis.

Over the years, the drama would ebb and flow between the kids. Our daughter seemed to be doing better when she got a job as a flight attendant and got married. However, at this time, our son was drinking heavily and using Cocaine. He crashed his car while driving under the influence, lost many jobs as well as his relationship with his girlfriend.

In drunken rages, he tore doors off and punched holes in many walls in our home. Around this time, our daughter's drinking got the best of her and she lost her job and split from her husband. We let her move back home with us. Her drinking continued and she ended up moving in with a boyfriend who introduced her to his drug of choice - Fentanyl. When that relationship ended, she moved to Ontario where she found herself with another Fentanyl-addicted boyfriend. During this time, our son had joined the army, which gave us renewed hope for his future. An incident he was involved in during this time resulted in him attending a treatment centre in B.C. We were grateful for this because he would finally get the professional help he really needed. When his time in the army was up, he came back home to live with us which was a big mistake. His old habits of binge drinking and doing cocaine returned and our lives became filled with chaos again. Our daughter and her new boyfriend moved from Ontario to Calgary for a "fresh start" and soon after their arrival, they were evicted from where they were staying and ended up living on the streets. She had no phone - we had no way to get in touch with her! We were really at our wits end!

Not knowing where else to turn, my husband and I decided to try this support group called Parents Empowering Parents. It had been recommended by our family doctor. We didn't know what to expect. The go-around was done during the first hour so we sat and listened to other parents who told stories about their children who were suffering from

addiction. Many of the stories sounded similar to ours and we were heartened to learn that we were not alone. We shared our story and immediately felt support from the facilitators and other parents in the room. No one was judgemental. The lesson was the last hour in which we learned more about different drugs and how they affect the body. After our first PEP meeting, we felt a little better and not so alone anymore. We decided we would attend PEP as often as we could.

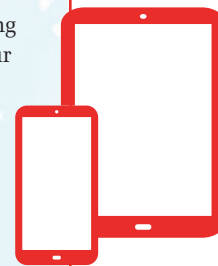
Since that March in 2018, we have learned many things. One of the first things that we learned was that PEP was to help us, the parents, lead healthier lives, not to "fix" our children. We learned that we did not cause the addiction, cannot control it, and cannot cure it. We learned that we had to set boundaries and that maintaining those boundaries was crucial

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See you "Zoom"

Due to ongoing challenges with physically connecting, PEP is joining the "Zoomers" and having 'virtual' Family Recovery Group and U-turn (16-24) meetings. Visit <https://pepsociety.ca/calendar/pep-family-recovery-meeting/> Make sure you have the calendar set to 'month' view.

Here is the information for the zoom link for ALL Family Recovery Group meetings and the zoom link for U-turn. <https://pepsociety.ca/covid-19-notice/>



Regaining Joy

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to our safety and sanity. We learned that we had to manage our expectations. And we learned that we had to detach from our children's addictions while still loving our children. By keeping ourselves healthy, we could be there for our children when they were ready to get healthy.

On several occasions, our family and friends have commented that they don't know how we have been able to handle our situation so well. I'm sure it is in large part due to the lessons we have learned at PEP and the unconditional support we receive. The PEP facilitators are extremely knowledgeable and very helpful. We have used the support line many times and were so thankful they were there for us. Their guidance helped us to make some hard decisions when we were in the middle of a crisis and they reminded us of the importance of both parents being on the "same page" when it came to those decisions. We have also come to really appreciate the input from the MEDD-X participants. Their first hand point of view allows us a glimpse into our children's thought processes. I especially connected with some of the women because, to me, they were a symbol of hope that my daughter could recover and come back into my life. We have also made friends with our fellow PEPers. My husband and I are lucky that we have friends and family who are very supportive, but no one can completely understand what you are going through unless you have gone through it yourself. In that way, the support and understanding of the PEP parents is immeasurable!

MEDD-X Alumni – PEP gives parents hope and tools

Parents Empowering Parents has, with 100 percent certainty been the most powerful, impactful life changing experience that I have been blessed to be a part of since being in the Edmonton Drug Treatment Court Program.

I had no idea the massive damage and pain I caused my friends, family, my children, and the community while being in the self-centeredness of my addiction. Sitting as a MEDD-X in PEP gave me a full understanding of what parents everyday are dealing with as their loved ones fight the disease of addiction. How my actions and behaviours brought tears to the eyes of the people I loved most every single day and I did not care about anything but feeding my disease.

PEP gives parents hope and tools that help them acknowledge their fears and pain, while giving support to work through the devastating disease of addiction in a healthy, safe manner. The PEP program changed my entire outlook on addiction, creating an inner self awareness of my actions and behaviours at the same time significantly impacting my own healing process.

Listening and being able to share my experiences helped me to understand the support I could provide by sharing my experiences and give some insight to the disease that had my life for 19 years. I cannot thank the PEP family enough for the endless support, knowledge, wisdom, and love they shared with me. PEP is a life changer for so many people! Never give up!

Corey

We've still had our ups and downs since we started coming to PEP, but we have weathered them better because we are stronger now. After attending three different treatment centres over the past three years, our son is currently 5 months sober. He lives in a sober living house, has a great sponsor, and is actively working on his recovery. We see him regularly now and we continue to love and support him (emotionally) during his recovery. Our daughter called us this

past August after almost two years of not hearing from her. We were elated! She now has a phone so we can keep in contact with her. She is off the street, living in a boarding house in Calgary and has a social worker. We don't know if she is still using, but we know these are all positive steps. We have no "expectations" for her because it is her journey to take. My husband and I will just take it a day at a time. And on some of those days, we are able to feel joy.

