



Perspectives that Matter

Behind every story is a journey of resilience, courage, and transformation. The heartfelt testimonials from alumni and Jefferson staff reveal the impact of compassionate care, highlighting the lives forever changed through our programs.

Andrea Turk

Director of Clinical Services, Jefferson Center

We know that folks who struggle with addiction, they are easily distracted because of their desire to use.

And so, you know, they work so hard in withdrawal management to manage their symptoms, to feel better. That's when they tend to feel motivated. And then, like with anything, with anything new.

You've got to be quick and you've got to respond so that, you maintain that motivation. So by having that access just across the hall where they don't have time to think about the what if, or they don't have time to get distracted by their boyfriend who wants to take them to the park and go use or whatever it might be, and convince them or talk them out of leaving them for 30 days. It is removing those stimuli pieces in their community that keep them from wanting to get better, because those are very strong motivators.

A boyfriend who doesn't want you to leave is a very strong motivator, not wanting to feel sick, not wanting to face, you know, the trauma in a therapeutic setting.

All of those things are strong motivators.

And so the other piece to this is when you're in the environment and you see kind of what it is, and you can visualize it, and you can meet the people, and you can see the staff who will be spending time with you for 30 days, I think that also reduces a lot of that anxiety that somebody feels. If they've never seen a patient before, they've never stepped inside a facility and worked with treatment staff before, that can be really scary.

But if they're there in the environment, and they can go over and see residential and see that it's not a scary place, see that staff care, I just think it increases someone's level of motivation, versus just wondering about it or seeing it on the internet because they're showing, you know, pictures maybe of the building or what have you.

It's all those pieces that we're working on eliminating and reducing those at Soteria Landing.



Jefferson Center Alumni

“Drugs were always around. My parents always had a bottle in the house, and there was so much of it that they would never notice anything was missing.”

Where did you grow up?

Denver. Was a somewhat challenging kiddo, got in fights with others.

What kind of family did you grow up in?

My parents gave me everything I wanted or needed, but they were drinkers. I think because they were unhappy with themselves. They both loved me and stayed together for me. My parents got together because my maternal grandma got cancer. I was closer with my dad. My dad would drink to get along with my mom's friends, and then he would make a fool of himself and they would fight, but he would always just blame himself for things.

What kind of teenager were you?

Parentified throughout adolescence.

When did drugs come into the picture?

Drugs were always around. My parents always had a bottle in the house, and there was so much of it that they would never notice anything was missing. I would drink to go get cocaine. I really fell in love with weed and stopped drinking as much. Friends introduced me to cocaine at 15, and that lasted until 19. I dropped out at 17 and worked to pay for my habit while living with a friend (now deceased). I moved to Peru and continued my drug habit but was grateful that I did not get killed. I decided that if I was going to do cocaine, I might as well do it in the U.S.

Then I started experimenting with everything, which led to a Ketamine addiction. Then a friend smoked a pill on foil in front of me, and when I tried it, it hit like nothing else ever had. I started dating a girl that did not do any drugs, and before this, I had never been with anyone that was not doing drugs. She and I started using Fentanyl together, and nothing could stop us—not overdoses, not fights, nothing. I went to a dealer, and they only had Meth, so that was what I picked up.

I tried it, and that was the only drug I had ever done that was comparable to how Fentanyl felt. I stayed up for three days straight, and the come-down absolutely sucked; when I was high, I did not eat, drink, sleep—nothing. So when I was coming down, it was just the worst. As I kept using, I started stealing cars and other things to sustain my habit, and my life just got so bad. Eventually, I hit the streets because no one would take me in anymore—I had burned all my bridges. So I started bouncing between sober livings and the streets. And this last year, I have seen more death than I ever have before; so many people have died.

What changed your path in life?

A dog died in front of me, and the owner of the dog and the sober living house I was at forgave me and said I could do better. I came here and knew I needed to do it differently.

There are so many things that have motivated me to do life differently. I have been stalked by bad people, been approached about getting into prostitution by gigolos, and eaten out of the trash at a grocery store. And I realized nothing was ever going to be as good as drugs made me feel, but I knew eventually the death I had witnessed was going to catch up with me.

It just made me think—is this what I want my life to be? I do not want to be another obituary; I do not want to be another funeral. I have seen people do it, and I want that.

What is possible for you now? What is next?

Everything is possible for me now. Before, I was sober, but I was entirely dissociated from my life. This time, I am going to do it differently. I am going to go to meetings and stay connected to my sober community. I want to take a Peer Coaching class and maybe have the opportunity to help other people who are going through the same things I have been through.

This place has been the best—it is why I came back. The staff care about us and want to see us have the lives we deserve. We get spoiled here—that is how much the staff is here for us! It puts things into perspective. The Peer, and that connection that I got with him, is the most valuable piece of what I experienced here; he showed me that I have to go all in to have what I want in sobriety.



Jefferson Center Alumni

“At age 9, I started sniffing glue and doing all kinds of bad things. Doctors always told me that I was “screwed” for any type of recovery.”

Where did you grow up?

Indiana. I came to Colorado to help my brother with his roofing business.

What kind of family did you grow up in?

Youngest of six. My mom was an alcoholic, though my siblings got less of the alcoholism than I did—my mom got worse as I got older. My mom would rub alcohol in my mouth to keep me quiet. My dad worked in Chicago and was abusive to my mom; he was considered a gangster in Chicago, too. Guns were always in the house because my dad was from Arkansas, and that was the norm for him. I did not get along well in school. My siblings have been in and out of prison, and my brother died in incarceration at age 33.

I got my own felony at age 15 and got out at age 17 after getting my GED. When I got out, I was still “up to no good” and got involved with my dad’s life as a gangster.

What kind of teenager were you?

At age 12, I started using cocaine with a neighbor girl. I was a wild teen! I would skip school and stayed in trouble. I was spoiled by my dad, though, and always had what I wanted despite his behaviors. I really loved the “get rich quick schemes,” and it kept me in and out of prison. I never really thought I fit in, even back then.

When did drugs come into the picture?

At age 9, I started sniffing glue and doing all kinds of bad things. Doctors always told me that I was “screwed” for any type of recovery. This was so discouraging—any hope for the future seemed impossible. Drugs and alcohol have always been in my life. My dad used them, my mom used them. My brother tried to protect me, but that could not last. I never got away from them either. Between hustling and being inside, it was impossible.

*Together, we build
hope and healing.*

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