

2022

**POARCH
BAND OF
CREEK
INDIANS**
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Poarch Band of Creek Indians—
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POARCH BAND OF CREEK INDIANS - OUR STORY



The Poarch Creek Indians have a rich heritage as descendants of a segment of the original Creek Nation which once covered almost all of Alabama and Georgia, tracing its roots to the Paleo period. The ancestors of the Poarch Creek Indians lived along the Alabama River including areas from Wetumpka south to the Tensaw settlement.

Unlike many eastern Indian Tribes, the Poarch Creeks were not removed from their Tribal lands and have lived together for almost 200 years in and around the reservation in Poarch, AL.

The Treaty of Fort Jackson in 1814 forever changed the face of the great Creek Nation as more than 21 million acres of Creek Indian land was ceded to the United States, and the Creeks were forcibly removed from their land in Alabama. In 1830, the historic Trail of Tears forced the resettlement of the Creek Nation from the remaining lands to present-day Oklahoma. However, there were several Creek families who received land grants in 1814 and 1836 and were allowed to remain in Alabama.

This remaining group moved inland away from the river and into what is now the Poarch Creek Reservation. Through the turn of the century, this settlement remained largely ignored and increasingly impoverished. In the 1940s, community leaders took action to improve the community conditions and educational opportunities, and in 1950 more formal leadership was established with an elected leader and formal governing body.

In 1984, the Poarch Band of Creek Indians became the only federally recognized Tribe in the state of Alabama. Poarch is eight miles northwest of Atmore, AL, in rural Escambia County, and 57 miles east of Mobile, AL. The current Tribal Chair of the Poarch Band of Creek Indians is Mrs. Stephanie A. Bryan.

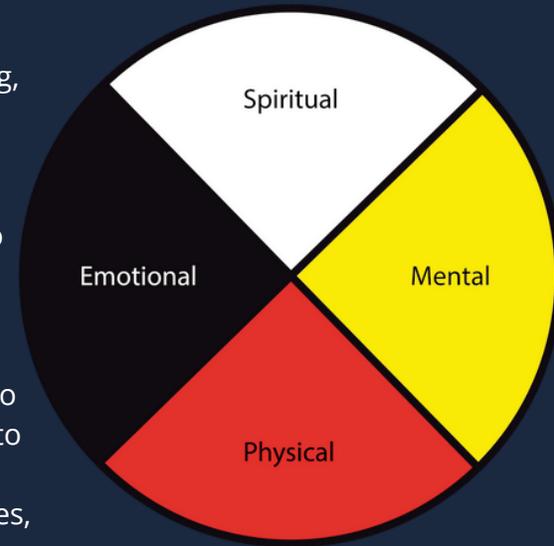
Poarch Creek Indians are proud, resilient people. Many powerful external forces pushed our ancestors to abandon their culture and give up who they are. Despite these immense challenges, we remain. We can draw strength from the knowledge that their wisdom and courage are within us too.

INTRODUCTION

Our teachings tell us that balance is needed in all that we do; our physical, spiritual, mental and emotional well-being must coexist in balance to maintain a healthy and harmonious life. We go to the doctor to ensure balance in our physical selves, religious groups for our spiritual well-being, but what do we do to balance our mental and emotional health?

When we are not balanced, problems may arise—we might lash out at a friend or family members, avoid doing things we once enjoyed, or turn to substances to escape our pain. Unfortunately, in ours and many other Native American communities, these problems are far too common.

To help break this cycle Poarch Band of Creek Indians has been blessed to partner with United South and Eastern Tribes (USET) on several projects to better understand these issues in our own community. This information has been helpful for the behavioral health department to improve services, help educate, train and to support Tribal Members in having their best life.



2016: Community Health Assessment completed by Tribal citizens Key Findings

- **90%** of Tribal citizens who responded to the survey indicated a source of stress
- Drug abuse was the top ranked health issue by youth and the second most important health issue for adults

2020: Behavioral Health Needs Assessment completed by nearly 200 Tribal citizens

- **55%** of those surveyed said that youth are the most underserved population in the community as it relates to behavioral health
- **49%** of those surveyed were not prepared to handle a behavioral health crisis

The Behavioral Health Department wants you to know that we hear these concerns and are working to address these needs identified by our community. We're hopeful that this booklet will provide you with valuable information. It is one of many culturally competent projects we have to address the issues we face in this community. In the future we hope to increase awareness of mental health and its connection to chronic disease, conduct events to reduce stigma, start conversations about mental health, and ultimately shift the focus of mental health from crisis oriented to prevention and early intervention.

