

## “Support Groups and Treatment for Loved Ones”

### Episode Overview

In the final episode of this season, I talk about support groups and treatment for *the loved ones* of people with SUD and overdose incidents. I review literature on the coping mechanisms of bereaved loved ones, look at the formation and impact of peer-support groups, review therapy techniques to help people navigate grief after a drug-related death, and discuss the challenges of accessing support.

episode.



- One of the takeaways from this season was that the loved ones of people with SUD/overdose incidents struggle with how to support someone during addiction and how to navigate complex grief after an overdose.
- For support, some people rely on their partners, friends, or relatives, and others seek out formal support/treatment organizations and therapists.

### TAKEAWAYS

- ✓ Service availability is limited for the loved ones of people with addiction/overdose.
- ✓ Support groups offer community, understanding, coping and communication skills, and overdose training.
- ✓ While self-compassion alone aids in growth post bereavement, hope can amplify and accelerate the process.

## References & Future Reading

- Gregg, M. E., & Toumbourou, J. W. (2003). Sibling peer support group for young people with a sibling using drugs: A pilot study. *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs*, 35(3), 311–319. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02791072.2003.10400014>
- Kelly, J. F., Fallah-Sohy, N., Cristello, J., & Bergman, B. (2017). Coping with the enduring unpredictability of opioid addiction: An investigation of a novel family-focused peer-support organization. *Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment*, 77, 193–200. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsat.2017.02.010>
- Khan, F., Lynn, M., Porter, K., Kongnetiman, L., & Haines-Saah, R. (2022). “There’s no supports for people in addiction, but there’s no supports for everyone else around them as well”: A qualitative study with parents and other family members supporting youth and young adults. *Canadian Journal of Addiction*, 13(2S), 72–82. DOI: 10.1097/CXA.0000000000000149
- Sperandio, K. R., Gutierrez, D., Kirk, M., Lopez, J., & Nathaniel Mason, W. (2022). Post-traumatic growth after the drug-related death of a loved one: Understanding the influence of self-compassion and hope. *The Family Journal*, 30(3), 390–400. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10664807211052479>
- Timko, C., Young, L. B., & Moos, R. H. (2012). Al-Anon family groups: Origins, conceptual basis, outcomes, and research opportunities. *Journal of Groups in Addiction & Recovery*, 7(2–4), 279–296. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1556035X.2012.705713>