

TEEN CHALLENGE

Navigating Substance Addiction Recovery **Together**

ISSUE #1

ARTICLE HIGHLIGHTS

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State of Substance Addiction ...

Across Canada

Did you know that every year more than 73,000 deaths are attributed directly to substance use in Canada?

Teen Challenge Canada is at the forefront of the addiction battle and remains steadfast in our commitment to transform lives and help heal families torn apart by addiction. We are proud to stand with other non-profits, ministries, and government agencies in a collective effort to address the complexities of the addiction crisis.

There were more than 2000 drug It is estimated that over 103,000 related deaths in Alberta in 2023.1 drugs in the past year.² Since 2022, there has been a 97% increase in accidental drug deaths in Newfoundland.⁵ 14% of Saskatchewan residents have

an addiction to drugs or alcohol-the highest per-capita rate of substance addiction in the country.³

1. https://edmonton.ctvnews.ca/2023-a-record-breaking-year-for-drug-poisoning-deathsin-alberta-1.6891911

2. https://canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/canadian-alcohol-drugs-survey/2019ummary/detailed-table

3. https://shrf.ca/post/shining-a-light-on-the-lived-experience-of-addiction-insaskatchewa

people in Atlantic Canada used illegal

On average, there is an opioid toxicity death every three hours in Ontario.4

More than 200 Canadians die every day due to issues related to substance abuse.6

4. https://ontario.ca/files/2024-04/moh-cmoh-annual-report-2023-en-2024-04-02.pdf 5. https://cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/2023-drug-deaths-73-1.7215810 6. https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/march-2024/substance-use-health-care

Note from the Editor ...

Welcome to the inaugural edition of our newly formatted newsletter, "Stepping Toward Recovery - Navigating Addiction Recovery Together." For years, our autumn newsletter has been a vital link between Teen Challenge Canada and our donors and supporters, sharing stories of growth, transformation, and hope. However, we believe it's time for a change-one that brings us even closer to fulfilling our mission.

"Stepping Toward Recovery" is designed to reach groups, individuals, and families who may never walk through the doors of a Teen Challenge centre, but are in desperate need of support, encouragement, and hope. Published twice a year, in April and August, this new format aims to deliver valuable resources to those grappling with the challenges of substance addiction-whether they are struggling themselves or standing by a loved one. And rest assured, we'll continue to share the powerful stories of impact that reflect the heart of our ministry along the way!

We hope you find this content both inspiring and helpful. May the Lord bless you richly!

Message From The CEO ... Glen Smeltzer

In the lobby of one of our Teen Challenge Canada centres, there is a glass case that holds memorabilia from the 1950s and 60s, honouring Rev. David Wilkerson and the beginnings of what we know today as 'Teen Challenge'. Staff, visitors, and clients alike admire these pieces as a glimpse into a bygone era.

This glass case reminds me of the metaphorical glass cases we all have in our lives. For some, these are our smartphones displaying favourite clips from our kids' soccer games. For others, it's the walls of our homes adorned with family portraits and vacation memories, or bookshelves lined with trophies from athletic triumphs. These personal 'glass cases' remind us of our history and, more importantly, our identity.

However, sometimes we unintentionally get stuck in our familiar and comfortable 'glass cases'. We become like Grizabella in the musical Cats, singing 'Memory' and nostalgically reminiscing about the past. To be successful, we must remember who we are and where we have come from, while also being open to new challenges and perhaps risks.

Teen Challenge Canada has always been willing to take risks to fulfill our purpose and mission: To demonstrate God's love by helping individuals become free from substance addiction and equipping them to live full and meaningful lives.

Throughout our history, we have taken on the toughest cases, helping men and women many would cast aside as lost causes. We have ministered to and supported those whom the average church or community group is not equipped to help. For over 50 years, Teen Challenge Canada has said "no" to ongoing government funding, instead relying on faithful donors to help provide 24/7 care to those society often deems as 'unlovely' or as a self-described 'rock bottom'. It has always been about trusting God and showing His love to those struggling with addiction.