In this book you will...

- Learn what to do in certain crisis situations
- Learn what resources are available at the behavioral health department and outside our community
- Learn information about some of the substances affecting our area.

HOW DO I...?

What to Do in a Crisis and Other Common Questions

We all have challenges in our lives. We may also experience a crisis at some point, or be with someone who does. In these situations, it can be hard to know what to do. Poarch Creek Behavioral Health department has many great resources available to you. It's also important to understand how to use these resources and to realize when additional care is needed.

Below are some examples of crises and how to handle:

I feel as though I want to hurt myself.

Suicide is a troubling topic that most of us would rather not deal with. By reaching out however, we will discover that there is help and that we are not alone.

- Call 9-1-1
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is available 24/7 at 800-273-8255
- Text HOME to 741741 to reach a Crisis Counselor

I'm worried my child might hurt themselves.

If someone talks about hurting themselves, take it seriously. Hearing this might make you feel overwhelmed or worried, especially if they are very upset or angry, but there are steps you can take to help.

- Call 9-1-1
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is available 24/7 at 800-273-8255
- Text HOME to 741741 to reach a Crisis Counselor

I'm with someone who just overdosed on opioids.

Naloxone is a medicine that rapidly reverses an opioid overdose. Naloxone is also sometimes called by its brand name, Narcan.

Patients can get a prescription from any provider for naloxone. The Poarch pharmacy can fill this prescription for free. Good Samaritan Laws in Florida and Alabama may provide legal protection to those acting in good faith to save someone's life from an opioid overdose death.

- Call 9-1-1
- Administer naloxone. The risk of death for someone overdosing on opioids is worse than the risk of having a bad reaction to naloxone.
- If needed, provide rescue breaths or CPR
- Lay the person on their side to prevent choking.
- Stay with the person until emergency workers arrive.

HOW DO I...?

What to Do in a Crisis and Other Common Questions

I think I may have a problem with drugs or alcohol.

Drug or alcohol problems impact many people. It is not a weakness or mark of bad character. It can happen to anyone.

- Call Behavioral Health to set up a confidential appointment: 251-368-9136
- Talk with your Primary Care physician
- Contact Mr. Daniels at Wellness Court at: 251-368-9136 Ext 2660

My friend passed away and I don't know what to do.

There have been a lot of losses in our community recently and grief is a normal process. However it can look different for different people. Talking about it may help.

- Reach out to a family member or close friend to talk about it.
- Reach out to a pastor or preacher to talk about your feelings.

I'm having problems with my family and I don't know what to do.

Family can absolutely come to therapy.

To make an appointment, call behavioral health at: 251-368-9136 Ext 2384

I'm worried about my child.

We all want our children to be happy and healthy, but we may not know what to do to help them.

- Reach out to their pediatrician to discuss your worries.
- Call behavioral health to set up an appointment for you, them or both of you together. 251-368-9136

WHAT SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE TO ME AT THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT?

Our Behavioral Health Professionals are here to serve you. The services listed are just a brief overview of what we offer, if you have questions regarding specific services please give us a call at **(251) 368-9136 Ext. 2384 or 2309.**

What healthcare professionals work at behavioral health?

Psychiatrist	Psychiatrists are medical doctors who can help treat mental health issues with medication and medication management.
Psychologist	Psychologists help people learn to understand and handle different life problems and mental health issues. They do this through behavioral interventions. They can also provide testing for learning disorders, ADHD, personality disorders, memory and substance abuse assessments among other. People may seek counseling or treatments from psychologists for things such as traumatic experiences, a death in the family, or long-term anxiety.
Therapist	Therapists also work with clients to help them handle stressful events, beat addictions or manage illness. Mr. George Hamilton and Mrs. Taylor Smith provide therapy at the clinic. Mrs. Smith primarily works with children and adolescents

WHAT SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE TO ME AT THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT?

What services might be provided to me at behavioral health?

The Behavioral Health Department offers the following services:

FAMILY/COUPLES THERAPY

Family/couples therapy can help family members improve troubled relationships, address specific issues such as marital or financial problems, conflict between parents and children, or the impact of substance abuse or a mental illness on the entire family.

COUNSELING

- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)
- Solution-Focused Therapy (SFT)
- Person-Centered Psychotherapy
- Psychodynamic Therapy

TESTING/ASSESSMENTS

- Psychological Evaluations and/or Clinical Interviewing
- IQ Testing/Memory Testing
- Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) Testing

CONTINUITY OF CARE

- Medication Management

WHAT OTHER SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE TO ME?

