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**DISCLOSURE**

I currently have no financial relationship with commercial enterprises & cannot identify any potential conflict of interest for the purposes of this presentation.

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**Today's Talk**

- My Story
- Lessons Learned
- Questions and Answers

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### My Father

- Paramedic for 25 years with Durham Region EMS
- Huntington's Disease
- Alcoholic
- Took his own life in 2007



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### Progression of Drug Use

- Started smoking marijuana after High School
- Started using cocaine at age 19
- Started using Percocet's to numb out the pain of my fathers passing at age 22
- Introduced to Oxycodone over the course of 2 years, it escalated to using five 80mg OxyContin's a day

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### Consequences

- Spent over \$100,000 on drugs
- Lost girlfriend of three and a half years
- Lost sense of ethics and morale's
- Lost 50lbs
- Labelled as a junkie
- Written off by friends and family
- Became physically dependent on opioids



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### Beginning of Recovery

- Two failed attempts of trying to get off Oxycodone using the "Cold Turkey" method
- Began methadone program to stabilize my life
- Dissociated myself with everyone I used with
- Started working at Walmart to create an income

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### Journey through recovery

- Was on Methadone for 5 years
- Used cocaine for first 2 years of being on the program
- Went 2 years without gas in my home
- Went up to 4 days without eating on over a dozen separate occasions
- Stole food to survive
- Realization that I wanted more for my life

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### Creation of Inspire by Example

- Quit job at Walmart
- Created my own system to figure out what I wanted to do with my life
- Approached Co-Producer
- Took transit bus to the Bowmanville library to use internet and computers
- Sold my house
- Began training
- Completed methadone program

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### What is Inspire by Example?

The idea that by showing others what is possible and when leading by example, you inspire others to do the same

- Film
- Ride
- Addiction Awareness
- Living life to its fullest



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### Learning Curve

No experience in:

- Film
- Journalism
- Public Speaking
- Public Relations
- Had not rode a bike in 8 years



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### The Ride

- From Victoria, BC to St John, NL
- May 15/2014 to Aug 27/2014
- 7,914km
- Filmed documentary about prescription drug abuse and its prevalence across Canada



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### Bucket List

Teeing golf balls off the mountains in British Columbia



Skydiving in Montreal, QC



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### The Film

- My Journey/Story
- Interviewed
- Current/Recovering addicts
- Families who have lost someone to an overdose
- Addiction Counsellors
- Harm Reduction doctors
- Advocacy groups
- OxyContin Task Force in Newfoundland
- Lawyers spearheading class action lawsuit against Purdue Pharma (makers of Oxycontin)



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### Where I am now

- Member of the Canadian Advisory Board for Drugs Over Dinner
- Advised numerous institutions and organizations including the Canadian Minister of Health, Health Canada, Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse, National Advisory Council on Prescription Drugs, Partnership for a Drug Free Canada etc.
- Co-Authored Opioid Prescribing Guidelines for all of Canada
- Nominated for CAMH 2016 Transforming Lives Awards



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### Lesson's Learned

- Personal Accountability
- Encourage Others
- Turning liabilities into assets
- Make addiction work for you as oppose to against you
- NEVER QUIT!!!



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### Questions and Answers

ASK ME ANYTHING

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Thank you

[www.inspirebyexample.ca](http://www.inspirebyexample.ca)



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