

pep talks

Winter 2023

Desperately Seeking Sanity

— a parent's message

"Addiction doesn't just affect individuals. It ripples through families causing emotional turmoil, financial strain, relationship struggles, mental health issues and perpetuating cycles. Reach out for help and break the cycle."

Have you ever played that game "never did I ever"? It's a fun little game as a kid or a teenager, but not a very fun game to play when you are someone with an addicted loved one. There's an annoying little saying that goes "it's all fun and games until someone gets hurt" - addiction doesn't care WHO it hurts.

Like my husband and I, have you ever found yourself saying: Never did I ever feel so alone? Never did I ever think things would get to this point? Never did I ever think we or our loved one (our son in our case) would be in this position - whatever that position looks like for you? ie. Living on the streets, running from authorities, dealers or themselves? Sending the authorities to your loved one's home to see if they are still alive? Your loved one blaming their circumstances on you? And then, just when you thought your loved one had finally "hit rock bottom", and you had the tiny glimmer of HOPE that things were about to change for the better, you discovered there was a "rock bottom-er"?

Once we found ourselves here, never did we ever feel like we would find any kind of light inside or a way to navigate through our dark, lonely, frightening tunnel ...

Until we found the PEP Society!
Once upon a time ... there was a

happy, united, connected family - OUR family. There is no guarantee of a happy ending like our fairytale dream, but we are beginning to reprogram our CPU (central processing unit - aka brain/heart) with happier "in-the-meantime" moments and thoughts. The big bad wolf of drug addiction is still lurking out there seeking to steal, kill and destroy our son, my husband and I and our family, but, together with the team at PEP, we are learning the weapons of warfare in this battle for our SANITY, for our son, his addiction and for our family.

If you or someone you know has ever been like us and have felt "never did I ever" dream our family would be going through this with our loved one, and utterly left with more confusing questions than answers, and more negative feelings than positive ones, and you just don't know what to do next; then we HIGHLY recommend taking that first step to get connected to the wonderful, supportive, highly experienced and highly trained community at PEP Society.

We are newbies to the PEP community. In August of 2023 we discovered PEP after months and months of searching for help in this incredibly unfamiliar territory. I found myself on a stress work leave of absence and my husband found himself more and more engaged with the authorities. This past summer my mental health counsellor and our local Victim Services Unit found and recommended PEP Society as a starting point for help. We live in an extremely remote and rural area where AA, NA, CA

and NAR-ANON meetings or any other resources for parents and family members of addicted loved ones are non-existent. My husband and I went to our very first PEP meeting on Tuesday, August 22, 2023. That night we learned about 'Addictive Thinking' and WOWZA that was just what we needed for our first night. The educational part of the evening was so full of incredibly helpful information that I could hardly write it all down fast enough. Then came the sharing our stories time ... (insert buckets of tears here) ... FINALLY!!! ... We were hearing other parents say exactly what we were feeling and experiencing too! Sharing the much too familiar stories and lived experiences of their struggles, challenges and pain. My

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**TOLL
FREE
FAMILY
SUPPORT
LINE**

Days/evening/weekends.
Professionally managed
Added to our local Family
Support Line

Toll Free 1.877.991.2737
Local 780.293.0737

husband and I FINALLY found a place where we could start to heal, learn and grow.

As we left Sherwood Park and began our very long drive home, I could not contain all the positive thoughts I had about our experience. With slight fear and trepidation, I asked my husband what he thought of it. He's not a fan of counselling and group chat sessions so I figured he was going to say that he put up with the meeting for my benefit, to make me happy, and to get me off his back etc., but not to expect him to go to another one. To my astonishment and delight he said, "I have never in my life been so glad to go to a meeting as that one". Like me, he felt the freedom to share his pain, hear stories of HOPE from the MEDD-X guys who have come out on the other side with changed



lives, support from other family members in attendance and deep support and care from the facilitating team.

It has literally been a game changer in our lives and in our marriage. Aside from a couple of times where we attended via zoom when we were unable to attend on a Tuesday night in person, we have not missed a meeting and plan to keep going for a very long time (for the next five years I think I heard my husband say). We have also used the 1-800 Family Support Line and had extremely valuable conversations and help there too. Thank you for this amazing resource. Webinars have also been very useful tools in our hands too. We cannot recommend highly enough the immense amount of gentleness, support, understanding and equipping we have found with this wonderful team of people to help us navigate through the pain, depression, destruction, devastation and

Watch for New Educational Webinars

Webinar are free, but pre-registration is required. pepsociety.ca/free-webinars/ or email at info@pepsociety.ca

Previous Webinars are posted and available for viewing.

darkness. Thank you to everyone at PEP Society from the Executive Team, to the facilitators, to the MEDD-X participants, to the people and organizations who give their support – you are all so dedicated, wise and caring. To the other parents – thank you for coming, sharing your stories and being such an encouragement to us. Our personal sanity is beginning to return.

