

## Nebraska Licensee Assistance Program

Substance abuse assistance for health service professionals licensed, certified or registered by the State of Nebraska

### A Nurse's Recovery Story

I am a Christian, a nurse, a friend and many other things, but the one thing I am that I can least afford to forget is that I am an alcoholic and addict. How and why I am an alcoholic and addict are important only in they help me to remember where I've been so I don't have to go back. It truly makes no difference to me today where I picked up the disease of alcoholism. Just knowing that I suffer from it is enough.

My first experience with the disease was thirty years ago. While in nursing school and my first couple of years of working, alcohol became the controlling factor in my life. Not all at once, but once it did gain control, I was out of control. I missed work, was hung over when there, got picked up for DWI and almost lost my job. I had little relationship with my family. My life revolved around when or where we would be going that day or night and I knew alcohol would be involved. I ended up in inpatient treatment and began the slow walk of recovery. I attended meetings, made new friends, came to understand some of who my Higher Power was for me and worked some of the steps of AA.

I stayed sober for four years. My marriage to an alcoholic ended after eighteen months although we did have two beautiful daughters. Life was not easy as a single parent. I quit going to meetings and having time with my AA friends. It wasn't a conscious move. I was just busy with my life.

I drank socially for quite a few years. Well, social might be a stretch. I would drink too much on occasion and do things I had promised myself I wouldn't let happen again. I began to use marijuana casually from time to time. I could function better being "high" than on alcohol, so this became my drug of choice. I married a second time and was blessed with a wonderful son who is nineteen today.

When I divorced again, I met the person that I now know my Higher Power intended for my life. However, at the time he was someone who could drink and use with the best of us. Within a short time the alcohol, drugs, and our relationship became the most important things in my life. Sure, I felt guilty at times, but the alcohol and drugs could usually take care of that in a short time.

On the outside, I would still come across as the successful person I wanted people to think I was. It wasn't to stay that way. I changed jobs knowing I was close to losing the one I had. I continued to drink and use, missed work, my finances were a mess, my son was fed up with me, my relationship was out of control. I was out of control.

Work confronted me and put me on a leave of absence and referred me to LAP. I remember being so angry. Who did they think they were and who were these people? There was nothing wrong with my life, and why did people need to interfere with it.

Judi asked me to go to intensive outpatient alcohol/drug treatment. I thought fine. I'll jump through whatever hoops I need to to keep my license and gain a little control back in my life. I quit drinking and using for a short time and I could see that I hadn't necessarily been making some of the best choices. I thought I'd quit for a while and everyone would be happy.

Today I can honestly say, with no reservations, that this was one of the greatest blessings of my life. I began attending AA meetings, working with a sponsor and working the steps of AA. I came to truly understand the disease of alcoholism and addiction. LAP was always there to keep me on the straight and narrow until I could find the tools and people I needed to successfully fight the disease. I came into this program broken and lost. I had been searching for something all my life and I can say I found it.

Today I have a more balanced life. It no longer revolves around alcohol and drugs and what I can get from life or what life owes me. My life has my Higher Power first, then AA, my family and friends, work, and service to others.

I will always be grateful for the opportunity to be involved with the LAP program and the people involved with it. They truly are servants of a healing Higher Power. I had nothing good to say about them when I first was put in contact with them. But today I know I will never be able to express the gratitude I feel for their caring, giving, and loving spirits.

If you are a licensed health service professional or an employer wanting more information about substance abuse or addiction recovery or other related issues, please contact the Nebraska Licensee Assistance Program (NE LAP) at (800) 851-2336 or (402) 354-8055 or visit our website at [www.lapne.org](http://www.lapne.org). If you know of or are concerned about a colleague's alcohol/drug abuse, contact the NE LAP for appropriate intervention and ongoing support. You may be saving a life, a family or a career.