

# Addiction: Harrowing accounts from people who've been there

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Fear, guilt and shame — those three emotions haunted Mary Mayes so much, they kept her from seeking recovery from her drug and alcohol addiction for years.

"It is the fear, guilt and shame that kept me from seeking treatment before, and if I had not overcome my own fears, shame and guilt I do not think I would have stayed clean," Mayes said.

She discussed her addiction and recovery Wednesday afternoon, after Gov. Jay Nixon signed a proclamation designating September as Alcohol and Drug Recovery Month.

Mayes vividly recalls days spent doing drugs and drinking. Her life for nearly 17 years consisted of drugs, alcohol and staying one step ahead of a society she felt would look upon her disease with shame, as she cared for her children.

She found herself on probation for five years because of a distribution conviction. While on probation, "I got in trouble again," she said.

"Only this time it was for possession."

Mayes found herself in Cole County Drug Court, and then treatment following a failed drug test.

"I actually decided to get clean before I even started treatment," she said. "I was clean two years on September 6."

Getting treatment does not mean the battle is over once an addict has finished 30 days of treatment or completed years of sobriety.

"This is a spiritual process. It is not about  
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## Addiction: Challenges in recovery

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perfection," said Randall Evers. "I have been in recovery for 15 years and can tell you, like they say in Alcoholics Anonymous, it is a journey, not a destination."

Evers battled both drug and alcohol addiction.

His ex-wife also was using, and he could not bare to watch his son and daughter live a life like that any longer.

"At the job I had they were going to start doing drug testing," he said. "I was a father and had a mortgage. For the first time in my life, I decided I had to step up to the plate."

Evers sought treatment when his children were in their early teens.

"My wife, at the time, kept using for another five years until I left," he said. "It was by the grace of God that I was able to stay sober those five years."

Recovery is a process that can he

hindered by many things.

Mayes explained: "I always wanted help, but I did not want to lose my kids. I was struggling and they were there with me, but I was afraid of losing them and of what others would think of me."

Those who have entered recovery are faced with challenges they feel many in society do not understand.

Crystal Hampton's sister died after an overdose and long battle with various forms of addiction, especially prescription-drug addiction.

"I think this is inspiring to see so many people of different backgrounds, different races, different ages, men and women and the different socio-economic backgrounds," she said. "It is great for the to see — for everyone to see there are all types of people battling addiction and that, with work, everyone can have a successful recovery."