



SafeHouse
a modern approach to recovery

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Season 05. Episode 12

Podcast Title: You Can Help Put a Stop to This

Hello, I'm Bruno J., and welcome back to Busting Addiction.

This marks episode 12 of season 5, which makes it 64 total episodes, once every week without a break. That's because addiction and alcoholism are such wide and deep topics that there are always new insights to bring to our audience.

We are also a bit proud of being named as one of the top 100 podcasts in our category by Feedspot, a respected third party, so we must be doing something right, bringing what we believe is a valuable perspective on the challenges of addictive disorder.

Not only is there much already published by authors and experts in our field, government agencies such as the NIH, pharmaceutical companies and not-for-profits continue to aggressively pursue research in the addictions space.

Interest in big scale solutions has accelerated in the last five years as the opioid epidemic continues to ravage North America and other countries, with as many as 100 overdose deaths recorded every day in the US alone.

The availability of Naloxone, aka as Narcan, used to counter the effects of opioid overdoses, has helped stem the tide, enabling first-responders to battle the effects of heroin and fentanyl on our streets. They often watch astounded as the near-miraculous effects of Narcan awaken an addict from what appears to be certain death.

That small, albeit important contribution to the solution is not nearly enough.

All agree that what's needed is a big-picture view of how the entire healthcare system should tackle addiction and alcoholism from the very beginning, all the way through to performance monitoring and continuous improvement.

Why do I even bring this up when you as a parent or loved one of the suffering addict really just want to know "What do I do now?"

Fact is, *you can do something.*

You can help put a stop to ineffective approaches to addiction treatment which have for years contributed to the acceleration of the incidence of addiction.

Even though you might have limited options when it comes to changing the downward trajectory of your loved one's path of addiction, *you can make a difference* by supporting organisations whose purpose is *to improve outcomes for those who suffer from addictive disorder.*

One such not-for-profit who stands on the front lines is called Shatterproof.org, and I should quickly point out that we at SafeHouse Rehab have no financial or other type of interest in the organisation.

I bring Shatterproof to your attention because it stands out as among the very best at changing how we as a society care for those who suffer from addictive disorder.

Just visit www.shatterproof.org to learn how you can help, whether it's by donation or by supporting national, state-level or local initiatives to improve outcomes.

I'm a plain-spoken guy. One of my heroes is Harry Truman, who had a sign on his desk in the Oval Office of the President of the United States which read: "The Buck Stops Here". In other words, you can pass the buck all you want, avoid responsibility all you want, but at some point the bucks has to stop and someone has to be held accountable for the things over which we have influence.

The addiction crisis, especially the opioid crisis, along with the rapid rise of methamphetamines and illegal synthetics, is a collective problem that must be addressed by us all.

That is where you can add your voice and your energy in ways that will help improve outcomes for those who suffer from this disorder.

Now, what does it mean to "improve outcomes"?

In plain language:

When a family doctor is *trained to spot symptoms of addiction*, that is an improved outcome on the early intervention front.

When *all* medical schools conduct *intensive education on* the symptoms and treatment of *addictive disease* - currently only half of all medical schools have any level of training on the topic - that is an improved outcome.

When *all* psychologists, non-MD's - are alert to the *possibilities of addictive disorder* and refer patients to those trained to treat them, such as specialist MD's and counsellors, that will improve outcomes.

When stakeholders - families, the medical community, educators, legislators - *adopt disease management* beyond the fix of a 28-day program, then outcomes will surely improve.

This is what I wish to underline to any family member who cares for and loves an addict or alcoholic: this is your chance to make a difference for those who suffer from the effects of addiction, *including families and loved ones*. Keep in mind that for every addict or alcoholic, there are six other innocent people affected.

These efforts point to a future that promises earlier detection, more effective treatment, lower incidence of addiction and less pain for our society.

Further, by education yourself on what is possible specific to your or your loved one's disorder, you can have a more immediate impact on the course of treatment or other types of interventions.

You will be doing something to help others, to give to something greater than yourself, and you will find you are not alone.

You will feel joyfully useful in the company of those who share the same mission. You will feel a change for the better, knowing you are doing a good thing for others.

Shatterproof supports "Evidence-based practices which improve outcomes for individuals with a substance abuse disorder."

We join Shatterproof in advocating:

1. *Routine screenings for substance abuse disorder in every medical setting*, as routine as getting your blood pressure taken. If there is evidence of abuse, referral to an addictions specialist and/or a follow-up plan is recommended.

At SafeHouse Rehab, we make sure that we conduct a thorough and precise assessment of *all medical issues* attendant to each individual who comes to us for treatment of substance abuse disorder.

2. *A personal plan for every patient.* Treatment facilities, no matter who or where or how well-known simply must create personalised treatment plans, nuanced to each individual's needs.

At SafeHouse Rehab, we make sure we understand and take all medical factors into account as part of the intake process. Only then are we in a position to build a treatment plan that meets the needs of each client, one client at a time.

3. *Fast access to treatment.* This is an obstacle for many addicts and alcoholics who are stuck in a holding pattern in their home countries, awaiting space in an in-patient or even an out-patient program.

Those who want it should be able to get treatment as soon as they are ready. Consider supporting initiatives that make this more possible in your community.

4. *Long-term disease management.* Addiction, sadly, is a lifetime disorder. Many have difficulty believing the truth of it.

The fact is that treatment is just the beginning of long-term disease management, including the addict's owning his own recovery program.

Disease management must also include coordinated care for every illness. Example: ideally, by staying in the same healthcare system, clinicians have access to the full medical history of patients and can work together more effectively as a team.

At SafeHouse Rehab, we have developed an aftercare approach called 'We Care' which consists of a full suite of tools and follow-up care that guides our clients toward a lifetime of clean and sober living, outside of a clinical setting.

5. *Insisting on best-practice-based therapies.* Treatment facilities must be licensed by the appropriate authorities. and their professionals must have degrees in specific disciplines that deal with addictive disorders.

Proven therapies include: Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, Individual Supportive Psychotherapy, Families and Couples Therapy, and Motivational Enhancement Therapy.

We are proficient at all of the therapies above, but we also include an introduction to the 12 Step programs of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Narcotics Anonymous (NA). We firmly believe that our clients need to own their own recovery and the support of other recovering people to embark on their lifetime journey.

What have we learned about a family members role in the larger scope of addictive disorder? We ask them to consider that:

1. They can have an impact on the larger picture of improving outcomes by supporting initiatives such as the ones proposed by Shatterproof.
2. In so doing, family members will have the satisfaction of knowing that they are not powerless to be of help to society. They can help put a stop to ineffective, marginal solutions to a central problem.
3. By practicing the modern approach to recovery, SafeHouse Rehab meets or exceeds all Best Practices for treatment.
4. We are proud to support the efforts of organisations whose mission is to improve outcomes for those with substance abuse disorder.
5. Working with others to support positive change will rejuvenate the spirit of family members who know they are doing something to help a cause that is greater than themselves.