

Son's addiction



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

" I'll be fine. I've stopped using."(Sheff, 13) This was the lie that Nic used to tell his heartbroken father. His struggle to his son's addiction is evident as he goes through devastation and stress. The charming and talented Nic had gone beyond the point of repair. He lives a life of self destruction, crime as well as deception. He breaks into the family's home and steals money, developed a sense of denial and lies about where he is and what is he is doing. He also calls for help and declines to comply with the conditions of the offer. Sheff goes through struggles as he tries to protect his younger brother and sister as well as his wife from his addicted son. Indeed, Sheff suffers a near fatal disease, brain hemorrhage (Sheff, 2007). His journalistic skills enable him to learn extensively about the effects of meth on the brain as well as the treatments available.

Sheff tells the story of his son's drug addiction from the parent's point of view. His son, Nic became an addict without his knowledge. Before he developed an addiction of alcohol and meth, Nic was a university student who used to perform very well. He was a responsible student. Nic is described as a " beautiful boy" simply because his characters were charming and acted as role model to others for his hard work. Immediately after he became an addict, he changed totally. He goes into an extent of stealing money from his younger brother. He also started living in the streets. Sheff is haunted by the past memories of how his son was compared with his current life. Nic is living a tormenting life. He is living in cracked houses in Oakland; he makes garbled phone messages as well as break-ins in the streets (Sheff, 2007). Just lik any other parent, Sheff grieves for the condition of his son and wishes to turn things the way they were before.

Sheff kept wondering what happened to the once beautiful boy. He also wondered what he did wrong that culminated into this addition of his son. This marked the beginning of journey of his son's rehabilitation. Moreover, after Nic became an addict, his behaviors changed immediately. For example, his charm went away, he became a liar, stole and started living on the streets. Indeed, Sheff began to notice changes in his son. This acted as a warning as he encountered several signs. Sheff states that after he was fully aware that his son had become addicted to drugs, " his son's addiction became an addition in itself" (Sheff, 18). He began worrying as he was preoccupied with thoughts of what steps he could take to reverse the condition of his son. Worry and stress started to torment him. However, he did not give up. He instinctively sought for any available treatment that could save his son. Sheff's received the first subtle signs from his son: the denial, phone calls made at 3 AM ((is it Nic? the police? the hospital? (Sheff, 42). This marked the search for treatment as he was not ready to watch his son suffer to self destruction.

Sheff states that the condition of his son's addiction affected all the members of the family. No one was at peace. Nic's behavior became a nuisance for his younger brother and sister who always found their money had been stolen. Sheff feels enraged as he perceives the condition of his son as a real loss to the family. He expresses his emotions. He states, " We do not talk about Nic. It's not that we're not thinking about him. Hiss addiction and its twin, the specter of his death, permeate the air we breathe". His fears and emotions for his son are confirmed as he adds that," if he were to die, or for that matter, if he stays high, I would live on --with that crack. I

would grieve I would grieve forever. But I have been grieving for him since the drugs took over - grieving for the part of him that is missing”.

The condition of Nic had deteriorated. He had 18 month of sobriety. This was followed by a number of lapses and later moves closer to his mother. Now, his home is in the streets as he only comes home for short visits. At times, he becomes sober and only returns home to steal. Nic is on Sheff's mind always. For instance, as he goes outing with his son, Jasper, this is what goes on in his mind “... there's an astonishing swath of shocking pink flowers, exotics left over from a long-abandoned garden: pink ladies, pink like cotton candy. We sit there quietly, listening to a birdsong and wind in the leaves. Suddenly I am flooded with dejavu. I have been here before. Sitting on this same log. But with Nic” (Sheff, 89).

In his quest to find treatment of his son, he faces several obstacles as no one really knows how to deal with meth addiction and the best treatment available. This exposes the bitter truth as he states that he did not cause Nic's addiction, thus, he cannot control or cure it. He shifts his attention from his son to his own condition (Sheff, 2007). Although there is a glimmer of hope at the end of the book, the author does not give a clear picture whether his son recovers or not. However, the message is sent home: the effects of meth addiction to the user and to those close to him.