

“I met
some
people
my age
and
connected
with
them”

- Juan, 17



FACTS:

- 2.4 million adolescents have an alcohol or drug problem
- 1.1 million are dependent on or abuse illicit drugs
- 1.3 million are dependent on or abuse alcohol

Source: National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH)

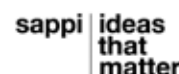


Founded in 1944, NCADD is the oldest advocacy organization addressing the disease of alcoholism and other drug addictions. Nationally, NCADD focuses on education, awareness, policy and advocacy. Locally, through our National Network of Affiliates, NCADD provides Hope, Help and Healing through direct assistance and support to individuals and families affected by alcoholism and drug addiction by offering information and referral, community-based prevention/education, training, intervention, treatment, recovery support and advocacy services.

Contact your local NCADD affiliate for more information:

Also visit www.ncadd.org or call the hope line: 800/NCA-CALL

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“I wasn’t
having
fun
anymore”

-Kat, 21



Hope, Help & Healing
Personal Stories of Young Recovery

“The moment I accepted help my world changed”



Out of Control

My binge drinking began in high school, and with it, blackouts and promiscuous sex. I brought hard liquor in Gatorade bottles to school dances and hooked up with boys in darkened hallways. I lost my virginity to a guy I barely knew at a house party. When I woke up the next morning, I hardly remembered it.

My friends and I had fake ID's and would go out to bars. I met lots of men and had lots of casual sex. One night as I drifted in and out of drunken consciousness, I was date raped by a man who I thought was a friend. A few months later, it happened again. At the time I didn't connect the drinking with the negative episodes in my life. I thought that everyone drank the way I did. I was angry that my life wasn't going as I wanted it to and that so many bad things were “happening to me.” I felt completely out of control and weak because I could not stop drinking, and my self-esteem began to plummet. I would seek to increase my self-esteem by getting attention from men, often with sex, but when they ultimately rejected me, I felt even worse.

When I graduated high school my drinking progressed, and my friends began to get real lives. I remained stuck in a pattern of drinking all day, every day. I needed help.

In recovery I have witnessed a miracle in myself. I have been given a new life. I am less jealous, angry, and lonely. I am present in my relationships with family and friends. I am attracting the kind of people that I want to attract and giving back to people more than I ever could when I was drinking.

Amy, 19



Full-Time Junkie

It started with drinks before a night out, and it ended in a very small bathroom with a needle in my arm. Along the way many good friends said goodbye because they offered help and I refused it. I fell out of the usual circle of family birthdays and holidays. I promised attendance and didn't show. I lost my job and became a full-time junkie. I traded sex for money in order to get a fix. My life became very small and very scary, and I just let it happen.

Homeless and out of money, one day I was offered help and I said yes. The moment I accepted help my world changed. There were challenges. I had to get honest. I had to be careful about falling into familiar patterns. But the truth is the challenges in recovery are easier than anything I had to do when I was out there.

I am the man I want to be today. I have real relationships with people. I have the respect of people whom I respect, something I had lost. I have joined my family again. This is how I stay sober: I don't use drugs or alcohol, I have a program, I talk to sober people every day, I tell the truth and I try to show up for others.

Raja, 20



I Stopped Running

I reached a bottom, an awareness that this was not working enough to numb the pain and other difficult emotions I was being tormented with inside of my head and heart. One day, I awoke for the first time with a feeling I needed to make a change in my life around this pattern of drinking and drugging.

So I went to a meeting. I met a young person who then introduced me to another person in my age group and I saw that this was working for them. I wanted what they had. I developed a support network of friends that helped me embrace a program of recovery, which has managed to keep me sober.

Juan, 17



Sweet Seventeen

I was 15 the first time I went through treatment. I had no idea what was going on and wasn't ready to listen. I knew it all, and no one could tell me different. Drugs and alcohol were the only things that I thought made me happy. I was having fun. When I was 17 I came back to treatment beat up and ready to listen. I wasn't having fun anymore. I was young and not sure if I was going to be able to stop drinking and drugging.

I struggled, trying to decide if recovery is really what I wanted or if I wanted to continue to use. I was in treatment during the holidays and came up with an analogy that worked for me. I thought back to when I was a little girl and couldn't wait to open up my Christmas presents to see what kind of toys I was getting. But when I opened the gifts and all I received were sweaters and other winter clothes, I was upset. It wasn't until it got cold that I was grateful for the clothes that I got and happy that I didn't throw them away. That is how I looked at my recovery. I wasn't very happy to have it at the age of 17, but I thought that maybe there would be a time when I would be grateful to have it and would regret it if I threw it away.

Today, I am grateful that I stayed sober. It's not always easy, but it is much better then when getting high was the only thing that was on my mind.

Kat, 21

Recovery from alcoholism and addiction is a way of life and a reality for millions of people. But you don't just check into rehab and get better by the time your stay is over. You don't just go to a few twelve-step meetings and get sober. Recovery is about learning to live your life in a new way, without alcohol or drugs. It's about developing a network of sober friends, people who you can talk with and relate to. It's about creating a new life. It's a wonderful gift. These Personal Stories of Recovery come from members of the recovery community. We are all ages, with different backgrounds and life experiences, but we are all addicts and alcoholics in recovery.

For over 60 years, NCADD has been a symbol of Hope, Help and Healing to individuals and families affected by the disease of alcoholism and drug addiction. If you are concerned about your own alcohol and drug use or that of a family member or friend, contact NCADD. Visit ncadd.org or call 800/nca-call.