If you're having a medical emergency, call 911

NATIONAL HELPLINES

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

1-800-273-8255

Crisis Text Line

Text-based mental health support and crisis intervention

Text HOME to 741741

StrongHearts Native Helpline

Confidential and anonymous domestic, dating and sexual violence helpline

1-844-7NATIVE (762-8483)

WHAT OTHER SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE TO ME?

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Florida has the Baker Act. This allows doctors, mental health professionals, judges, and law enforcement to commit a person to a mental health treatment center for up to 72 hours if they display violent or suicidal signs of mental illness. If you have immediate concerns call 9-1-1 or go to the emergency room (Baptist or Sacred Heart).

Beacon Behavioral Hospital <i>Luverne, AL</i>	334-335-5040	Children 6-18 yrs
Bullock County Geriatric Psych Unit <i>Union Springs, AL</i>	334-738-1453	Elders
Crenshaw Community Hospital-- Mental Health <i>Montgomery, AL</i>	334-335-1175	Adults
Southern Oaks at Grove Hill- Elder Psych. <i>Grove Hill, AL</i>	251-564-7119	Elders
North Baldwin Senior Behavioral Health Bay <i>Minette, AL</i>	251-580-1770	Elders
Learning Disorder: Read Write Daphne Hunter Oswald	251-625-4020	Children
Therapy: Healthy Minds Leilani Mason <i>Atmore, AL</i>	251-333-2777	Anyone
Laurel Oaks <i>Dothan, AL</i>	334-794-7373	Children and Adolescents

WHAT OTHER SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE TO ME?

SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT FACILITIES

Please call behavioral health for a more comprehensive list of treatment facilities. We can help you find the program that best fits your needs and can discuss financial help.

Bradford Inc. Mobile Detox, inpatient and outpatient	1-800-762-3740 251-295-9717
CED Fellowship <i>Gadsden, AL</i>	256-413-3470
Native American Addiction Recovery <i>St Augustine, FL</i>	904-547-0411
Oxford House <i>Mississippi</i>	228-222-7861
Home of Grace for Men and Women <i>Mississippi</i>	228-826-5283
Mission of Hope <i>Mobile, AL</i>	251-649-0830
The Shoulder Spanish Fort	251-626-2199

*Not every facility will be the right fit for every patient.

WHAT OTHER SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE TO ME?

WELLNESS APPS

Look for these apps in the Apple App Store or Google Play store. Most can be downloaded for free. Some require a paid subscription for additional content.

<i>Calm</i>	Sleep Meditation Relaxation	Anyone
<i>Harmless</i>	Tracking self-harm	Anyone
<i>Reflectly</i>	Journaling to help you reflect upon your daily thoughts and Problems	Anyone
<i>Mindfulness Coach</i>	How to adopt mindfulness practice	Anyone
<i>CBT-i-sleep</i>	Developing positive sleep routines	People working with a health provider with CBT for insomnia
<i>CPT Coach</i>	Posttraumatic stress disorder	People who are participating in Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT) with a professional mental healthcare provider.
<i>PE Coach 2</i>	Posttraumatic stress disorder	for patients to use with their therapists during prolonged exposure (PE) therapy for PTSD.
<i>Stay Quit Coach</i>	Smoking Cessation	Anyone
Caring Messages: Text Caring to 65664	Self-esteem Improve your mood	Native youth

SUBSTANCES 101

People who misuse substances are often surprised by the ways drugs or alcohol crept into their lives and became an issue. The reason for this is simple- addictive substances (like drugs and alcohol) actually change the way our brain works. In fact, one of the first brain changes that occurs is that substances hijack the part of our brain that controls our cravings, tricking us into wanting drugs or alcohol more frequently and in larger amounts.

ALCOHOL



Alcohol is the mind-altering ingredient found in beer, wine, and liquor. Alcohol affects every organ of the body with many short- and long-term health consequences.

Drinking is a problem if it causes trouble in your relationships, in school, in social activities, or in how you think and feel. Some of the signs and symptoms of a severe alcohol use disorder could include:

- **INABILITY TO LIMIT DRINKING.**
- **CONTINUING TO DRINK DESPITE PERSONAL OR PROFESSIONAL PROBLEMS.**
- **NEEDING TO DRINK MORE TO GET THE SAME EFFECT.**
- **WANTING A DRINK SO BADLY YOU CAN'T THINK OF ANYTHING ELSE.**

E-CIGS/ VAPES



E-cigarettes are sometimes called "e-cigs," "vapes," "e-hookahs," "vape pens," and "electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS). They are the most commonly used tobacco product among youth. Some e-cigarettes look like regular cigarettes, cigars, or pipes. Some look like USB flash drives, pens, and other everyday items. E-cigarettes are most often used to deliver nicotine, but can be used to deliver marijuana and other drugs. Nicotine is highly addictive and can harm youth and young adult brain development. It is also dangerous for pregnant women and developing babies.

