

Finding Help for Opioid Addiction

Jake Jansen struggled with opioid abuse for several years. His addiction started with prescribed medications. When he could no longer get those, his addiction drove him to heroin. He sought treatment several times.

"Something happened that while I was in treatment, it went from I'm doing this because everybody told me I can't, to maybe I can do this for me. Maybe I can create a good life for myself in recovery and find that happiness that I had lost for so many years."-Jake, Patient

When someone like Jake gets to the point of wanting to beat an opioid addiction, it's important to have both formal and informal support.

"The formal support includes the treatment providers like the psychiatrist, the therapist, possibly a clinic providing opiate replacement therapies. It's also going to include informal support like family, friends, community support groups."-Sarah Joyce, Outpatient Program Manager

Medical professionals will monitor you while going through withdrawal because the side effects are difficult to handle.

"Nausea and vomiting, diarrhea. There's this incredible panicky feeling of anxiety. A minute seems like an hour and it becomes an incredibly demanding process for about five to seven days."-Jake, Patient

Robyn Ellis learned the importance of finding a good mental health counselor after years of struggling with opioids. She was able to open up about incidents in her childhood that triggered her addiction.

"I always knew I was going to be an addict, from like the first time I touched a pill. I grew up in a home where both my parents were addicts and alcoholics, so it was like in my blood."-Robyn, Patient

After trying several different treatment approaches, Robyn found a counselor that could help get to the root of her struggle with opioids.

"I really like just learned to open up to her. You know I had a trust with her and I could just really tell her anything. You know that was going on and a lot about my past."-Robyn, Patient

Jake Jansen found that having support from others is what helped him. By sharing his experience with people who'd been through similar situations, Jake was able to stay focused on his journey to recovery.

"It's about surrounding yourself with people that are going through the same things and people maybe that

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have solved some of those problems as well in their own lives and can now teach you how to do it.”-Jake, Patient

Keeping appointments and regularly checking in with your healthcare team and support groups is key.

“For me that follow through was about setting a routine in my life, setting a certain structure.”-Jake, Patient

And if a person doesn’t know where to turn to start the process of recovery, some advice.

“You can start with your primary care doctor, a mental health provider. You can ask your insurance company for a list of providers and if you would like to start something more informal you can always look online for local anonymous meetings, including heroin anonymous, narcotics anonymous. And people who attend those meetings can also help you find local treatment centers.”- Sarah Joyce, Outpatient Program Manager

Recovery is not something that happens overnight. Prepare yourself for the journey.

“You have to find support and life does get better. That once you get through this challenging experience, everything else in life can get easier.”-Jake, Patient

“It’s the drive to something different and to be somebody better than what you are right now and to never give up.”-Robyn, Patient

If you or someone you know is struggling with an opioid addiction, there are several resources you can call for help – including Narcotics Anonymous, Heroin Anonymous and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health National Helpline.