

Compassion Project

Connecting in the Kootenays

If I say something about drugs or alcohol, I want people to know I mean it. People have to hide their use. It's like being in AA...you have your sobriety days, so if you go 'out' you have to start all over...but you don't lose that time... the gap of time that you were sober is still an accomplishment. The biggest thing I want people to know is that there needs to be more housing.

Sometimes it is hell being me. I try to live day by day being sober. The majority of us will fall again – each person is different and will find their own way to stop the cycle. The hardest part about being me is that I am dictated by my situation – the shelter I stay in is open from 4pm to 7am. I am tired and just want to rest. I just finished taking a course in school and I want to take another one but I can't do that when I am trying to stay warm during the day.

If I could have one wish it would be to tell my story. I've died twice. I wish people could REALLY hear my story. I want to share it to help others, like kids who are getting into drugs.



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I want people to see beyond the uniform. I want them to see me, because I see them; I see daughters and sons, Moms and Dads, Grandparents. I may not meet them at their best, but I know their addiction or their mental illness is only a part of them, and does not have to define them. Just like the yellow strip down my uniform does not define me.



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*I have a choice
I choose to fight
Some days I lose
I win more now than I lose*

*The days are sunnier
Not as dark
The will to live is stronger than the will to die
The will to be clean is stronger than the will to use*

*Sometimes the demons don't stop
They just come relentlessly, pounding at my head and heart
What matters
I'm still here, despite what stats say about women like me
The murdered, the missing and the voiceless*

*I am here, I have a voice, I have a face
Maybe, just maybe one day you will be honoured enough to know this face and this voice
My face and my voice won't disappear
I owe it to every woman who came before me
To fight
To change opinions
To shatter stigmas
That are killing mothers, daughters, and sisters.*

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Working with people that abuse substances is challenging and fulfilling. There is a level of empathy and compassion along with frustration and anger. I want to help people. I want to alleviate some pain and suffering. I believe most people do not choose to abuse substances. There is often underlying circumstances that unfortunately cannot be easily fixed. I have learned that I can help by walking along with them and helping them where they are; wherever that is. No judgement, no expectations.

It is challenging to be me. I have so many goals and interests that sometimes I get pulled in many directions and don't feel I succeed at anything. I have passion for working with marginalized populations. I have compassion and see the worth in every person. I don't think I am all that different from most people.

We face challenges, some greater than others. I have faced some pretty big life challenges and can understand how or why someone might have turned to substances, how they might want to hurt themselves, how they might want to give up.

I had some pretty great influences in my life; I hope I can be that for someone.

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*I'm sit'n here worrying
I'm scared it's too late
I've only rhymes to bring
Attention to this fate
I'm ranting and raving
A life for a life
Justice systems coving
Loss cuts like knife
The crown wants 18 years
3rd bust for dealing dope
Kin folk drowning in tears
How the hell does one cope?
900 plus dead in BC
When will it all be done
No answer unfortunately*

*What is the solution?
She was just a lil' girl
Her furture yet unfurl
Circumstancing fates first
Callow kid on the brink
Womanhood and addiction
She was gone in a blink
Yet the story is not done junkies are people too
Hookers, busilers and hypes
Pigeon square offers a clue
The morgue is outta room
The kids are dropping like flys
Not equipped for this boom
No one cares if they die
They're "disposable folk"*

*Ignorance is not bliss
Tell me it's a hoax
Turn your back...it's abyss
Naiwetés no excuse
It may cost you your life
Loved ones left to deduce
Survivors flooded in strife
If you have an answer
I'll listen to your cure
Same company as cancer
Beyond tough to endure
I won't hold my breath
I don't look good in blue
Same colour as death
Beating this will be a coup*

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I have always wanted to be understood. I have journaled everything in my life. It got the hurt out. Living in a small community, people see me. They see that I am hurting. If the community only knew that the drugs I did were because I was hurting. I got molested and no one did anything, not even my mom. I felt like a piece of shit. My mom didn't like that I went on methadone even though it helped me to not do heroin. It helped me to stop withdrawing so I could do things during the day. My body rejects drugs now...but I still hate myself. I used heroin with fentanyl in it. I died then was given Narcan -it was so shitty - I went into withdrawal. I never want that to happen again. I am going to help people. People do bad things like smuggle and deal because they are broke and hungry. If we could just all be positive and caring, if we had world peace, we could just help each other...how exciting would that be...that would be amazing.

It is good to be me. I have friends and family who love me. I must have something in me that speaks to animals because they love me too.