MARIJUANA

Marijuana—which can also be called cannabis, weed, pot, or dope—is the dried flowers, leaves, stems, and seeds of the cannabis plant. It is the most commonly used federally illegal drug in the U.S. Marijuana use directly affects our brains—specifically the parts responsible for memory, learning, attention, decision making, coordination, emotions, and reaction time. Developing brains, like those in babies, children, and teens, are especially susceptible to the negative effects of marijuana. Research shows that about 1 in 10 marijuana users become addicted. For people who begin using before the age of 18, that number rises to 1 in 6.



OPIOIDS



Opioids block pain signals from reaching our brain. They can also change our mental state, making us feel happy, relaxed, sleepy, or confused. When taken as prescribed, opioids are relatively safe and can reduce pain in the short term. However, some opioids like heroin, are illegal and are not used to treat medical conditions.

PRESCRIPTION OPIOIDS



Health care providers commonly prescribe opioid medications to help people manage pain from things like major surgeries, dental work, serious sports injuries or cancer. The most commonly used prescription opioids are oxycodone (OxyContin®), hydrocodone (Vicodin®), codeine, and morphine.

If a person doesn't take opioid medications as prescribed, they can have dangerous consequences.

Below is a list of common signs you (or someone you know) may be misusing opioid prescriptions

- Taking your prescription in ways other than instructed, like taking more than your prescribed dose or taking it more often
- Getting and using prescription pills from a friend or family member, even if it's for a medical condition
- Taking prescription medications to get high
- Mixing prescription opioids with alcohol or other drugs
- Experiencing withdrawal symptoms, including diarrhea, sweating, shaking or moodiness when the opioid wears off

HEROIN



People who use heroin report feeling a "rush" (or euphoria). Other common effects include dry mouth, heavy feelings in the arms and legs, and clouded mental functioning. Heroin is an addictive substance. Withdrawal symptoms include severe muscle and bone pain, sleep problems, diarrhea and vomiting, and severe heroin cravings.

Heroin is an illegal opioid drug made from morphine, a natural substance taken from the seed of opium poppy plants. Heroin can be a white or brown powder, or a black sticky substance known as black tar heroin. People inject, sniff, snort, or smoke heroin.

FENTANYL



Fentanyl is an opioid similar to morphine, but 50-100 times more powerful. It can be prescribed for pain but is also made illegally. Illegal fentanyl can be sold as a powder, dropped on paper like small candies, in eye droppers or nasal sprays, or made into pills that look like real prescription opioids. Illegal fentanyl is being mixed with other drugs, such as cocaine, heroin, or methamphetamine. This is especially dangerous because people often don't know that fentanyl has been added and can easily take too much. Since it is so powerful, it greatly increases risk of overdose and death.

WHAT IS AN OPIOID OVERDOSE?

A person can overdose on legally prescribed opioid medications or illegal opioids such as heroin. An opioid overdose occurs when the amount of opioids taken slows or stops our breathing. If an overdose is not treated, it may result in death.

Signs of an overdose include:



Pale skin



Bluish
fingernails
or lips



Slow or no
breathing



Inability to
speak



Small Pupils

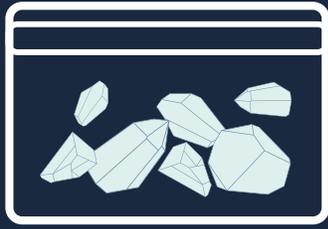


Unresponsiveness



Vomiting or
gurgling noises

METHAMPHETAMINES



Methamphetamine is a powerful, highly addictive stimulant. It is usually a white, bitter-tasting powder or pill. Crystal methamphetamine is a form of the drug that looks like glass fragments or shiny, bluish-white rocks. People can take methamphetamine by smoking, swallowing, snorting, or injecting the drug.

Methamphetamine alters the chemicals in the brain, making it highly addictive. When people stop taking it, withdrawal symptoms can include anxiety, fatigue, severe depression, psychosis, and intense drug cravings.

