

# User's Guide for Treatment Providers

A Collaboration with Caron Treatment Centers

## Love the Kid, Hate the Disease

Lessons Learned from a Father Dealing with his Son's Addiction

Twelve gritty, relatable, and personal short stories about a teenager's deep struggle with addiction and his father's journey supporting his recovery process.

[www.AddictionLessons.com](http://www.AddictionLessons.com)

The son, Stevie, is now 25, seven years sober, and living a connected, productive and happy life!

All 12 stories take only 40 minutes to read, and address topics such as:

There is great hope for recovery!

Parental fear, isolation, and dysfunction at home

Why addicted people behave erratically

Common traps, such as lying, manipulating, and playing parents off each other

Parent tools to promote healthy change


The recovery process explained

### Feedback from Site Users:

Over 98% of users completing the survey would **recommend the stories to others**

Over 90% of users completing the survey:

- » Feel **more hope**
- » Learn **powerful change tools**
- » Better understand the **recovery process**
- » Recognize the **impact on family**



“Although everyone's journey with this is different, there are just some things every single parent of an addict can feel in their bones and relate to in your words. It felt like you were speaking to me and that you GOT ME. I felt understood and seen.”

— **Megan**

“Incredibly powerful and valuable. Truly. You've captured so many realities and truths herein. It is likely to inform and empower parents and family members to make a difference and give them hope in tough times.”

— **John F. Kelly, PhD., ABPP**

Harvard Medical School's first endowed professor of addiction medicine



Used and promoted by  
Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation,  
Caron Treatment Centers and other  
highly-respected treatment providers

**A FREE RESOURCE** with no sponsors or economic interests to anyone

# Integration Suggestions for Clinicians

Each story can be read in 1 to 5 minutes (40 minutes total) and can be easily integrated into family sessions, particularly during zoom meetings

## For families already participating in a comprehensive family program:

- » Assign the stories as part of the early education process
- » Integrate discussions about the content into family sessions

## For families not participating in a structured family program:

- » Share the story links and resource page with family members
- » Provide some support to address questions that arise

Discussion questions can help prompt dialogue and insight:

- » Which stories had the most impact on you?
- » Did the stories raise any new questions?
- » How do these stories apply to your situation?
- » Did the stories challenge your assumptions?
- » What surprised you the most about the stories?
- » What did you find most helpful or insightful?

Use specific stories to enhance discussions as topics arise:

### 1. There is Great Hope!

Addiction is scary. This story highlights deep parental fears and demonstrates hope for recovery.

### 2. Is There an Addiction Problem?

Is there a behavior issue or possibly an addiction/substance use disorder? This story introduces families to addiction as a disease and the DSM-5.

### 3. Addiction is a Brain Disease and Not a Personal Failing

Your child has become erratic, irrational, and engages in bad behavior. Understand the science behind why.

### 4. What Type of Treatment Makes Sense for My Child?

Learn why the most restrictive treatment option is not always the best choice.

### 5. Addiction Recovery is a Process

Recovery is not a straight line. In this story, parents are introduced to the Stages of Change model and the recovery process.

### 6. How Can Parents and Caregivers Help?

In situations where parents feel helpless, this story outlines four steps they can take, including getting professional help and taking care of themselves.

“There was constant confrontation, arguments, and stress. Every day, every hour, I walked on eggshells in my own home.”

# Integration Suggestions for Clinicians

**The stories have been reviewed and endorsed by world-class addiction researchers!**

## 7. Understanding Common Traps

Learn to recognize behaviors such as lying, manipulation, confrontation, and playing parents off each other.

## 8. Detachment is a Parent's Superpower

Detachment is not an easy skill for parents. This story reinforces how it can help shift focus from the behavior to the disease, and what needs to be done.

## 9. Tools to Create Change: Boundaries, Consequences and Leverage

If a parent keeps fixing problems and making life easier, why would a child change? This story explores effective parental tools to help promote change.

## 10. The Power of Positive Reinforcement

A big part of a successful recovery includes supporting them, loving them, and consistently calling out positive behaviours.

## 11. Addiction is a "Family Disease"

This story highlights the deep impact on a family from a loved one's addiction.

## 12. A Great Public Health Resource: Alcoholics Anonymous

Twelve-step programs are often misunderstood, and are a valuable recovery resource. Learn why twelve-step programs work.

## A Note from the Author

“Challenging does not begin to describe the fear, hopelessness and anxiety that I felt while my teenage son suffered from active addiction.

In these stories, I share the most important information, concepts and tools that helped me handle extreme parenting difficulties and allowed me to be a part of the recovery solution for my son.”

— Stephen D'Antonio



“We used to have such a close and special relationship, and now we don't talk... We don't have a relationship at all... I am so sad.”

—Stevie's sister

# Caron Treatment Centers' Integration Insights

## Caron's Integration Uses

- » Useful for the full continuum of care from prevention to intervention, treatment and recovery. Part of our family resource kit.
- » **During treatment:** Appropriate for all levels of care. Lessons 5 through 11 are essential at the treatment stage.
- » **Professional training:** Compelling stories create an understanding of recovery as a family process. Reduces stigma and enhances compassion and support for families.

## Caron's User Experience:

- » Allowed patients and parents to discuss family dynamics in a safe way by discussing the family in the stories.
- » Lessons provided a feeling of not being alone and promoted a connection to support.
- » The stories are relatable and connect to the challenges and the healing process.
- » The stories have been used for general and customized approaches based on needs.
- » The stories have been a gateway for further learning by families.

## Stephen D'Antonio

Author of "Love the Kid, Hate the Disease"

Stephen spent the past four years as Shatterproof's Executive Vice President, responsible for creating educational materials for families. Prior, he spent a year studying addiction at Harvard University as an Advanced Leadership Fellow. Stephen was trained as a Parent Peer Coach and has volunteered for 7 years at Northwell Health's flagship outpatient center working together with the clinicians to help families. He is a co-creator and a participant of the podcast series "My Child & Addiction".

Stephen spent 30-years at Morgan Stanley running global trading and sales businesses and was a member of the Firm Management Committee. He has a BA from Dartmouth College and an MBA from Harvard University.

All of Stephen's addiction work is volunteer.

## Caron Treatment Centers

Caron Treatment Centers is an internationally recognized non-profit dedicated to addiction and behavioral healthcare treatment, research, prevention, and addiction medicine education. Their mission is **Recovery for Life**.

For more than 65 years, Caron has helped thousands of individuals struggling with substance use disorder and their families begin to manage this chronic, treatable disease. Caron provides a continuum of care for young adults, women, men, and older adults.

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