Once upon a time ... there was a happy, united, connected family. Will they live happily ever after? ...NOT "The End".

We are holding onto faith and hope for a change in our son's circumstances. Until then, "change begins with me/us".

Faith and Hope are our anchors. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen".

MEDD-X Alumni Responses

Please share your thoughts on how to improve MEDD-X involvement at PEP meetings, as well as any additional comments about the program.

"I think it was an amazing group and I definitely got a lot out of it. I wish everyone with a loved one in addiction knew about it."

"I loved PEP! I don't know how it could improve"

"I think you did a good job at involving us at the PEP meetings."

Local Gives Back to Local



County Clothesline Foundation has supported local charities and individuals in need through grants and scholarships in Strathcona County, a true "giving back" story for 40 years. PEP Society has been a recipient of numerous grants over the years. Help them "Raise Our Roof" so they can continue to be a "giving light" in their community.

Team Professional Development 4 days of team training



Services to our PEP families and community continue to grow and improve through ongoing training and development of our PEP team.

Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but desire fulfilled is a tree of life.

Proverbs 13:12

by Lerena Greig

No one likes waiting. It feels good to get what we want. But when our expectations are delayed for a time, sometimes for a long time, we can experience disappointment, disillusionment and loss of hope. In some cases, prolonged waiting for what we eagerly desire can become such an affliction to us that it can look like a lingering illness. As we eagerly hope for something important to us and it keeps getting postponed, the longing can make our heart sick.

When you have a loved one struggling with substance use or addiction, hope can be a lifeline to keep going. How do we keep our hope alive when it's been delayed, when our expectations aren't met over and over again?

Hope is something we all have. Research is revealing that it can be a powerful tool for better

mental health as well as a robust predictor of well-being. Hope is good for our health...

How can we help people access hope? We believe that our Family Recovery Group helps to bring measures of hope into our personal story; to be supported in a peer environment and to find hope through learning and stories and wellness. When loving someone in addiction, the addiction may take a long time to be treated so we need to be intentional with our personal recovery journey and hold on to hope.

"We must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope" – Martin Luther King, Jr

You are not alone. Join the Family Recovery Group and together, we will hope.

Lerena Greig
Executive Director

When you have a loved one struggling with substance use or addiction, hope can be a lifeline to keep going.

Thank you to our supporters

Abrasive Blast & Paint Inc.
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Roger and Reit Bland Family Fund
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Brisbin Family Chiropractic
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Strathcona County
Sturgeon Valley Baptist Church
Sunrise Community Church
TELUS Edmonton Community Board
United Way
Volunteer Strathcona
Womanition
Also, thank you to our regular monthly donors.

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

PEP is Alberta-wide

PEP is a provincial organization, removing barriers of location to support all municipalities across Alberta and their families.

Virtual Wednesdays Group

See back page of this newsletter or visit pepsociety.ca for details

Gift of Giving

Please consider supporting a PEP family in your community.

Donate today at canadahelps.org. PEP Society is a registered charity.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Not in My Family: PEP Talks Recovery - a drug educational forum with panel

April 23rd, 2024. 7pm - 9pm, doors open 6:30pm
Southside Location - Sunrise Community Church
3303-37 Street Edmonton

YES

I Want to Help Rebuild Hope for Families

With a one-time gift

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With a monthly gift

- \$25 \$50 \$100 \$250
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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 (in person and virtual capability no limits at this time)

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 (in-person)

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

Dec 5, Dec 19, Jan 2, Jan 16, Jan 30, Feb 13, Feb 27

SHERWOOD PARK (in-person)

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

Dec 12, Dec 26 CANCELLED, Jan 9, Jan 23, Feb 6, Feb 20

ST. ALBERT (in-person)

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

Dec 7, Dec 21, Jan 4, Jan 18, Feb 1, Feb 15, Feb 29

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

VIRTUAL Family Recovery Group Meeting

PERMANENT VIRTUAL WEDNESDAYS (via Zoom) continue bi-weekly

Via Zoom, 7 pm - 9 pm

Dec 13, Dec 27, Jan 4, Jan 18, Feb 7, Feb 21

As of May 15th, 2023 U-Turn is no longer available.

We are currently revisiting our youth program based on the needs of our families and the communities we serve. Watch for opportunities to serve our youth in the future with U-Rise. Youth family Recovery Group for 12-18 yr olds.

QUARTERLY WEBINARS Watch our website for the next webinar

<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.

Employee Giving Through payroll deductions. 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 to <https://pepsociety.ca/family-recovery-group-meetings/#>

For dates confirmed, you can also visit

<https://pepsociety.ca/calendar/pep-family-recovery-meeting/> Make sure you have calendar set to "month" view.



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

www.pepsociety.ca
info@pepsociety.ca

Family Support Line: 1.877.991.2737
 tel: 780-410-8516

2001 Sherwood Drive
 Sherwood Park, AB T8A 3W7