

## **Father Beats Drug Addiction and Wants His Daughter Back in His Life**

***The Edmonton Drug Treatment Centre refers a father who has beaten his serious drug addiction, to MRJC as he wants his daughter who he hasn't seen for 13 years, back into his life.***

***Scenario:*** Drug addictions destroy families. A father, Brad, battles addiction and beats it. After serving time in jail, and coming clean, Brad wants to re-connect with his daughter, Jessica, who he hasn't seen for more than 13 years. Brad wants to Build Safer Ground, and through a referral from the Edmonton Drug Treatment Centre, MRJC will help this family to get through a very difficult choice for all involved.

Jessica's mom, Tammy, doesn't want Brad back in Jessica's life. However, Tammy recognizes that Jessica will want to meet her dad one day, and that she can do so on her own, once she turns 18. Brad says that he abandoned Jessica because of his addiction. Tammy and Brad decide that they should meet to discuss the possibility of Brad becoming more "dad-like" in Jessica's life.

***MRJC's Restorative Dialogue Team Gets Involved:*** Tammy and Brad accept the referral from the Edmonton Drug Treatment Centre to MRJC's Building Safer Ground program. They know that they cannot dialogue about this sensitive issue alone, and that this process is safe, voluntary, confidential, and at no cost to either of them. It is agreed that Brad will be accompanied by his Probation Officer, which provides some comfort to Tammy.

MRJC's respectful and impartial Restorative Justice Facilitators help Tammy and Brad to talk directly about impacts of the harm resulting from Brad's absence in Jessica's life, for each of them, and for Jessica.

Brad shares concerns about his lack of responsibility and takes full responsibility for his actions and inactions over the past 13 years. Tammy better understands the reasons for Brad's absence in Jessica's life, and she has a somewhat greater appreciation of the influence that drugs have had in his life choices. Brad better understands how his poor life choices have impacted both Tammy and Jessica.

Tammy feels more confident that Brad is much more stable now. She sees that he now lives in a safe, home environment, far removed from the influence of drugs and his prior addictions. Brad supports Tammy by helping her to remove self-blame for how things went in their relationship

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and ultimately, for Jessica. They agree to take some baby steps toward restoring a father/daughter relationship between Brad and his daughter, Jessica.

Building Safer Ground helps parents and families where abuse has taken place, to set goals together. It gives both the victim, and the offender, a unique, safe and fully-supported opportunity to ask questions of one-another, to talk constructively and to gain insights into behaviors that are completely unacceptable and extremely hard-to-comprehend. Everyone gains a better understanding of the harm committed and its impact on all involved.

**MRJC invests countless hours helping people like Tammy and Brad to dialogue about sensitive issues, to set goals that help to address the harm committed, and to Build Safer Ground.**

***To find out more about MRJC's Restorative Dialogue process, please call us at 780.423.0896.***