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Agenda

A Night of Family Recovery

- ▶ The power of addiction
- ▶ Impact on the family
- ▶ How to manage when the family is not on the same page
- ▶ Fears and not letting them dictate your response
- ▶ Setting boundaries
- ▶ Self care during and after the storm



Power of Addiction

- ▶ Addiction is more powerful than you
- ▶ You can not make your loved one want to stop using
- ▶ This means there is nothing you can say that will magically create their desire for recovery
- ▶ Even when they really want to stop the addiction is so powerful
- ▶ Recovery is a lot of work
- ▶ They have to want to stay clean more than they want to use- this is where you have a tiny bit of power!
- ▶ “I would die for my children, but I couldn’t stop drinking for them.”

–Elizabeth Vargas

Addiction Impact on the Family System

- All aspects of family life are affected, but especially psychologically and socially
- Less stable because of stress, anger, depression, inconsistency, conflict, abuse, trust
- Parents retreat from socializing due to shame, pain, fear of leaving their SA alone
- Chronic SA is traumatic which can have a different effect on the individual in the family this leads to deep conflict and fractured relationships. Flight/fight/freeze
- Denial- (defense mechanism) state of self- delusion that people use to deal with pain or loss, their awareness of reality is shut down
- The #1 barrier to recovery- enabling, not addressing the needs of SA

Addiction Impact on the Siblings

- ▶ Lose respect for their parents based on their reactions or lack of reactions
- ▶ Cut off relationships with SA which leads to more conflict for parents
- ▶ Parents fear they will be influenced by their SA sibling
- ▶ Become less of a priority, lost
- ▶ Form their own maladaptive ways of getting attention
- ▶ Avoid relationships OR Marry an addict

Family Members “Not on the Same Page”

- Denial
 - Where parents come from in their own childhood impacts their reaction
 - Avoider, family member died from addiction, ACOA, perfectionist, controlling
- Currently married
 - Effects trust, intimacy, social life, opportunity for conflict, Splitting. SUD is a magnifier to all issues already present in marriage
- Divorced family
 - Splitting, enabling (\$), even less impact on convincing other parent of reality, guilt can be a greater factor

How Do We Handle This?

- Speak your truth to your coparent
- Ask them poignant questions about your loved one's behavior and use
- Set time aside to discuss your loved one
- "I love you enough to stand up to your addiction, even if your addiction hates me for it"
- Creating a contract between parents
- Ask to see a Co-Parent Mediator or Family Therapist

“What If?”

- Many families fall into the trap of “what if?????”
- Run away train of fear-based thinking
- Managing our acceptance of the disease and balancing that with our fears
- What are these thoughts doing for you?
- What are you doing to manage your thinking?
- Is this productive towards your desired outcome?

The Grief of Loving an Addict

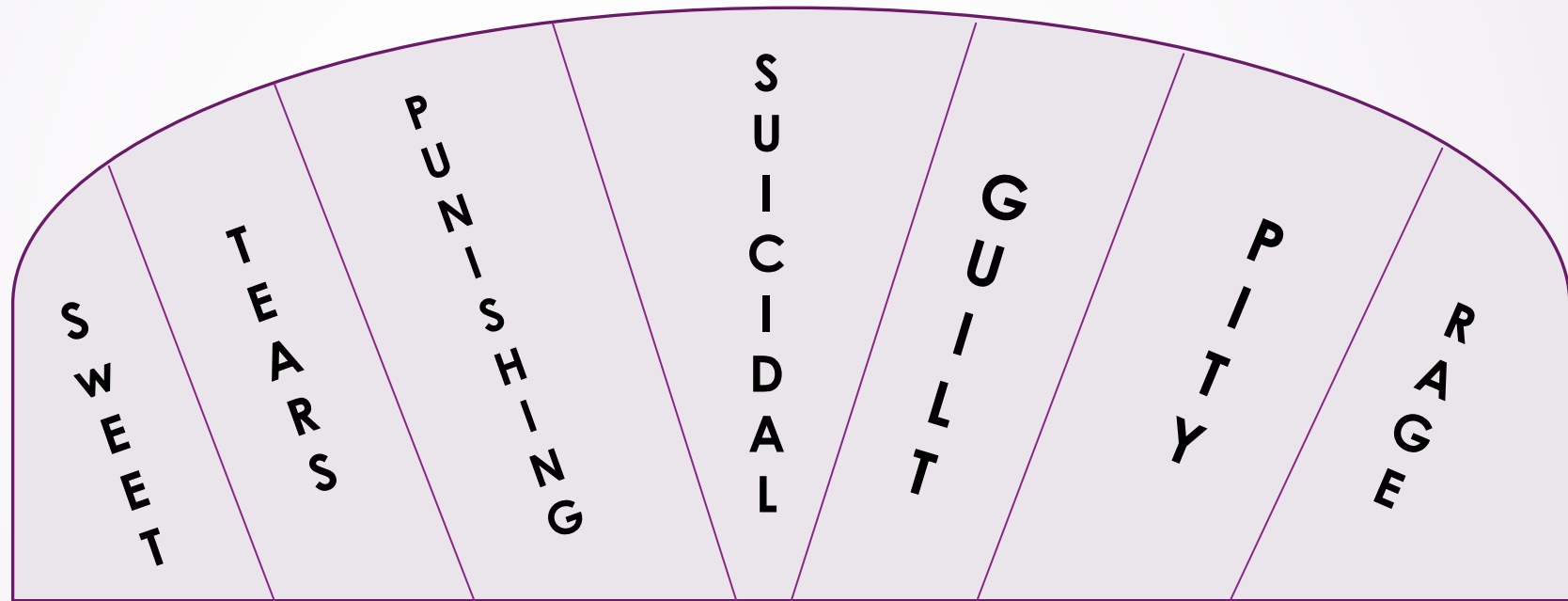
- ▶ “I would miss having Nic in my life. I would miss his funny phone messages and his humor, the stories, our talks, our walks, watching movies with him, dinners together, and the transcendent feeling between us that is love. I would miss all of it. I miss it now. And here it sinks in: I don’t have it now. I have not had it whenever Nic has been on drugs. Nic is absent, only his shell remains. I have been afraid and terrified to lose Nic, but I have lost him.”

-David Sheff, Beautiful Boy

Setting Boundaries

- Where are we starting from?
- What is our leverage?
- Does this support motivation for recovery or enable use?
- Write out your boundaries and expectations
- Get support to communicate them effectively
- Be clear with the consequences, but you must be able to uphold or it's worse

Knowing how we are individually vulnerable to manipulation



Self Care

- ▶ Parent Support Meetings
- ▶ Reevaluating who you can spend time with socially
- ▶ Connecting with spirituality or religion
- ▶ Do you over schedule to run from feelings?
- ▶ How long can I stay in bed?
- ▶ Your own therapist
- ▶ Support network
- ▶ Walks, exercise, baths, yoga, podcasts, time with friends, journaling, helping someone who wants help, hobby
- ▶ Write your addict letters (DON'T SEND)
- ▶ Rest while they are in rehab

Review

- ▶ Remember none of us are more powerful than addiction
- ▶ There is nothing you will say to want them to get better
- ▶ Knowing your truth and getting help to stay in it
- ▶ Communicate your boundaries
- ▶ Don't forget to live your life and let them see it!
- ▶ Tools to turn your fears over
- ▶ Set time aside to think about the addiction then use strategies to STOP
- ▶ They can't get clean alone so you shouldn't go at this alone
- ▶ YOU ARE WARRIORS! MY WARRIORS ARE HERE TONIGHT!