

# ANONYMOUS MIDDLETOWN, OH

## **How is the opioid epidemic affecting you, your family, and your neighborhood? :**

I am in long term recovery from sexual abuse, depression, attempted suicide (which left me in a coma for 13 days), and IV meth addiction. Yet I was not exempt from heroin. On February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2010, an individual swapped out my meth and injected me with heroin and nearly died. The near-death experience led me onto the path of recovery. Today, I am the founder of Celebrating Restoration - a licensed 501c3 non-profit organization located here in Middletown that provides crisis intervention, street outreach, court advocacy, and more... WE are witnessing more people getting on Vivitrol - an opiate blocker yet some individuals are going back to using meth, cocaine, and/or crack as there are no blockers for these types of drugs.

## **What do you see as causes of the epidemic in your community and in Ohio? :**

We are witnessing more people getting on Vivitrol - an opiate blocker yet some individuals are going back to using meth, cocaine, and/or crack as there are no blockers for these types of drugs. Some of the causes that keep people stuck in addiction evolves around legislation/laws that need changed such as: Felons cannot get a decent job and if he or she is lucky to find a job...it is with other people that are using drugs. There needs to be a greater opportunity for individuals to find better employment and housing. Depending on the type of felonies that are not violent crimes should be expunged from the record.

Child Support is another big issue: An individual may go to jail for not paying child support and may even lose his/her license which makes no sense and once again keeps individuals stuck rather than allowing them to move forward in the recovery. Not all individuals can work early in recovery and if he or she is employed early in recovery - maybe those individuals should have a representative payee to help them with their finances.

## **What steps might we take as a state to combat the opioid epidemic? :**

A stronger collaboration with organizations, business, schools, and churches. Yet, I do think our community is improving in this area. The major area for combat is simply surrounded around legislation and laws that need to be changed. Personally, I think we need to change our vocabulary from opioids and keep conversation surrounding how all drugs can steal, kill, and destroy lives. Would be great if there could be a blocker for meth, cocaine, crack, etc. Fentanyl should be banned completely. Hospitals/Emergency room staff need further education (Does not mean that hospitals are bad yet continued education is important to prevention/recovery).

## **What might we do as individuals and a community to reduce opioid abuse?:**

Continue communication! Promote NATIONAL RECOVERY MONTH in September an event that we hold every year in collaboration with SAMHSA- Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Association. During the month of September should be a huge focus on prevention and education. Also, more assemblies regarding prevention, addiction, and recovery. Maybe more recovery-oriented events throughout the year.