



Substance Abuse - A Parents Perspective

Substance Abuse....Have you been affected yet?

While gathering my thoughts for this article, my mind wandered to all of the opportunities to express myself. But in fact, expressing the thoughts about the loss a child is an excruciating task.

My wife and I still find ourselves trying to understand the loss of our son Kyle Franks in December of 2006 at the age of nineteen. Kyle was a terrific son and brother, with a million dollar smile and an acute awareness of how to treat people with respect, and in return was always treated as everyone's favorite popular person to be around. A huge sports fan, a very good high school athlete and a personal best friend to all in need.

We raised our son in a great community and loving middle class Christian home in Oro Valley, AZ with all basic needs provided. Like a lot of you, our lives revolved around the schedules and needs of our kids, from birth through high school.

In 2006 Kyle approached us for help with his substance abuse and addiction problem. As a family we were very pro-active in trying to help resolve his issues and tried many methods of resolution.

Methods to help navigate the path of a substance abuser

- New focus on parental relations and oversight
- Environmental change
- Rehabilitation support programs
- Counseling
- Church

All of these methods were useful at the time and were in-valuable in the healing process. You must understand, addiction has a grasp of its own. Personal relationships whether parental, sibling or friendship cannot remove the clamps of substance abuse, and in fact with regard to substance abuse, there are couple of guarantees.

Substance Abuse Guarantees

1. Substance Abuse/Addiction doesn't respect wonderful nice people or terrible people. All are potential victims.
2. Substance Abuse will affect the Abuser, their families, their friends and their neighbors in a negative way. Hopefully it doesn't end tragically.

What to do and what not to do

We as parents often wonder what it would be like to see and hold Kyle today, to know him better, to know his wife, to see his kids, to see our grandkids, but that's not going to happen!

If we could give you advise on how to deal with anyone in your life, family, friend or acquaintance that may have a substance abuse and addiction problem, it would be the following do's and don'ts:

Do

Love them

Pray for them

Guide/Mentor/Lead them

Provide "Tough Love" to them

Assist them on a journey to recovery

Don't

Don't stop Loving them

Don't stop Praying for them

Don't stop Leading them

Don't stop providing "Tough Love" to them

Don't leave them Unassisted on their journey to recovery

Most of all -* Don't Enable Them *

Going Forward - Community Support

It is our advice that you find a way to be an integral part of a related community support effort. For our family, it has really helped in our life's journey. In our particular case we started a non-profit foundation called "The Kyle Franks Foundation, (www.kylefranks.org). We annually hold a Charity Golf Tournament called "The Kyle Franks Charity Golf Classic. In 2011, the event will be held on the morning of October 1 @ Tucson National Golf Resort. The monies raised are used to support community related projects such as the Oro Valley Police Department's - Disposeamed Program and OVPD Drug Awareness day which is intended to alert local 5th graders about making proper choices and the dangers of substance abuse. In addition, our Foundation provides college scholarship opportunity through our "Tough Street Scholarship program", to qualifying High School kids who need financial assistance to continue their education. Please go to (www.kylefranks.org) to find out more information about all of these important initiatives.

In closing, you must remember that you cannot control a substance abuser and they will always make their own choices. We all make our own choices. Do your best to help them succeed, and be prepared to be tested at the highest levels, and remember, it may or may not be enough but - Never Give Up on them or yourself!

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