

Submission No: 164

Supp to Sub:

AUTHORISED:

30/5/2007



Up until the 1998 I truly believed we were a normal, happy, healthy and well adjusted family with two sons 23 and 27, they had good jobs, worked hard and both living in their own homes paying off mortgages, we could not have been happier it was what every parent dreams of for their children. The youngest had been in a long term relationship with his girlfriend since high school which had broken down with which he had started to drink quite heavily, but his friends would always reassure me that there was no need to worry as they were looking after him. The eldest took pride in his home loved fishing had a great bunch of mates but did admit to smoking marijuana occasionally. We started to notice a difference in behavior regular visits seemed to get less, broken invitations to dinner or they just did not turn up the excuses being working too hard or met a new girlfriend, happy to believe any excuse and brush it aside rather than admit there was something wrong, but you knew deep down inside the pit of your stomach things were not as they should be.

The day all the truth was revealed will be a day that I will never forget, it was full of bewilderment and despair I can picture my husband still, sitting in the car unable to move or say a word. That day had started with a phone call from my eldest son's best mate he had great concerns for my son and his current girlfriend and thought we should pay them a visit I assumed it would be the marijuana use which had got out of hand. Being face to face with my son I could see the condition he was in and that it was not going to be just marijuana. I felt so many mixed emotions that day especially when I heard the word "heroin" the panic and fear was overwhelming all I could think about was overdose and that he was going to die. Fortunately for me a counsellor arrived at the house as the day before my son and his girlfriend had been in to the Naltrexone clinic to detox and the counsellor was checking up on them, he was able to calm me enough to listen to my son as he told me all about his battle with drugs over the past year and that his younger brother had also been using heroin. It was so difficult to absorb I was in total disbelief at what I was hearing this was never going to happen to our family asking the counsellor how did this happened and how did we miss the signs. I wanted reassurance from my husband that all would be ok but he was numb and just through himself into work so he did not have to deal with any of it. I felt so sad full of sorrow my whole world in pieces and no idea where to go from here. Over the uncertain weeks and months that followed the full impact of the chaos my sons were in had begun to surface the unpaid bills and fines, final demands, debt collectors, personal belongings in hock, loss of jobs even down to the dealers wanting to be paid, and so began to pick up the pieces and stick them back together determined to bring some normality back into my life, not knowing this was not the way to go about it, all I knew was that I loved my children and had to protect them at what ever cost! So paid off the dealers so they would not be harmed, reclaimed the tools so they could return to work, supported them in court when in front of the magistrate, allowed them back home when they had lost their own, shared their pain when they lost a friend to overdose and each time believed it would be the turning point and they would be well never wanting to ever admit they were addicted. The chaos returned time and time again with the never ending anxiety and worry constantly dreading the day with news of their death, disillusioned with the broken promises, frustration that the past attempts at treatments had failed, tired from lack of sleep, depressed and miserable but trying hard to smile and put on a brave face for family and friends even though you ache inside, the situation was destroying our lives.

I no longer wanted to be consumed with the turmoil or on edge waiting for the next crisis to arise, I had stopped enjoying my life I needed to face reality that my denial and enabling was putting off the inevitable and needed to be dealt with as I wanted my life back and knew I would need the assistance from a professional counsellor to help me deal with my sons addictions.

So the road to recovery began facing the destruction that had entered my world, coming to terms with how it had affected me, the realization that I was not too blame, learning that the way I had responded was out of fear of loosing the ones you love, gaining information, knowledge, support and guidance and finding comfort from other people traveling the same hard road, slowly acknowledging your fears, regaining strength and that there is a visible light at the end of the dark tunnel and hope and recovery are very real.

It has been a very hard road to travel and although both my sons have been through rehabilitation I can see that they have to work hard at their addictions each and every day so I never really believe it will be finally over. I am fortunate in some ways that my sons are still working and the youngest now has a daughter and seems focused on his responsibilities as a father and rebuilding his life. Unfortunately the older son battles with his demons often and lapses back in and out of the drug scene, but I truly know he does not want to be there, it still hurts badly to see him go 3 steps forward with great effort and then 8 back but over the past years have learnt that I have no control over anyone's life but my own, which at the moment is peaceful enjoying my grand-daughter, grateful to all the true valuable friends made on my journey, living one day at a time, but so very thankful that we have all survived intact.

I will be honest and say that whilst writing my story it takes you back to all the horrors you have endured and shed those tears once more but realize how you have grown and the strength you have gained to fight another day.