

Imagine if we could drink all the beer we want. We get intoxicated and our emotional pain gets numbed. But if we were to repeat it, day in and day out, drinking more beer each time, will we be immune to its effects?

Like everyone else, Caroline's answer was yes too. After going through divorce and mounting family problems, the pain she felt could no longer be drowned by bottles of beer. She needed something more powerful to numb this pain. When Caroline's friend introduced her to meth (methamphetamine), she took it. Unfortunately – or, fortunately, as some would say - Caroline was caught by the police the first time she tried this crystalline, grainy substance.

The first person she had to face - with mixed feelings – was her father. Caroline and her father shared a rocky relationship, strained by her records of truancy, suspension from school and a narrow escape from expulsion. Caroline could not predict how her father would respond to this criminal offence.

Their communication during the weeks after this piece of news was marked by familiar bouts of tension, silence, and unspoken words. Yet, through all of this, she experienced her father's unwavering love for her, however subtly. He would sit on the sofa late into the night, waiting for Caroline's return. Caroline was touched by his grace and love, which she reciprocated by making a point to signal her return by audibly closing the front door.

Apart from being touched by her father's willingness to help her, Caroline's desire to be a good mother to her kids sealed her commitment to change for the better. She did not want to live a life serving a jail term that would separate her from her kids. Believing that she should treasure these chances that don't come easily, Caroline took concrete steps to change: she deleted the contacts of the friends whom she took drugs with, changed her phone screen wallpaper to a picture of her family and perhaps most boldly, she cut her hair short for the first time.

But change wasn't so easy. Caroline recounts a memorable quote from a previous drug addict, "The demon always lives inside of you. The addiction is real, the struggle is real."

Even at the beginning of her time at YGOS under the Youth Enhanced Supervision (YES) programme, she didn't think that anyone could truly understand her difficulties and struggles. But time and unwavering love have their ways to open hearts.



Caroline
Female, 22 years-old
Youth Enhanced Supervision (YES)

“Charis just didn’t give up on me. When I didn’t want to talk, she would be able to sense my reluctance and find a gentler approach. I also grew close to the youths in my programme. They have been where I was before. We were able to talk candidly in a way that I never will with my other friends.”

Caroline also credits her colleagues for being her life-line: they fought for a second chance at work for her and gave her morning calls to motivate her to go to work. After work, they brought her out to karaoke lounges to keep her occupied, knowing that overthinking would consume her and pull her into relapse.

To date, Caroline has successfully graduated from YES. While she still does not know how to explain to her children when she goes for her regular urine tests, she finds herself a lot happier now. Her family has learnt to communicate more effectively; family outings have notably increased too. Throughout her entire journey, various groups of people have rendered her tremendous support. Starting life afresh now, she is determined not to disappoint them anymore.

