

Rx Awareness Real Stories

Sophie's Story



If someone had told me 5 years ago that I would be as close to my father as I am today, I wouldn't have believed it

I am so proud of his recovery and the relationship we built over the years. There was a time when I didn't believe that would ever be possible.

My parents divorced when I was younger, and my mom had custody of my sister and me, so I didn't see my dad every day. He owned his own business and even though he never said it, I knew he felt tremendous pressure to be successful and provide for us.

Growing up, my parents always spoke honestly and openly about addiction with my sister and me. My dad attended Alcoholics Anonymous before I was born, and we talked about our family history of substance use disorder and how it put us at risk for the same health issues.

Growing up with a father who suffered from opioid use disorder

I was a sophomore in high school when my mom first told me about my father's addiction to prescription opioids. After a knee injury that needed surgery, he was prescribed opioids, not knowing that they were addictive. When his knee got better, he continued to use prescription opioids and eventually turned to heroin.

My dad wasn't present during that time. He was unreliable and chaotic, and he didn't ever seem to have much energy, like he was always on the verge of falling asleep. He started gambling, lost his business, and went to prison. When he was at his worst, the whole family felt it. We lost everything, and we almost lost him.

It was a fragile time for our family. I was devastated to see my parents struggle and be in so much pain. Even though I was young, I knew my father's opioid use wasn't by choice. I knew how much shame he must have felt to watch everything he had given to us get taken away in the blink of an eye.

Our family journey towards hope and recovery

When my father went to treatment, it was a relief. He knew he needed to get better, and while treatment was difficult, the hardest part was facing the consequences of his actions and coping with the reality of what he lost. Through hard work, he overcame his suffering and turned it into something empowering for himself and for others around him.

I'm so grateful for my mother's strength during that time, too. Even though my parents were divorced, her support for my father never wavered. She set an important tone for our family, that we needed to be there for my father—to love him through it.

There is nothing shameful about needing help

There is harmful stigma around addiction, and it can feel isolating and lonely, not only for people who are suffering from substance use disorder but for their loved ones, too. Our family felt that. Some people may think, “What went wrong in their family?” or “Why did no one stop it before it got so bad?” That perception is wrong. People struggling with addiction deserve compassion, and so do their families. This can happen to any family—no one is immune to it.

While it was never easy, I’m grateful for the perspective our family’s experience gave me. I’m grateful to have my father back and to look up to him again. We are best friends, closer now than we ever were before.

If there’s anything I wish I knew sooner, it’s this—there is nothing shameful about needing treatment or knowing someone who is in recovery. My father’s strength and resilience are amazing. Now, he helps others understand that it is okay to struggle, and that recovery is possible. I’m so proud of him.



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