A person can overdose on methamphetamine. Because methamphetamine overdose often leads to a stroke, heart attack, or organ problems, first responders and emergency room doctors try to treat the overdose by treating these conditions.

COCAINE



Cocaine is a powerfully addictive stimulant drug made from the leaves of the coca plant. People snort cocaine powder through the nose or rub it into their gums. Others dissolve the powder and inject it into their bloodstream, or inject a combination of cocaine and heroin, called a Speedball. Another method of use is to smoke Crack cocaine.

Cocaine alters the chemicals in the brain, making it highly addictive. With continued use, people become less sensitive to the drug. They have to take stronger and more frequent doses in an attempt to feel the same high, and to obtain relief from withdrawal. A person can overdose on cocaine, which can lead to death.

MENTAL HEALTH 101

Mental health issues can cause people to think, act and feel differently than they usually do. For a person going through these difficulties, the different feelings are very real and often scary. Mental health problems are more common than we think, affecting at least one out of every five people.

DEPRESSION

Depression is more than just feeling down or having a bad day. When a sad mood lasts for a long time and interferes with normal, everyday functioning, you may be depressed. Anyone can get depressed, and depression can happen at any age and in any type of person. It's estimated that 1 out of every 6 adults will have depression at some time in their life.

Symptoms of depression include:

- Feeling sad or anxious often or all the time
- Not wanting to do activities that used to be fun
- Feeling irritable, easily frustrated, or tired, or restless
- Having trouble falling asleep, staying asleep or sleeping too much



ANXIETY

Occasional anxiety is an expected part of life. You might feel anxious when faced with a problem at work, before taking a test, or before making an important decision. But anxiety disorders involve more than temporary worry or fear. For a person with an anxiety disorder, the anxiety does not go away and can get worse over time. The symptoms can interfere with daily activities such as job performance, schoolwork, and relationships.



ATTENTION DEFICIT AND HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER (ADHD)

ADHD is a behavioral problem of not being able to focus, being overactive, not being able control behavior, or a combination of these. To be diagnosed as ADHD, these behaviors must be out of the normal range for a person's age and development. Symptoms may include:

- Fails to give close attention to details or makes careless mistakes in schoolwork
- Has difficulty keeping attention during tasks or play
- Is often forgetful in daily activities
- Fidgets with hands or feet or squirms in seat
- Has problems playing or working quietly



BIPOLAR DISORDER

People who have bipolar disorder go through unusual and extreme mood changes. They go from very happy, "up," and active to very sad and hopeless, "down," and inactive, and then back again. They often have normal moods in between. The causes of bipolar disorder aren't always clear. Signs and symptoms of bipolar disorder can vary.

DEALING WITH GRIEF

The grieving process is like a journey; it takes you from the starting point of your loss to a new life. Each feeling you experience is another step in your grieving process. Some common steps in this journey include: denial of the loss, anger, bargaining to get your loved one or piece of mind back, depression, and finally—acceptance. However, everyone moves through the grieving process at their own pace, in their own way. Some people become very quiet and thoughtful, while others cry a lot. Neither is better than other because both will help you heal in your own way. There are ways to help you get through it:



Accept your feelings

Allow yourself to cry, smile, say goodbye in a letter or ceremony, or however feel appropriate to you.

Take time out

It's important for you to manage how you're feeling. It might be helpful to set aside some time in the day to deal with your thoughts. During this time, you might want to write in a journal, draw, punch a pillow, or exercise to let off some steam.

Value your memories

Memories help you to remember the person you've lost, and over time the pain will fade into happy memories. Remember that it's O.K. to cry and be saddened by the memories at first.

Talk to someone

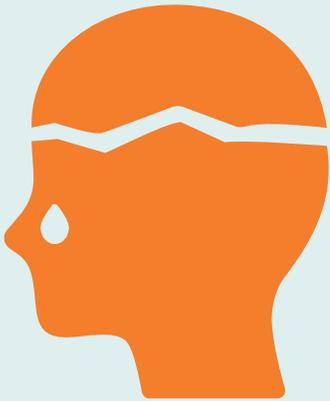
Sometimes talking to someone about how you're feeling helps you manage your emotions and make sense of them.

TRAUMA

Trauma can happen when a person is involved in a situation where they believe that they (or someone else) might get seriously hurt or die. Trauma can also happen when a person hears about traumatic events from others. It is a distressing experience that can impact us emotionally, mentally, physically, and spiritually. For example, someone who sees violence between their parents, is the victim of physical or emotional abuse, or who experiences a natural disaster, may feel out of control, frightened, and worry about being seriously hurt or dying. These experiences can all result in trauma.

