

# The *Loved Ones Group* Newsletter

vol. 2 no. 2, July 28, 2017

## Are you concerned about a loved one's alcohol or drug use?

We want you to know, you are not alone. The Loved Ones Group is free, education-based support and information about the brain disease of addiction, and how you can help loved ones who may face an addiction problem. Each edition of this newsletter will offer resources designed to help loved ones encourage the addicted person to seek treatment and embrace the goal of maintaining a long-term recovery lifestyle.

For more information about the Loved Ones Group or *10 Ways a Family Member Can Help* contact Robin Looney, the Counseling Center's Director of the Day One Admissions and Family Resource Center at 740-354-6685.

*Loved Ones Group*



## How to Recognize an Effective Drug Treatment Program, an interview with Ed Hughes



Ed Hughes is one of the originators of the Loved Ones Group. He is a licensed, Independent Chemical Dependency Counselor for the State of Ohio, and served as Executive Director of The Counseling Center, Inc., from 1989-2013. He also served as CEO of Compass Community Health from 2013-2016. Mr. Hughes earned a B.A. in Sociology from Ohio University and a Master's of Public Service Counseling from Western Kentucky University, and has co-authored a companion book titled *Baffled by Addiction*, with Dr. Ron Turner.

***Drug addiction has had a devastating effect on our community and families. What would you recommend to an addicted person or family member who is looking for a good and effective treatment program?***

I would begin by measuring any treatment program by the standards of the National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA). NIDA identifies several important characteristics of a good and effective program.

First, you want a program that views addiction as a treatable brain disease that left untreated eventually impacts every aspect of a person's life. Understanding addiction as a disease allows the addicted person, and their family, to embrace a solution that is based on proven medical science, as well as an understanding that treatment should address the individual's physical, emotional, social and spiritual challenges.

Secondly, there is not one single treatment solution that fits everyone. An effective treatment program will offer a variety of treatment options focusing on the complex needs of each addicted person. An addiction assessment should focus on determining the appropriate level of care for each person. Treatment options should include outpatient, intensive outpatient, residential, transitional and aftercare services, and on-going relapse prevention support.

These treatment options vary by level of frequency and intensity. Residential treatment is the highest level of care offering the person an opportunity to live in a closely monitored and structured environment outside of their own home. Aftercare services address the chronic nature of this disease by offering counseling and support for as long as needed to ensure a stable foundation and maintenance of sobriety and independence. Most all addicted persons initially underestimate the level and amount of treatment support they need. It is very important that any treatment center have the ability to increase the level of care as needed.

Next, you need a treatment program that addresses the multiple needs of each addicted person. The addiction to the drug is a primary concern, but ongoing recovery may well depend on the level of attention paid to other problems, including mental health issues, the need for continuing housing support, assistance with finding a job or engaging educational services. There must also be a comprehensive approach to addressing other health care needs. Most addicted people have not paid adequate attention to their primary care needs and many in addiction treatment are diagnosed with other serious health problems. Failure to address these co-occurring health issues can dramatically affect the potential for success.

## Recovery Story - Daughter

As a child, I grew up in the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous and thought the Serenity Prayer was one that everyone knew. My father is a recovering alcoholic, and my mother is the opposite, she would probably pass out after two beers, if she ever would drink them. My solemn vow growing up was to not end up like my father. I would never hurt my family by choosing alcohol over everything else in my life. My mother and father were both hard working people, and growing up I had all I needed and most of what I wanted.

I did not party in high school and did not take a drink of alcohol until the end of my senior year. I had a great job, to be only 19 years old, plus I had healthy relationships and was on a good path after graduation. In my early 20's, I began going out some on the weekends and soon realized that alcohol was taking a priority in my life. Not long after I began drinking on a regular basis, I added opiates and most other narcotics were soon to follow.

Over the course of the next few years, there were multiple jobs lost, multiple evictions and my young son was drug along the way. I was always able to pull myself back up, because my mother ensured that would happen. I could always count on her. My mother made sure that my water wasn't shut off, that my rent was paid and that I had food in my house. I stole from my mother. I lied to my mother. I pawned my mother's jewelry, and I knew she would forgive me. I was arrested in Florida in 2008, and once again my mother allowed me back in to her home, so I would have a safe place to live. I began using again in her home and for the first time in my life, she told me to leave and I could not come back. My mother joined forces with my father and my son's father as well. For the first time in my life, I was alone in my addiction.

Losing my family did not make me stop using, stealing or manipulating anyone in my path... initially. After about 2 months of actually feeling the effects of my addiction, I reached back out to my mother for help. I called my mother as I had done 100 times before, and she told me there was nothing more that she could do for me. I can't explain how hearing her say that made me feel, and I hope I never forget that pain.