Sponsorship Spotlight



Local support for local charity

A Sherwood Park firm, SITE (A Centurion Company), raised funds through their company golf tournament of \$5,000.00. The cheque was presented from Ron Yoneda, Vice President of Safety & Human Resources to Larena Greig, Executive Director of PEP.

Helping families in their community step into recovery and wellness...giving back and changing lives.



UPCOMING EVENTS

PEP's Virtual Christmas Dessert Potluck and Goodbye

Tuesday, December 15 6:30 pm

Join us for our "Virtual Potluck" and Goodbye. Bring your own dessert, share a sweet virtually and say goodbye to our long-time team member Jolene as she steps into a new journey. **Family Recovery Group meeting to follow 7 pm.**

visit www.pepsociety.ca for ongoing updates and special announcements



On behalf of
the Board of Directors,
our team and families.
Merry Christmas and
Happy New Year!

Removing Barriers

by Lerena Greig

It is so great when we can share good news with our families. Recently, Alberta Government removed the financial barriers to addiction treatment by eliminating user fees for all Albertans accessing publicly funded beds. For more information about this release, please visit alberta.ca. Previously people struggling with addiction could only access residential treatment if they received Alberta Supports or paid privately. At PEP, we have heard numerous stories of substantial financial strain and the negative impact on family's health and wellness as they seek residential treatment for their loved ones struggling with addiction **when they are ready**.

When they are ready, this is the key for the person struggling with the addiction and also the dilemma. Financial burden, although a large aspect, is just one of the barriers that we need to recognize when we have a person in our family, our circle of friends, colleagues etc. that we love or care about who is in the throes of the illness of addiction.

You may have heard the words "hit bottom" before but as individual is recovery, so is addiction. Addiction as stated from the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) Addiction is a **treatable, chronic** medical disease involving complex interactions among brain circuits, genetics, the environment, and an individual's life experiences. People with addiction use **substances or engage in behaviors** that become compulsive and **often continue despite harmful consequences**.

Addiction comes to steal, kill and destroy. The good news is that it is treatable **when the individual is ready**. And when they are ready, there needs to be that open

door for them to step into to start their journey into sobriety and recovery and making public residential treatment free, is a great way to keep that door open.

Addiction may affect one person and yet the whole family, caregivers and community suffers.

At PEP, we empower those impacted negatively to take steps for their own recovery by providing knowledge and support.

Today, because of a COVID-19 community grant received from Alberta Health, we are removing the location barrier for ALL municipalities across Alberta with a **NEWLY ADDED** permanent professionally facilitated Family Recovery virtual group bi-weekly Wednesday 7 pm. On the education front, we will also be providing webinars on a regular basis. Barriers are coming down!! Take your step into recovery and you can remove more barriers such as lack of understanding, fear, and hopelessness and be built up with knowledge, a sense of peace that surpasses understanding and **hope**.

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

WEDNESDAY MEETINGS

A permanent virtual group started Wednesday November 18, 2020, running bi-weekly.

COMING SOON

Toll free Family Support Line added to our local Family Support Line.

EDUCATIONAL WEBINARS

Go to pepsociety.ca to watch NEW educational webinars (free registration) and Family Recovery stories.

To be added to our email list, please contact info@pepsociety.ca

ALBERTA-WIDE

PEP is now a provincial organization reaching Alberta-Wide, removing barriers of location to support all municipalities across Alberta and their families. Supported by Alberta Government, Alberta Health COVID-19 Community Grant

Thank you to our supporters

THANK YOU

- Abrasive Blast & Paint Inc.
 - Apex Contracting inc.
 - BMO Wealth Management, BMO Nesbitt Burns
 - Butler Family Foundation
 - CALLS Community Adult Learning & Literacy Society, Fort Saskatchewan & Strathcona County
 - Canadian Progress Club, Silks
 - Canadian Progress Club, St. Albert
 - Claysmore Pure Ltd.
 - County Clothes-Line Foundation
 - Dacro Industries inc.
 - Edmonton Community Foundation (Roger & Reit Bland Family Fund, Felix & Pat Kuefler Fund)
 - Greig Printing & Stationary Ltd.
 - Halkier + Dutton Design
 - McCraryRourke Advisory
 - The Medicine Shoppe Pharmacy, Sherwood Park
 - Realtors Community Foundation, Edmonton & Area
 - St. Albert Alliance Church
 - SITE a Centurion Company
 - The Strathcona Bugle
 - Strathcona County
 - Sturgeon Valley Baptist Church
 - Style Lounge Apparel Etc.
 - Sunrise Community Church
 - TELUS Edmonton Community Board
 - Volunteer Strathcona
 - Womanition
- Also, thank you to our regular monthly donors.

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

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 Wednesdays 7pm to 9pm

Bi-Weekly Thursdays 7pm to 9pm

SEE you "Zoom" Due to 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.

December 1, 2, 8, 10, 15 (6:30 pm Christmas Dessert), 16, 22 (no meeting Dec 24), 29, 30

January 5, 7, 12, 13, 19, 21, 26, 27

February 2, 4, 9, 10, 16, 18, 23, 24

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.

December 1, 15, 29

January 12, 26

February 9, 23

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.ca

Stay Connected – You are not alone!

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



**PARENTS
EMPOWERING
PARENTS**

www.pepsociety.ca
info@pepsociety.ca

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

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