Because everyone is different, potentially traumatic situations affect us all differently. It may be difficult to understand how these situations are affecting our lives. A trauma reaction is our body's way of helping us survive. When our brain perceives a situation as threatening, it will trigger our body to respond and try to save us. Some reactions might be going into a fight or flight mode, freezing, feeling numb or paralyzed, feeling separated from our body, or people-pleasing to calm conflict and feel safe. Another common reaction is using substances as an escape. Substances allow us to forget and pretend the trauma never happened.

There are ways in therapy to effectively address trauma.



CULTURAL TRAUMA (SOUL WOUNDING)

Trauma can also be passed down from one generation to the next. We know that our ancestors experienced extensive trauma. Our genes carry the memories of our relatives, and these intergenerational and historical traumas may impact us in physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual ways. Fortunately, resilience is also passed down from one generation to the next, and there are many ways we can call upon our strengths as Poarch Creek people to heal.

TALKING WITH A LOVED ONE ABOUT SUBSTANCE ABUSE



Recovering from a substance use disorder can be a lifelong journey. Rather than blaming our loved ones with this health condition, we must support them in getting the help they need. Walking the road to recovery can be a bumpy path with many ups and downs but having a strong support system can help. The following are ideas for how you can support someone on their journey.

REMEMBER ADDICTION IS NOT A CHOICE OR A MORAL FAILING.

It is a disease of the brain. Understanding that it is not a choice might help you let go of anger and resentment you may be feeling about your loved one's addiction. Recognize that relapse is not a sign of failure. It is often part of the overall recovery process

USE KIND AND RESPECTFUL LANGUAGE

Not everyone is able to recognize how much their substance use is impacting their life. Make sure you find a convenient time and a private place to have a conversation with them about it.

"I love and support you. What I don't support is what happens when you... [drink/use]"

"My experience of your [drinking/drug use] brings up feelings of fear and dread. I worry that..."

"Are you willing to talk with someone about how this problem is affecting our family?"

TALKING WITH A LOVED ONE ABOUT SUBSTANCE ABUSE



LEARN ABOUT THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE.

Reading this booklet is a good start! The more you know, the easier it will be to recognize warning signs and reduce misunderstandings.

TALK TO A COUNSELOR OR ANOTHER MEDICAL PROFESSIONAL.

Talking about substance abuse is hard! They can help you stay positive and identify effective strategies for talking to your loved one. They can provide a space for you to share your worries, fears or frustrations with your family member.

HELP YOUR LOVED ONE IDENTIFY STRATEGIES TO PROTECT THEIR SAFETY, IF THEY CONTINUE TO USE.

Some people are not ready to stop using substances completely. This may be where they are at now. By showing your support now, they may be more likely to turn to you for support when they are ready to stop using.

CARE FOR YOURSELF.

It's not always easy to live with or support someone who has an addiction. If you're not caring for yourself, you are less likely to have the energy or patience to help them. Engage in activities you enjoy, make time for people that support you, take time for yourself. Modeling this positive behavior may also be beneficial for the family member you're trying to support.

TALKING WITH A LOVED ONE ABOUT SUBSTANCE ABUSE



SETTING BOUNDARIES TO SUPPORT A LOVED ONE

It can be painful watching those we love struggle. We may feel out of control, helpless, scared, and not sure what to do. Loving someone does not mean fixing their problems. It means listening and allowing them to be where they are at and who they are in that moment. Offer your love and support not because you expect a particular outcome, but because it feels right. However, creating healthy boundaries are essential for unconditional love. If you find that your love, kindness, and safety are not being respected, it may be best to step away for a period of time.

BE SUPPORTIVE, BUT HAVE REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS.

It's important to know that it's not your job to fix anyone. Our loved ones may need to work through the struggle to help them get where they need to be. This does not mean that you cannot talk to them and offer them support. However, the future doesn't always lie in our hands. It is often up to the person themselves to take steps and make important life changes.

VISUALIZE POSITIVE OUTCOMES.

Your thoughts and imagination are powerful tools. Just as you feel horrible when imagining a negative outcome, you can feel positive and peaceful when imagining a positive outcome. Things can look bad and out of control, but your hope and positivity can deeply help your loved one. Continue thinking of what could change for the better and imagine the person living to their fullest potential.

IDENTIFY LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

While it may be difficult and uncomfortable, tension is often where the real seeds of growth begin. Some of our most painful challenges (and lessons) come to us indirectly through someone we deeply care about.