With the help of my father, I was admitted into a 90 day treatment stay with The Counseling Center. I completed residential treatment and then moved into Transitional Living for a total of 15 months of treatment. I stayed in Transitional for a year because I had no place else to go, my parents were done enabling me. My entire family stood up and refused to allow me to be a tornado in their lives, which I had been in the past. I have been clean since November 2008, and I am forever grateful to my family for "turning their backs on me."

- M.B.

## Recovery Story - Mom

A few months into my daughter's sobriety we were sitting at my kitchen table talking like we used to in the years before her addiction. She talked about how, with a clear head, she could see her life again as she wanted it to be. She was aware of the challenges of sobriety, but this time she was focused and seemed determined to work toward her future. I was warily optimistic. I had heard the words before. I told her I hoped so, because I couldn't go through much more emotionally, mentally or financially. She looked at me dead on, with a clear head and the full realization of the life she had been living, and said, "I know Mom, but you were also loving me to death." She hugged me, and said, "I love you."

I felt as though she had slapped the life out of me. I searched my heart trying to understand how she could say that I had been part of the reason she had continued in her addiction. Hadn't I done everything to help her? I had helped keep a roof over her head, made sure she had food on her table, bought her new clothes every time she started a different job, gave her a car and helped her keep gas in it. I also made excuses to family and friends about her appearance and gave reasons why she never came to family functions. Telling myself each time I helped her, it would be the time it would make a difference, and she would be able to turn her life around. But days, and months moved into years, and I could no longer continue to make excuses. I finally had to admit that my beautiful, smart, once loving daughter, who had a smile that could light up a room, was an addict.

My faith, my prayers and the prayers of my friends and church family, I am convinced, was what kept her alive, because the stories she told of situations she found herself in should have killed her. I found strength in my church family, confided in my pastor and even talked her into going to church with me believing if I could get her to go with me



## Recovery Story - Mom *continued...*

that would do it. She even pacified me by talking with my pastor, but it was all part of the games played by addicts. She was very good at it. She knew what I needed to hear.

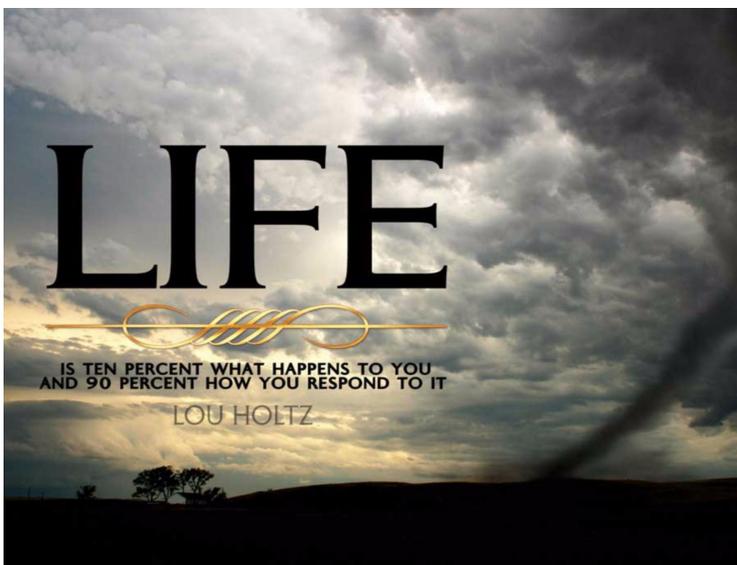
Not knowing anything about addiction, someone told me about The Loved Ones Group at The Counseling Center. Having nothing to lose and since I had resigned myself to the fact the rest of my daughter's life would be that of an addict, I went to the meetings hoping to salvage myself from the ravages that a child's addiction has on a parent. I admit I had a hard time with what they were telling me. The word "enabler" kept coming up. I kept telling myself that wasn't me. I was just helping my daughter to keep her from dying.

After talking with my pastor one day and letting him see the toll her addiction had taken on me, he said, "Sometimes Cindy, you just have to let go." Let go? How do you let go of a part of your heart and believe it will still keep beating?

It wasn't long after talking with my pastor a situation came up and it was the last situation I could deal with. I told my child to pack her trash bag and get out of my house. I had finally "let go". Now I had to "let God" take care of it. I had to leave it lay and get out of his way. Was it hard? Yes. Had I been an enabler in her addiction? Absolutely. That was 8 ½ years ago and I now have my beautiful, smart, loving, and faith filled daughter back.

