

## “Siblings’ Experiences”

### Episode Overview

In this episode, I explore people’s experiences of being the sibling of someone with an SUD/overdose incident. First, I talk about people’s experiences navigating their sibling’s substance abuse issues and life after their overdose. Then I describe the impact of drug-overdose bereavement on siblings’ emotional, physical, and social well-being.



- People learn to navigate their sibling’s drug misuse and overdose and have intimate knowledge of the situation.
- Siblings balance their own grieving as well as help their parents navigate grief and loss.

### TAKEAWAYS

- ✓ People watching a sibling misuse drugs or overdose experience trauma.
- ✓ Siblings face struggles in navigating life after the overdose of their loved one.
- ✓ People recognize their sibling beyond the label of “addict.”
- ✓ Sibling overdose bereavement is tied to increased emotional states (guilt, sadness, uncertainty).

## References & Future Reading

- Brennan, B. (2020). *Siblings: The Hidden Casualties of the Opioid Epidemic. A Quantitative Study Investigating the Relationships Between Stigma and Support Systems and the Emotional Well-Being of Siblings of Opioid Addicted Individuals* [Doctoral dissertation, State University of New York at Stony Brook].
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- Meen, G., Reime, M. A., & Selseng, L. B. (2024c). 'I've tried not to show it too much, and not burden others with my problems': A discourse analysis of understandings of grief among siblings bereaved by drug-related deaths. *Culture & Psychology*, 1354067X241236727. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354067X241236727>
- Meen, G., Reime, M. A., Lindeman, S., & Selseng, L. B. (2024b). Beyond troubled and untroubled positions—An intersectional analysis of siblings who are bereaved by drug-related deaths' meaning-making stories about their deceased brothers and sisters. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-Being*, 19(1), 2372864. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17482631.2024.2372864>
- Perrin, J. (2022). Sibling bereavement when death is drug-related: A qualitative study (Doctoral dissertation, Charles Sturt University).
- Perrin, J. (2023). Applying three different horizons to understand sibling experiences when the brother or sister dies for a drug-related reason. *The British Journal of Social Work*, 53(6), 3073–3088. <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcad090>