STORIES AND TESTIMONIALS FROM THE TRIBE

**Just because someone stumbles and loses their way,
doesn't mean they are lost forever**

**"Sometimes the smallest step in the right direction ends up being
the biggest step of your life. Tip toe if you must, but take the step." -
Naeem Callaway**

As a family member of a close relative with addictions to alcohol, meth, and spice, I can tell you the toll it takes on the addict as well as the family is horrendous. Donald Lyn Frost once said "Drugs will take you to hell disguised as heaven" and that is the epitome of addiction. The 'heaven' lasts for a moment then they wake up in 'hell' and don't know the way back out. Even the most loving and well-intentioned families must come to realize there is no help that can be given to the addict until they are ready to receive it. I praise God daily that my family member is FINALLY ready for that help!!! After 15+ years of addiction, he is finally ready to receive what has been waiting to be freely given, forgiveness and help. I will not lie (he wouldn't either) and say it has been easy; there have been relapses, jail, and many tears shed along the way. (Aside from death itself, I do not believe there is anything more heart wrenching than watching a mother grieve for her lost son.) But by the grace of God, a determined addict, and a loving family he is finally finding his way HOME again! Much love and prayers to all who battle this disease...it is not an easy road and the ending is not always pleasant.

STORIES AND TESTIMONIALS FROM THE TRIBE

Never Say Never

Never Say Never and never think that one drug is different from the next at least for an old alcoholic like me. One would say that I am not an alcoholic because my drug of choice is Methamphetamines, but at the bottom of every drink will be my drug. I first got clean in 2007 from Methamphetamines. I was clean for 12 years during that time I retained a full time job and started college. I moved up the ladder of success and earned a Master's Degree in Business. I built this beautiful relationship with God and walked closely with my church family. My life had turned completely around. My kids were very active in sports especially my daughter who played softball. We traveled from state to state often and I was the mom that juggled all the responsibilities from this. This required a lot of lugging and toting ballfield items like team coolers, tents, chairs, portable heaters, shade umbrellas, generators you name and we had it in the truck or car. Years past, and I was toting a team cooler to the dugout and my shoulder popped. It was painful and I knew something was wrong. I end up having to have rotator cup surgery. I was given Hydrocodone for the pain and after surgery. I had complications and had to have another rotator cup surgery. These two surgeries happen back to back and I stayed on the opiates for 6 months. Never believing I would come addicted to these little white beast, because I never used a pill before and I was a Meth addict. I realized they had taken control of my life. I was buying off the street every day. I had to have them to even get up in the morning. I was sick without them and I was even sick with them, because I would take so much I would be nauseated. The pill addiction took away the connection I once had with God, because my temple became so dirty and blocked the sunlight of the spirit. I no longer was able to think rational thoughts, and I defiantly did not think clearly. The pills had drawn me to isolation. I no longer socialized with hardly no one except for the people I was getting my opiates from. I turned to the only thing that I thought would make me feel whole again, Methamphetamines. The joke was on me that's for sure, because for the next two years I burned my life to the ground. The struggle with my opioid addiction was the worst as far as my physical effects and they defiantly took all my money. Opioid abuse lead me back to something I had quite for 12 years. I would always say I would never do Meth again. That's why I say never say never and never think one drug is different than the other. Once you feed that monster and it wakes up, an alcoholic like me has no control. It is illustrated in the short story below from Alcoholic Anonymous:

Our behavior is as absurd and incomprehensible with respect to the first drink as that of an individual with a passion, say, for jay-walking. He gets a thrill out of skipping in front of fast-moving vehicles. He enjoys himself for a few years in spite of friendly warnings. Up to this point you would label him as a foolish chap having queer ideas of fun. Luck then deserts him and he is slightly injured several times in succession. You would expect him, if he were normal, to cut it out. Presently he is hit again and this time has a fractured skull. Within a week after leaving the hospital a fast-moving trolley car breaks his arm. He tells you he has decided to stop jay-walking for good, but in a few weeks he breaks both legs. "On through the years this conduct continues, accompanied by his continual promises to be careful or to keep off the streets altogether. Finally, he can no longer work, his wife gets a divorce and he is held up to ridicule. He tries every known means to get the jaywalking idea out of his head. He shuts himself up in an asylum, hoping to mend his ways. But the day he comes out he races in front of a fire engine, which breaks his back. Such a man would be crazy, wouldn't he?"

"You may think our illustration is too ridiculous. But is it? We, who have been through the wringer, have to admit if we substituted alcoholism or any addiction for jay-walking, the illustration would fit exactly. However intelligent we may have been in other respects, where alcohol has been involved, we have been strangely insane. It's strong language but isn't it true?"