As 1 in 5 Canadians-21% of our nation-struggle with severe drug and alcohol addiction and over 200 Canadians die every day due to issues related to substance abuse, Teen Challenge Canada is committed



to saying to anyone in substance addiction, "Come to us, there is hope, there is help, let us help you." Addiction itself has evolved, as has the complexity and availability of addictive substances. But as we adapt to better-serve those in need, we remain firm in our conviction that true freedom and hope are still found in Christ.

Teen Challenge Canada's mission is to demonstrate God's love by helping individuals become free from substance addiction and equipping them to live full and meaningful lives.

As a ministry, we strive to initiate new conversations and create resources for those who may never visit our centres, while continuing to offer our proven recovery program. We invite discussions with parents or family members who have guestions about what to do when they see signs that their loved one is struggling in addiction, and with members of local communities and practitioners who recognize that harm-reduction strategies and safe injection sites may help some, but still leave people in addiction.

We want to do a better job of providing resources for churches and business owners who find themselves alongside men and women in substance abuse, sharing what we've learned over 50 years of faith-based recovery. We are committed to being a beacon of hope in an often-overwhelming journey of recovery, providing guidance, encouragement, and practical tools to help navigate the complexities of addiction. This publication is the first step!

None of this would be possible without your faithful support. Your generosity allows us to extend our reach, offering hope and transformation to those in need

Thank you for standing with us.



Glen Smeltzer

CEO, Teen Challenge Canada

Beyond the **Stigma** of Addiction ...

stig·ma/'stigm!/

"...a mark of disgrace associated with a particular circumstance, quality, or person."

Letter from a Mother ...

Dear Teen Challenge Canada,

I'm reaching out with a heavy heart, literally in tears as I write this. Recently, my son confided to me that he's struggling with substance addiction. He said he feels "out of control" and what started as a marijuana addiction has now escalated to cocaine and pills. This has left me feeling conflicted and overwhelmed. I love my son dearly and want to support him, but I find myself grappling with the 'stigmas' of now being "a mother of an addict" and the shame that society will now place on my son. How do I help and understand him without judgment or fear? How do I deal with my own feelings while being supportive of his needs?

Sincerely, A Conflicted Mother

Dear Conflicted Mother,

Thank you for your heartfelt letter. You are not alone. Your concerns resonate deeply with many facing similar struggles, trying to support a family member or loved one in addiction. Please know that addiction can happen to anyone, regardless of background or circumstance. Recognizing that the road ahead for you, your family, and your son may be long and rocky, the first step in supporting him is understanding what he is going through, even in part, and moving beyond the ugly stigma associated with addiction.

Often, many might think, "At least I'm not an addict," when they see someone who fits society's stereotypical image of addiction. But addiction wears many faces. It can be a young man in a courtyard, sitting cross-legged on his sleeping bag, lighting up a crack pipe, unaware of his surroundings. Or it can be a business professional overwhelmed by life's pressures, suffering in secret, worrying that someone will find out she is drinking more and more each day just to function. The truth is, substance addiction does not discriminate.

Those in addiction are not just the 'unlovely' stereotypes we might envision. They are our neighbours, friends, and family members, and they are very important to God—they are His creation! Gerald May, in his book *Addiction and Grace*, reminds us that we all have compulsions that can control us. Whether it's alcohol, gambling, or even being overly self-critical, these compulsions can rob us of our freedom and ability to love. Yet, no one is beyond hope—even your son! May says, **"To be** alive is to be addicted, and to be alive and addicted, is to stand in need of grace."

Grace flows through our imperfections. Recovery is a journey with ups and downs and walking alongside someone in addiction often requires more than we can give on our own. This is why ministries like Teen Challenge Canada exist.

Understanding addiction requires redefining our perceptions. Not everyone falls into addiction the same way. Some, like Tina, a recent Teen Challenge Canada graduate, turned to abusing prescription drugs to cope with job-related stresses (www.changedlives.ca/tinas-story). Others, like Laura, another graduate, started experimenting with different identities to "fit-in" which led to partying and drinking profusely in high school, to cope with the stress of having to be perfect for her family (www.changedlives.ca/lauras-story). There is no single narrative when it comes to addiction. Each person's journey into and through addiction to sobriety, is unique. But help, hope, and freedom from addiction are possible.

