

We focus on you

TRANSFORMER >

CHERYL

Patient, US

I was a radio host, softball coach and mother. In 2004, en route to a family vacation, my husband and I were hit by an 18-wheeler pulling 70,000 lbs of cargo. I awoke from a coma three days later with a fractured neck in unbearable pain. I was prescribed opioid painkillers. After six months, I was dependent.

I couldn't get through a day without pills. In time, I spent all my money on painkillers, which cost me more than I could have ever imagined: my husband, my career and my home life. To add to the chaos, I realized my son was also addicted to painkillers.

One evening, I suddenly saw myself in a way that I had not before: how had I gotten to this very dark place in my life? At that moment, I surrendered to the mess I had made and knew it was time to reset my reality.

My adult son and I went into a 30-day rehab program. Both of us benefited from medication-assisted treatment with Suboxone® Film as part of our treatment plan along with counseling and support from loved ones. My son and I have been in recovery now for more than six years!

I often refer to opiate addiction as the stealth addiction. I hid my abuse of opioids very well. I wasn't the stereotypical 'drug addict'.

To people around me, I was living what seemed by all appearances to be a healthy, active lifestyle. My loved ones were the only people who could visibly see my addiction, and that's only because they were emotionally invested.

I was dead during my addiction – I wasn't living, I was surviving. I thank God every day for the many blessings of recovery. I committed to treatment, and my relationships, trust and most important role in life have been restored: mother and wife.

I do whatever I can to raise awareness of addiction. I want people who find themselves bound in the vicious cycle of opioid addiction to realize that life is waiting for them, and with the right treatment, the journey back isn't as far away as one may think.



For product information, visit: www.suboxone.com

Transforming addiction

Continued

WE HELP EXPAND ACCESS TO TREATMENT WORLDWIDE

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DUNCAN

Patient, England

My drug career started in the 80s, but didn't get serious until the 90s. When I asked for help from my doctor, the only options available were methadone or do-it-yourself. Getting treatment, like drugs, was a gradual thing.

You don't wake up one day and say, "I'm going to be a heroin addict". I went into drugs quite slowly and gradually, and I came out of drug addiction quite slowly and gradually.

There is a difference between people who take drugs recreationally and those who become dependent – it's like the difference between people who have a glass of Chardonnay at the weekend and those who drink a bottle of vodka before they start work.

People who become addicts, like myself, generally something happened: physical or mental abuse, health issues and so on. You self-medicate with alcohol, cannabis, or other drugs and feel better. You think of drugs as a cure, not a problem. It's all very well treating the addiction with medicine, but you've got to look at what caused the behavior in the first place, or it's very likely to reoccur.

Two of the biggest steps I took were getting out of a hostel, where drug use was all around, and going to a place where they really understood drug addiction and tried to help people, not punish them. That's where I was treated with Subutex® Tablet.

I remember an ex-user at a conference saying: "all of a sudden I became a member of society again". But, you never left society – you just weren't a very popular part of it.

We need massive education of doctors about the disease, treatment options and how to work out what is best for a specific patient. We need people to learn what their options are, whether that's residential rehab, detoxification, or what medication options are available. We need not to be judged, as well.

If treatment isn't available, people will die, lives will be wrecked, and there is a lot of fallout. It's not just drug users, it's their families. I say to users, there are a lot of good people who will try to help you. Forget about the ones who treat you like scum. There are people who will try and will help you!

Duncan is co-founder of a charity to provide peer support and guidance for patients currently in drug or alcohol treatment. The organization trains recovering patients to advocate for others and helps patients navigate the treatment and social support systems.

