

Americans Share Hopeful Stories of Recovery From Opioid Use Disorder

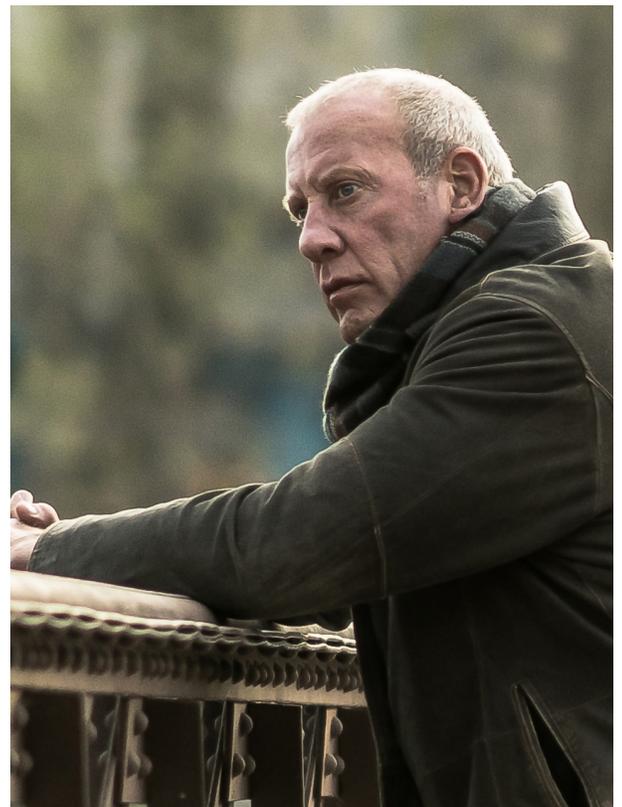


[David](#) founded a multimillion-dollar brokerage firm, managed 75 employees, and was happily married. At age 39, David was prescribed opioids to manage pain from several knee surgeries. Although David had a history of excessive alcohol and cocaine use and had even completed treatment for substance use, he wasn't aware of the addictive properties of prescription opioids.

In a matter of weeks, David found himself taking far more opioids than he was prescribed. When David could no longer get a prescription for opioids, he turned to heroin, and from there his life spiraled out of control. He bankrupted his brokerage firm, lost his wife to divorce, and was sentenced to 5 years in Federal prison.

David isn't alone.

While she was pregnant, [Tessa](#) misused prescription opioids and took illicit drugs to self-medicate her chronic headaches, pain from fibromyalgia, and depression. [Britton](#) became addicted after taking opioids prescribed by his doctor at age 19 after sustaining a severe shoulder injury while serving in the U.S. Army. [Tele](#) misused prescription opioids beginning at age 13 because he experienced anxiety and depression. Alaska Natives [Jeni](#) and [Stevi Rae](#), suffering from intergenerational trauma, also became addicted to prescription opioids.



Opioid use disorder and prescription opioid overdose can impact anyone

Opioids are prescribed to treat pain, often following surgery or injury, or for health conditions. But opioids carry serious risks. In 2018 alone, overdoses involving opioids killed nearly 47,000 people — and 32 percent of those deaths involved prescription opioids. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's National Survey on Drug Use and Health, an estimated 10.1 million people aged 12 and older reported misusing opioids in 2019 and an estimated 1.6 million people suffered from opioid use disorder.



cdc.gov/RxAwareness





Recovery is possible, treatment can help

In addition to having a history of suffering from opioid use disorder, David, Britton, Tessa, Tele, Jeni, Stevi Rae, and many others have something else in common — they have all recovered.

David has been in recovery for 9 years and is dedicated to working as an interventionist and certified recovery coach. He also helped champion funding for local prevention, education, and treatment efforts in Minnesota.

Tessa has been in recovery for 3 years and runs a treatment center focused on supporting pregnant women with substance use disorders. For Britton, a structured therapy program helped him get into and stay in recovery. Tele has been in recovery for 4 years and credits his parents and friends for supporting him. Jeni and Stevi Rae both credit their recoveries to connecting with their culture, despite the limited resources in their community.

Raising awareness in communities

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) *Rx Awareness* campaign aims to prevent prescription opioid overdose and reinforce the message that recovery is possible for people who are struggling. The campaign is designed to raise awareness that prescription opioids can be addictive and dangerous. The campaign features stories from real people about how prescription opioids impacted their lives.

Anyone who is prescribed opioids can become addicted to them, and taking too much can result in an overdose. "This started as a problem linked to prescription opioids in some parts of America, but now it's an 'everyone, everywhere' problem," said Grant Baldwin, Ph.D., M.P.H., director of CDC's Division of Overdose Prevention. "*Rx Awareness* is focused on preventing overdoses from happening in the first place and partnering with communities to increase awareness and save lives. It's just unacceptable for anyone to die of a drug overdose. It should never happen."



Visit [findtreatment.gov](https://www.findtreatment.gov) to learn more about available treatment options. For more information about the *Rx Awareness* campaign and resources about prevention and recovery, visit [cdc.gov/RxAwareness](https://www.cdc.gov/RxAwareness).