When making a plan to support and come alongside your son, remember: recovery is not about "quickly getting over" or "conquering" the substance addiction; recovery is a daily commitment, day by day, choice by choice. An individual in addiction often lives with the shadows of his or her past, aware that triggers can resurface at any moment. And not just those in addiction: We all can struggle with forgiveness, anger, or other personal challenges, every day. It's a continuous practice of breaking the negative cycles in our lives, and many in substance addiction cannot do it on their own.

Finally, overcoming substance abuse involves more than willpower. While determination is vital, recovery is complex. Many Teen Challenge Canada graduates emphasize the need for a deep, personal desire to change, but they also know that it takes more than just strong mental and emotional strength. Support and community, away from the familiar individuals and environments related to their addiction, coupled with a personal faith in Jesus Christ, play deep and significant roles in recovery.

At Teen Challenge Canada, we find our help in Christ, who said, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." (2 Corinthians 12:9). It is in moments of true grace that transformation happens; coupled with healthy, support from family and friends, especially if the one in addiction is ready to receive help. Your son's journey may be long and challenging, but he is not beyond recovery and you are not alone. Your love, support, and willingness to look beyond societal stigmas—to love the unlovely, even when it gets ugly—can make a profound difference in his recovery. And we, at Teen Challenge Canada, are here to help.

With compassion,

Teen Challenge Canada www.teenchallenge.ca/get-help www.changedlives.ca



What Can Addiction Recovery Teach Us?

Individuals, Families & Communities

Letter from a local Church ...

Dear Teen Challenge Canada,

We are reaching out to seek your guidance and support. Over the past year, we have noticed a growing number of families in our congregation struggling with loved ones facing addiction. This crisis has left us feeling uncertain about how best to support these families. We are looking for encouragement, resources, and insights on what addiction recovery can teach us to better support our community. How can we, as a church, help these individuals and families navigate their challenges and foster an environment of understanding and healing?

Sincerely. A Concerned Church Community Pastor

Dear Concerned Church Community Pastor.

Thank you for reaching out. Your willingness to support those facing addiction in your community is commendable. The addiction crisis in Canada is significant. With one-fifth of Canadians addicted to illegal substances, 45% of young adults actively using cannabis in the past year, and one in five Canadians using psychoactive prescription drugs daily, the need for addiction recovery is great. Understanding what recovery can teach us is crucial in addressing this crisis and supporting our local communities.

What Can Recovery Teach Our Families?

> Understanding & Recognizing Enabling Behaviours

Addiction often involves rationalizations, self-deception, and lies we tell ourselves. In recovery, individuals must recognize they need help to overcome these internal battles. Families may also fall into similar patterns, believing they can handle everything alone within their family circles. In trying to help, they might unintentionally facilitate or "enable" the addiction. Recognizing and addressing these patterns is the first step toward breaking them. As Chanelle, a Teen Challenge Canada (TCC) graduate, says, "A lot of people that go through addiction, they don't understand it. Their families don't understand it. At a place like Teen Challenge Canada, people know what they are doing, and can help you get better" (www.changedlives.ca/chanelles-story). It's essential for families to hear this, Pastor, and the church can and needs to advocate for necessary family support, within community outreach circles and internal messaging.

Seeking External Support & Community Resources

Families need to know that they do not have to navigate the complexities of addiction and recovery alone. Seeking external support and utilizing community resources can provide the necessary tools and guidance. Churches can play a vital role in this, by connecting families with local 12-step programs, supportive mentoring accountability groups, or assisting individuals in navigating admissions to a Teen Challenge Canada centre. By fostering a sense of community and offering practical support, churches can be instrumental in guiding individuals and their families on their path to recovery.

