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The Newsletter of Ray of Hope Inc.

# My Journey to Sobriety

Prior to connecting with Ray of Hope's Community Based treatment program, I had a long journey of ups and many downs. The youngest child in a broken home, my father was an abusive alcoholic who suffered and died from significant mental illness. My mom was preoccupied with her own trauma.

School was always a challenge. With all of the chaos going on at home, I did not make it to school often. In grade nine, I began using drugs to cope with my family dysfunction.

Initially, I felt people truly liked me when I was under the influence, and that I could be myself without being judged. However, the situation quickly changed for the worse. My boyfriend started to abuse me, my friends and I had a falling out, and people started threatening me. A lifestyle that had once seemed "carefree" and "glamorous" had become scary. Likely due to my drug use, I developed mental illness.

I decided I wanted to change. I got a job at a fast food restaurant to earn money and make connections with positive coworkers. For the most part, I cleaned up my act, but when I broke up with my boyfriend from work, I reverted to old coping strategies. In grade eleven, I dropped out of school after two run-ins with the police. Feeling unworthy of love, I let people use me for drugs, sex, or money.

I moved to Ottawa and graduated from an addiction treatment program,



only to relapse after moving back in with my mom in Kitchener. When I realized my life was not heading in a positive direction, I sought help at Ray of Hope.

Ray of Hope has been helping me through my sobriety journey this past year. During weekly sessions with my Addictions Counsellor, Brandi, we talk about healthy relationships, future planning, and healthy coping strategies. Currently Brandi and I are working through trauma therapy, with Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing.\*

Ray of Hope was there for me when no one else was; for that I will be forever grateful!

I appreciate Youth Addictions Services for many reasons. It's amazing how their services are available to the community, and how understanding, nonjudgmental, and caring the staff are. The program is flexible, and the staff are always willing to help in any way they can.

I am pleased that I have recently overcome many challenges. I have been clean since September 8th, 2017. I secured a part-time serving job which helped me to move out in December of 2017. On March 3rd, 2018, I spoke as a graduate of the treatment centre in Ottawa—which was a personal goal. I also completed my high school diploma and started college. Having worked hard to overcome my substance abuse, I am filled with hope that I can accomplish anything I set my mind to!

– Written by D., a Ray of Hope client

## About Ray of Hope's Addiction Treatment Services

Ray of Hope offers Community Based Treatment, Day Treatment (includes a 5 days/week school program and addictions counselling) and Residential Treatment (6 beds for male teens, includes 5 days/week school and addictions counselling) for youth 13 and up who are struggling with addictions. In addition to one-on-one addiction counselling sessions, and group therapy, Ray of Hope staff have widened their treatment tools to include EDMR and neurofeedback.

\*Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EDMR) is a psychotherapy treatment that helps to alleviate distress associated with traumatic memories. Three Ray of Hope Youth Addiction Services (YAS) staff are trained to use EDMR. YAS staff have recently begun using neurofeedback, a type of brain training that helps addicted youth regulate brain activity and reduce emotional and mental chaos

**MORE INFO AT**  
[www.rayofhope.net/need-help/youth-addiction/](http://www.rayofhope.net/need-help/youth-addiction/)  
 or call 519-743-2311.

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