

# Great Lakes ATTC Portage Substance Abuse & Mental Health Conference

Presents

## Breaking Intergenerational Patterns of Trauma, Addiction and Dark Family Secrets

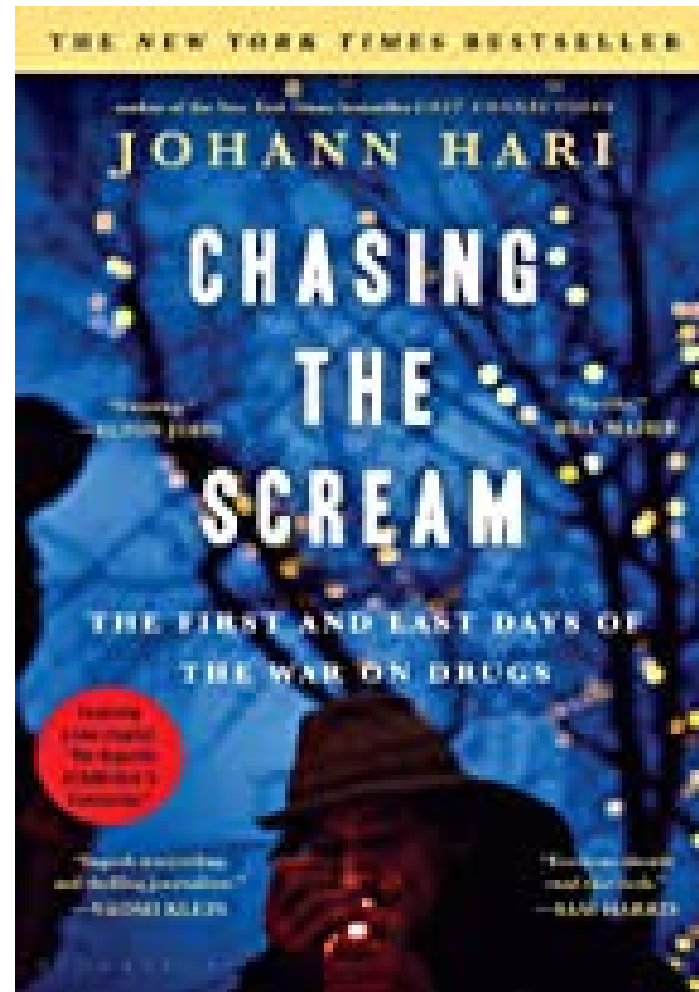
Presenter

Mark Sanders, LCSW, CADAC

# Risk Factors for Intergenerational Patterns of Addiction

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- Trauma



Source: amazon.com

# Adverse Childhood Experiences ACE's

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Before age 18 (10 ACE's)

- Abuse (physical, emotional, sexual and/or neglect)
- Exposure to parental domestic violence
- Parental mental illness or Substance Use Disorder
- Parental separation or divorce
- Loss of a parent through death, deportation, incarceration

# Results

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- Compared to an ACE's Score of 0, a person with a score of 4 is 8 times more likely to develop a Substance Use Disorder
- A score of 5, the person is 10 times more likely to develop a Substance Use Disorder
- Life expectancy of a person who scores 6 is age 60 (monitoring)

"A bold, creative, and compassionate work."  
—SHARON SALZBERG, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Real Happiness*

# It Didn't Start With You

HOW INHERITED FAMILY TRAUMA  
SHAPES WHO WE ARE AND  
HOW TO END THE CYCLE

Mark Wolynn



Source: amazon.com

# *Tuskegee Experiment*



Source: flicks commons





# GOING FROM THE PROJECTS TO PH.D.

Transcending My Geography



DR. YVETTE L. PYE





# Strategies to Break Intergenerational Patterns

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1. Shift the unit of service in prevention and treatment from the individual to the family and extended family.

# Clinical Strategies Continued

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2. Let parents with Substance Use Disorders know that their children are at increased risks for developing a Substance Use Disorder and provide education on how parenting styles can impact child and adolescent substance use.

# 3 Parenting Styles

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- Autocratic – children have no voice
- Democratic – children have a voice
- Laissez – faire – anything goes

# Strategies Continued

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3. When working with adolescents with trauma at risk for addictions provide preventive services for their younger siblings.

# Strategies Continued

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4. Help families with generational histories of trauma and addiction think about new family memories.



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“Son, we shouldn’t be comparing arrest stories.  
We need new memories.”

“Let’s play AA.”



# Strategies Continued

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6. Help families with generational trauma and addiction improve parent/child relationships.