Understanding the Importance of Interdependence

Recognizing one's interdependence and embracing a supportive community is a key step toward recovery. As Tracey, another Teen Challenge Canada graduate, recalls, "When I came to Teen Challenge Canada, I could barely walk the length of a driveway. I was met at the airport by supportive staff. When I got to the centre, I was greeted by a group of 20 people who were happy that I was there and encouraged me that I had made the right decision" (www.changedlives.ca/traceys-story). This sense of belonging and support is vital. Al, another TCC graduate, years after completing his program, still finds strength in the understanding and support of his "brothers" he met while in his program (www.changedlives.ca/als-story). Families can learn from these examples by fostering strong support networks both inside and outside the home. By incorporating these principles, church families can create a supportive environment that encourages recovery and growth. Pastor, your church can help by fostering these practices, providing resources, and offering a compassionate, understanding community for families dealing with substance addiction.

What Can Recovery Teach the Church?

Understanding Identity & Belonging

Addiction is deeply intertwined with questions of identity, and many individuals lose track of who they are. In recovery, discovering one's true self, away from substance abuse, can be challenging especially when transitioning into a positive and welcoming church community. It's essential for your congregation to accept and support individuals as they are, helping them find their true identity in Christ as they rebuild their lives away from addiction.

Recognizing Spiritual Warfare

Addiction is a profound struggle that touches our deepest needs. Adrian van Kaam, a Dutch writer and psychologist, described addiction as "a counterfeit of religious presence." Only God can help us become what He intended, and any attachment that steals our desire and freedom must be confronted. This battle requires consistent, dedicated support from the church. Equip your members with the understanding that supporting someone in recovery is a spiritual battle, requiring prayer, patience, and persistence.





What Can Addiction Recovery Teach Us?

Individuals, Families & Communities

<< Continued from pg.6-7

> Creating a Safe & Supportive Environment

Creating a welcoming and non-judgmental environment in your church is crucial. Whether on Sunday mornings, in midweek groups, or in different ministries, ensure that people struggling with addiction feel safe and accepted. Offer hope and encouragement, allowing them to feel understood rather than judged. This can significantly impact their journey to recovery.

> Providing Practical Resources & Support

As **Romans 15:13** says, **"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow** *with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."* Recovery is a journey filled with challenges and the need for grace to be given. Your church can play a crucial role in helping families struggling with addiction. Begin by encouraging open conversations about addiction and recovery, offering resources like Celebrate Recovery groups, family mentorship, and support groups.

By fostering a compassionate and understanding environment, your church can help individuals and families support and encourage their loved ones to seek the help they need for recovery. This support can be a lifeline for those struggling with addiction, providing them with the hope and resilience needed to stay on the path to recovery.

Our thoughts and prayers are with you, Pastor, as you continue to explore how to reach out and support those locally in addiction.

Sincerely, Teen Challenge Canada

Book a Teen Challenge Canada presentation or seminar today.



www.teenchallenge.ca/presentations

IFA With Teen Challenge Canada ...

Common Questions Received Across Canada

Who does Teen Challenge Canada help?

Teen Challenge Canada is dedicated to helping adult men and women, aged 18 and older, who are struggling with substance addiction. Our programs provide hope and a path to recovery for those ready to break free from the grip of addiction, regardless of their background or circumstances. We focus on providing a supportive environment where individuals can rebuild their lives, restore relationships, and find purpose through a faithbased approach.

What does the Teen Challenge Canada program look like?

A Teen Challenge Canada offers a 12-month, in-residence, faith-based addiction recovery program across Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario, and Atlantic Canada. The program includes three phases: Induction, Training, and Transition, with a focus on communal living, spiritual formation, addiction counselling, and work therapy. For those desiring continued support, an optional two-phase aftercare program for graduates extends the recovery journey for an additional 12-24 months, providing ongoing guidance and support.

What are the signs of addiction?

A Recognizing the signs of addiction is crucial for providing timely help and support. Addiction often begins subtly but can lead to significant changes in behavior, physical health, and emotional well-being. Key signs to watch for, include neglect of responsibilities, noticeable changes in behaviour, withdrawal from social activities, and significant declines in health and hygiene. Other indicators might include financial difficulties, secrecy, and changes in social circles or activities. It's important to approach these signs with compassion and understanding, as they often indicate a deeper struggle that requires support and intervention.

Why does faith matter in addiction recovery?