As I think back on the statement she made to me about loving her to death, she was right. My unconditional love and need to make it better for her was just enabling her to continue her lifestyle. I'm thankful I was able to let go and get out of God's way so he could do for her what I couldn't.

- C.B.



## Visit a Loved Ones Group near you:

### South Webster, OH

**Pinkerman Community Church**

**37 Carmichael Street**

**June 15 – July 27, 2017**

**Contact: Sandy Smith, 740-357-5334**

**sandy.smith@bv.k12.oh.us**

### Huntington, WV

**Pretera Center-Pinecrest Location**

**5600 Rt. 60 East**

**Huntington, WV 25705**

**Tuesdays @ 6:00 PM**

**Contact: Cary Dixon, 304-633-9632**

### Hurricane, WV

**Hurricane Church of Christ**

**600 Midland Trail, past middle school**

**Tuesdays @ 7:00 PM**

**Contact: Ed Covert, 304-206-1285**

**ecovert45@suddenlink.net**

### Ashland, KY

**Grace Culture Church**

**2020 Carter Avenue**

**starting Monday, September 11, 2017**

**for more information call**

**(606) 547-7997**

## Find more Loved Ones Group resources online:

The Loved Ones video series, including episodes 1 - 6 on The Counseling Center's YouTube Channel

<http://bit.ly/2vi3iCG>

The Loved Ones group website for teens and youth resources

[www.L1GTeen.com](http://www.L1GTeen.com)

## How to Recognize an Effective Drug Treatment Program, an Interview with Ed Hughes *continued from page 1...*

***Drug addiction has had a devastating effect on our community and families. What would you recommend to an addicted person or family member who is looking for a good and effective treatment program? continued...***

There are medications that can assist in the treatment of addiction. These medications are intended to “assist” in the treatment of addiction by reducing the intensity of withdrawal symptoms, or helping to reduce drug cravings. These medications can be effective when provided within a comprehensive counseling and health care program. However, I would recommend avoiding programs that rely primarily on medication, such as Suboxone, offering limited counseling, health care, or other support. These programs are often attractive to the addicted person who is seeking a simple, or quick and easy solution. Recovery from addiction is not simple, nor quick and easy. I am also not supportive of programs that think medication is part of a program for all addicted people. Medication is not an effective tool for many addicted people. I also favor a short-term use of Suboxone as it is itself an addictive drug. Since Suboxone is an addictive drug, long-term use presents the dilemma as how to withdraw the person from the medication. I believe this can be best accomplished earlier in the treatment process whereby the person is engaged in intensive services and surrounded by greater support to avoid relapse.

I strongly believe that an effective treatment program makes every effort to include families in the treatment of their addicted loved one. Too often families are left out of the treatment process, which not only misses a tremendous opportunity to educate and develop the family as a helping resource, but it also leaves the family vulnerable to continued manipulation by the addicted person.

Lastly, but just as important as anything I have previously mentioned, you want a treatment program that takes a very active approach to linking clients to community 12 Step recovery programs, Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous. These programs are vital to the long term maintenance of sobriety, and provide explicit directions regarding the development of good character and the healing of damaged relationships. Addiction is a chronic disease with no cure. Lifelong abstinence is possible when the addicted person is equipped with the tools and support for daily maintenance of sobriety.

### ***What happens if someone relapses after a period of sobriety?***

Relapse is an issue with any chronic disease, similar to a reoccurrence of cancer, or when a diabetic deviates from their diet and exercise plan. Relapse is a common reality for those making their initial efforts to get clean and sober. The potential for relapse and the steps to take to get back on the right track must be a big part of the counseling process. An effective treatment program will work hard toward relapse prevention, but will also help prepare the addicted person, and their family for the potential of relapse. Most people in long-term recovery have benefited from multiple episodes of treatment.

### ***Are treatment agencies licensed by the state or other governing organizations?***

Yes, and I would highly recommend asking any program you might use whether they are licensed by the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, or have a national certification such as CARF (Commission on the Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities). This can assure that the program is following certain best practices and standards, and is subject to regular reviews and audits.

### ***If a person is addicted to one drug can they safely use other drugs as long as they avoid the drug that has gotten them in the most trouble?***

No. Addiction is a brain disease. Continued use of other mood-altering drugs will lead to an addiction to those drugs or will lead the person back to their original drug of choice. The ability to control ones drug use is the obsession of every addicted person. Switching drugs is a common attempt in continuing the pursuit of the “high” while avoiding the consequences created by addiction. A primary goal of recovery is to embrace the need and desire to attain, and maintain, abstinence from all mood-altering drugs. To this end, frequent drug testing is another characteristic of an effective recovery program.

For more information visit [www.TheCounselingCenter.org](http://www.TheCounselingCenter.org)