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My sister passed away in August 2004 from an opioid addiction that began after a car accident that crushed her ankles. She was a 20 year old college student with a very bright future. At that time, the world was just becoming aware of the effects of prescription opioids. So many questions haunted me daily...could we have helped her if we would have known what to do? Would she have survived if there were more stringent laws for involuntary/court ordered rehab? Why were there so few resources for addicts and their families to get help when they need it the most? I truly believe having more resources available will save lives. These days, I mostly ask questions like the words in a Kenny Chesney song and I pray that no one ever has to go through this pain that changed my family's lives forever.

"Who You'd Be Today"

Sunny days seem to hurt the most
I wear the pain like a heavy coat
I feel you everywhere I go
I see your smile, I see your face
I hear you laughing in the rain
I still can't believe you're gone

It ain't fair you died too young
Like a story that had just begun
But death tore the pages all away
God knows how I miss you
All the hell that I've been through
Just knowing no one could ever take your place
Sometimes I wonder who you'd be today

Would you see the world, would you chase your dreams?

Settle down with a family?
I wonder what would you name your babies.
Some days the sky's so blue
I feel like I can talk to you
I know it might sound a little crazy

Sunny days seem to hurt the most
I wear the pain like a heavy coat
The only thing that gives me hope
Is I know I'll see you again someday
Someday

"Substance abuse has caused my granddaughter to lose her children. My family has tied up a lot of money trying to get her help but it hasn't helped yet, she is not ready"

Don't be ashamed of what you have been through. Be proud of what you have and can overcome.

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At a young age, my dad became addicted to Opioids and Methamphetamine. I remember vividly seeing the dad I once knew change right before my eyes. It was always one thing after another: things going missing from the house, money being stolen, people I was unfamiliar with showing up at our house, countless times of him forgetting to pick me up from school, threats from strangers, and the list goes on and on. It affected my whole family and I ended up spending the rest of my childhood in a single parent home. My dad finally ended up going to rehab. It was a rough road for him with many highs and lows. Addiction robbed me of a childhood with my dad, a closer relationship with my dad, but really it robbed the most from him. It breaks my heart to see what addiction had taken from him.

I can thankfully say my dad is alive, healthy, and most of all happy, living a drug free life now. Personally, I believe the hardest part for some people going through addiction and beating it is the guilt and shame they carry.

So, for those that may be experiencing that, remember that you are worthy. If I could put into words how proud I am of my dad, I would. I will never understand what he went through. I forgave a long time ago, and I sure hope one day he can fully forgive himself too.

I lost a brother to alcoholism at the age of 40. He was a gentle sweet soul and he could not shake the addiction even with multiple rehab stays. He lost his career his family and ultimately his life alone in a shack in the middle of nowhere. My family has an addiction problem! My only sister died at age 50 from Mental illness after years of substance abuse and refusing treatment. What I learned is that no matter how much you talk and try to help they will reach their low point and they either want to live or want to die.

My mother enabled their behavior because she thought she was helping them but in reality she was being used by them to feed their addiction. When addiction takes over the old self is gone the new brain of an addict is all that drives the person. Mom still saw in them her sweet children and she desperately wanted to keep safe.

Praying for all who are going through addiction and families torn by addiction. The best way to beat addiction is to never start using a substance! Support your children and keep them busy in positive activities. Make sure they are with a good group of kids that share your moral beliefs. Addiction is only a drink away or a toke away or a pill away!

STORIES AND TESTIMONIALS FROM THE TRIBE

WELLNESS COURT GRADUATES

First and foremost, Drug Court and this entire program has taught me how to take responsibility for my actions. I used to blame everyone else for the things I've done in my past. Drug Court has also brought my family back together. My family is so strong now because they see that my recovery comes first and if I don't put my recovery first then I lose them

I used to think that I had power over addiction until I realized it had control over me. Since being in Drug Court I see things completely different.

When I came back home and officially started in the Drug Court Program, I knew there was a difference because I made the decision to want better for myself. Over the past year I have been able to accomplish many goals that seemed impossible to me before. In the beginning of the program one of my top goals was to get my driver's license back and I accomplished that. A couple weeks ago I got my GED, and it has been a great feeling to be proud of myself, and I know that I would not have been able to accomplish this goal without the help and support from the program. The Drug Court Program has shown me how to set goals for myself and work towards them until I achieve them and that is a tool that I will be able to use for the rest of my life