A In the battle against addiction, faith can be a powerful anchor. At Teen Challenge Canada, we believe that faith

in Jesus Christ is a vital component of lasting recovery. Faith offers individuals a source of hope, strength, and purpose, providing a foundation to rebuild their lives. It helps individuals connect with a supportive community, find meaning beyond their struggles, and develop a sense of accountability and responsibility. By placing trust in something greater than oneself, individuals are empowered to overcome their challenges and embrace a new-life in Christ—one of freedom, healing and sobriety.

Why is Teen Challenge Canada's program more affordable than other for-profit rehabilitation programs?

A Teen Challenge Canada is a non-profit, faith-based organization dedicated to making recovery accessible. We charge only a one-time fee of \$1100, and we do not accept any ongoing government funding. Instead, our core program is primarily funded by the generous support of individuals, businesses, and church donors. This community support allows us to provide comprehensive, 12-month, faith-based recovery services without the high costs associated with for-profit facilities, ensuring that financial barriers do not prevent anyone from accessing the care they need.

What can I do next if I or someone I care about needs help?

A Taking the first step toward recovery is a courageous decision, and it's important to know that you're not alone. At Teen Challenge Canada, we are here to support you or your loved one through the recovery journey. If you or someone you know is struggling with addiction, reaching out for help is a critical first step. You can contact our admissions team by calling our toll-free number at 1-877-343-1022, or visit our website at www.teenchallenge.ca/get-help for more information and to begin the application process. We're here to provide guidance, resources, and a supportive community to help you and/or your loved one find freedom from substance addiction, and start a new chapter in life.

Why Are Addiction Resources Needed?

Addiction is a pervasive issue that affects not only individuals but also families, communities, and society at large. The journey to recovery is often fraught with challenges, and for many, finding the right support can be a daunting task.

> The Growing Need for Resources

The statistics surrounding addiction in Canada are sobering. According to the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction, nearly 21% of Canadians aged 15 and older are addicted to illegal substances. This means that over 7.5 million Canadians are struggling with addiction today, and many more are impacted indirectly, whether they are family members, friends, or coworkers of those afflicted.

In recent years, the opioid crisis has brought the issue of addiction to the forefront of public consciousness. The devastating impact of opioid addiction has led to an increased demand for comprehensive and accessible resources that can help individuals navigate their recovery. But opioids are just one facet of a much larger problem. Addiction to alcohol, prescription drugs, and other substances continues to rise, creating a critical need for a variety of resources to address these issues.

> Why Diverse Resources Are Crucial

Addiction is a complex and multifaceted issue. It's not just about the substance being abused; it's also about the underlying psychological, emotional, and social factors that contribute to the addiction. Because of this, there is no one-size-fits-all solution to recovery. While faith-based programs like those offered by Teen Challenge Canada have proven to be lifechanging for many, others may find that different approaches resonate more with their unique circumstances.

On average, men and women who come to a Teen Challenge Canada centre have already participated in three or more different programs before finding their way to us. This reality highlights the importance of diverse resources. For many, our long-term, faith-based approach is the key to lasting change. For others, different methods may provide the breakthrough they need.

Diverse resources are crucial because they provide options. Whether it's a faith-based program, a medical treatment centre, a support group, or a combination of approaches, having access to a wide range of resources increases the likelihood that individuals will find the lasting help and recovery they need. Moreover, addiction is not just a personal battle-it often requires the involvement of family and friends, who also need support and guidance as they navigate the challenges of a loved one's substance addiction.

Finding the Right Resource

If you or a loved one is struggling with substance abuse, it's important to remember that help is available. The first step is often the hardest, but reaching out for support can be the beginning of a new chapter. We encourage you to explore the resources that are available to you and to find the one that best meets your needs.

At Teen Challenge Canada, we are here to support you, but if our program isn't the right fit, we want to ensure that you still have access to the help you need. For more information on a variety of addiction recovery resources, please visit our website at www.teenchallenge.ca/resources. Here, you'll find a region-specific, curated list of resources that may be better suited to your situation.

> There is Hope!

