

POSITIVE PEER ~ Irwin Foster

Irwin Foster fought the hard fight to avoid the life of addiction he experienced his parents trapped in as he was growing up. As a young boy he “saw it all” and in those early years **was lucky to have community support** to help keep him focused on being an athlete and working jobs while his parents were distracted by a life of drug use. He was very accomplished in high school and was even chosen to be a peer counselor. The jobs he worked at were to help support his siblings when his parents couldn't. He knew not to use drugs and in some ways believed he enabled his parents by keeping it together himself and taking care to make sure his brothers and sisters were fed, etc. He learned to be an adult at an early age.

After high school and managing a renovation company, he moved to New Mexico from California. Shortly after his grandfather passed away he began to get more and more exposed to the world of drugs. He started transporting drugs but things took a turn for the worse when he saw his uncle, a man whom he respected for having a family, a good job and good life, start using. He was shocked but he thought that if his uncle could live a functional life and use drugs, he could too. He would clean up for a while then start selling and using again. When his family left him, he took it hard. **He always wanted to be a different man, different from his parents, but the drugs stuck to him** and he went deeper in with it all.

In 2011 he felt he would never see the light again when he ended up in jail in Socorro. He felt so raw as he was losing his second family. Everything he tried so hard to avoid was coming true. When his lawyer called him a junkie it was his rock bottom. **Someone was finally honest with him** and told him what no one else was willing to say.

He climbed out of that dark place and worked hard to get his life back. It was a struggle but he knew he had to strip his life down, focus, simplify, and **take time to heal**.

Now he can reflect and look back after these years of sobriety and see how his childhood played out in his addiction and generational trauma. He realizes that even when you are clean and sober **you have to work at working your life**, take things one day at a time, and keep yourself in a safe space in your recovery.

He is now the lead peer at Duke City Recovery and focuses on helping people understand what they are going through with their feelings and emotions as they step into a life of recovery.

Irwin himself does not have a sobriety date. He focuses on **moving forward** and keeping up with his kids that live with him. He has a six year old girl who only knows her dad as sober and his three boys, ages 9, 13 and 14 who are starting to get into sports....taking after their dad.

Thank you Irwin for your amazing resilience and courage.