The journey to recovery is deeply personal, and finding the right support is essential. Whether through our year-long, faithbased programs across five provinces or other available resources, the most important thing is that you take that first step toward recovery. At Teen Challenge Canada, we believe addiction recovery is not just a physical battle but a spiritual one as well, and God's love is powerful enough to break any chain. Overcoming addiction may be a long and difficult battle, but you don't need to travel the road to recovery alone. With the right resources, there is hope, recovery is within reach, and freedom from substance addiction is possible.

For a list of Addiction Resources across Canada please visit our website.

www.teenchallenge.ca/resources





Teen Challenge is a drug & alcohol rehabilitation program with centres located across Canada. We offer help and hope to those struggling with alcoholism and/or addiction to other drugs.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT US AT WWW.TEENCHALLENGE.CA











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Teen Challenge Canada centres in the ...

Prairie Region

Teen Challenge Alberta Men's Centre

PO Box 24010 RPO Evergreen, Calgary, AB T2Y 0J9 PHONE: 403.931.3501 TOLL FREE: 1.800.856.8902

Teen Challenge Saskatchewan Men's Centre PO Box 21111, Saskatoon, SK S7H 5N9 PHONE: 306.257.3325 TOLL FREE: 1.877.396.9152

Teen Challenge Prairie Hope Women's CentrePO Box 21111, Saskatoon, SK S7H 5N9PHONE: 306.225.2213TOLL FREE: 1.866.663.7060

*For a full list of our other centre locations across Canada, visit our website.

Teen Challenge Canada Inc.

Lambeth Box 777, London, ON N6P 1R6 TOLL FREE: 1.888.417.7777 www.teenchallenge.ca







Teen Challenge Canada centres in the ... Ontario Region

Teen Challenge Ontario Men's Centre Lambeth Box 777, London, ON N6P 1R6 PHONE: 519.652.0777 TOLL FREE: 1.888.417.7777

Teen Challenge Ontario Women's Centre PO Box 100 Stn Main, Aurora, ON L4G 3H1 PHONE: 905.727.3913 TOLL FREE: 1.877.979.7770

Teen Challenge Northern Ontario Men's Centre PO Box 20012 RPO East End, Sault Ste. Marie, ON P6A 6W3 *RELOCATING TO SUDBURY, ON

Teen Challenge Eastern Ontario Men's Centre *PO Box 61 Stn Main, Renfrew, ON K7V 4A2* **PHONE:** 343.361.1011 TOLL FREE: 1.877.568.8282

*For a full list of our other centre locations across Canada, visit our website.

Teen Challenge Canada Inc.

Lambeth Box 777, London, ON N6P 1R6 TOLL FREE: 1.888.417.7777 www.teenchallenge.ca





Our Commitment ...

At Teen Challenge Canada, our commitment extends beyond the walls of our addiction treatment centres. We are dedicated to supporting individuals and families on their recovery journey, offering support, compassion and hope, regardless of whether they are admitted to our in-patient programs or not.

Celebrating over 50 years of addiction recovery, we continually expand our reach and improve our programs to meet the evolving needs of our communities. Through initiatives like this newsletter, we aim to provide resources and inspiration to those who may never come to our centres, but still need support.

Our mission is clear, to demonstrate God's love by helping individuals overcome substance addiction and live meaningful lives. We provide holistic, faith-based care, and by not relying on any ongoing government funding, we can stay true to our roots, values and mission.

Together, we are creating an environment of understanding and healing.

Thank you for being part of this journey with us.

Our mission is to demonstrate God's love by helping individuals become free from substance addiction and equipping them to live full and meaningful lives.





Teen Challenge Canada centres in the ... Atlantic Canada Region

Teen Challenge Atlantic Men's CentrePO Box 911, Moncton, NB E1C 8N8PHONE: 506.758.2377TOLL FREE: 1.800.965.7170

 Teen Challenge Atlantic Hope Women's Centre

 PO Box 8713 Stn 'A', St. John's, NL A1B 3T1

 PHONE: 709.781.7118

 TOLL FREE: 1.866.968.9450

*For a full list of centre locations across Canada, visit our website.

Teen Challenge Canada Inc.

Lambeth Box 777, London, ON N6P 1R6 TOLL FREE: 1.888.417.7777 www.teenchallenge.ca