- Parenting time with each child
- Family rituals and drug free celebrations
- Drug free cultural celebrations
- Positive relationship with an aunt or uncle
- Communicate high expectation and support their dreams
- Mentorship for each child

# Strategies Continued

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- Teach healthy family boundaries
  - Loose- everyone is doing their own thing, no one is aware of what's going on with other family members
  - Enmeshed- family members are too close
  - Healthy- everyone is allowed the 5 freedoms

# The Five Freedoms

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- To think what you think rather than what you should think
- To feel what you feel rather than what you should feel
- To want what you want rather than what you should want
- To see what you see rather than what you should see
- To imagine your own self actualization

## *Strategies Continued*

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- Address family secrets



# Good Family Secrets

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- Santa Claus
- The tooth fairy
- Surprise birthday party
- How you feel about people as people

# Dark Secrets

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# Level I Dark Secrets

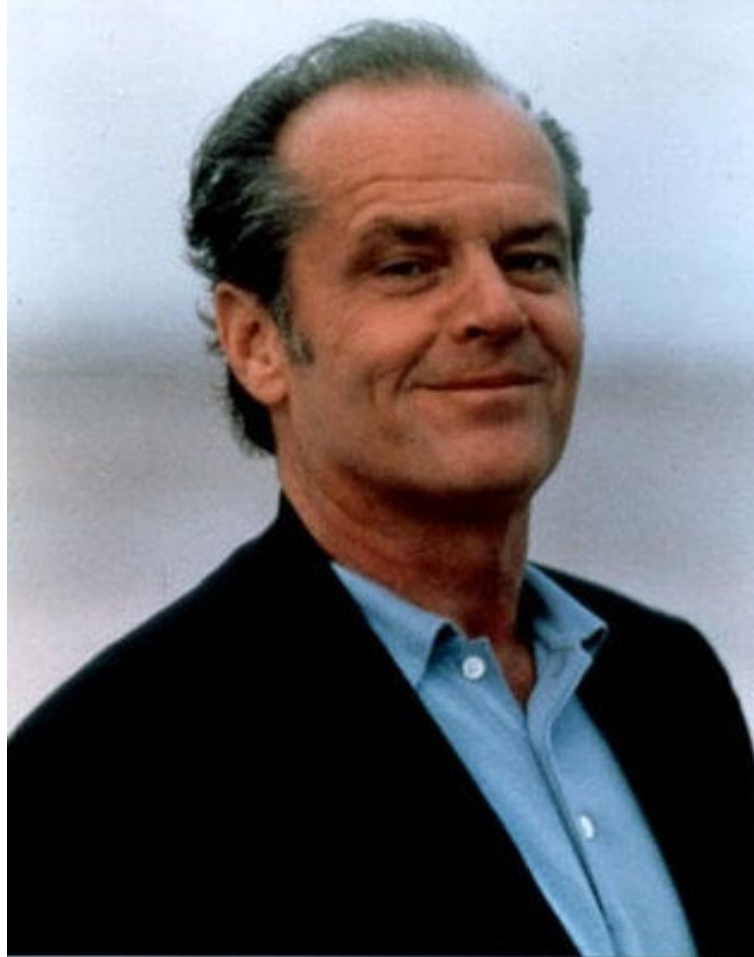
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- Phobias
- The intimate details of an affair

# Level II Dark Secrets

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- Your real ethnicity
- Adoption status
- Who your parents really are



Source: flicks commons

# Secrets Theory

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Everyone in the family knows the secret.  
They will repeat the secret across generations  
until the secret is openly dealt with.

Source: Family Secrets



# Level III Dark Secrets

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- Addictions
- Living with addictions

# Level IV Dark Secrets

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These secrets cause the most damage if not discussed

- Incest
- Childhood sexual abuse
- Sexual assault
- Torture
- Witnessing extreme violence
- “The secret that you only tell once”

# Protective Factors to Prevent the Intergenerational Transmission of Addiction

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Source: flicks commons

# Family Dinners

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# Mother Nurture: Life Lessons from America's Best and Brightest

by

Stephanie Hirsch

with

Hannah Seligson





Steven Spielberg

Source: flicks commons

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Children and adolescents who eat dinner with their parents 5 times per week use 3 times fewer drugs than those who eat dinner with their parents twice a week.

# Protective Factors Continued

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- Family celebrations
- Mentorship
- A membership
- Later onset of substance use
- Early treatment of mental illness and trauma

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# Protective factors for children of parents with Substance Use Disorders

# Protective Factors Continued

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- A Matrix (a safe place)
- Constant & predictable routines
- The ability to get adopted by surrogate families
- The behavior to see the consequences of behavior before they engage in it.
- Lot of activities

# Protective Factors COA's Continued

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- Address the Fetal Alcohol Spectrum
- A belief that they are responsible for managing their own lives
- A sense of belonging
- Later onset of substance use
- Early trauma and attachment-based therapy
- Insight

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My parent has a disease that is characterized by emotional unavailability, broken promises, and inconsistency. I did not cause this problem. I cannot control it or cure it.

# Protective Factors COA's Continued

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- An affirming mirror
- An adult who has high expectations
- Later onset of substance use
- Encourage excellence rather than perfection
- The chance to express their feelings



# Appropriate Response to the Feelings

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"I believe you."

Normalization of the feelings

Reflection of feeling

"I could see how you would feel that way."

"You are not alone."



Drew Barrymore

Source: flicks commons



## Charlize Theron

When Charlize was 15, her mother went to prison for killing her dad who often physically abused her mom when he was under the influence.

Source: flicks commons



Kelly Osbourne

Source: flicks commons



## Halle Berry

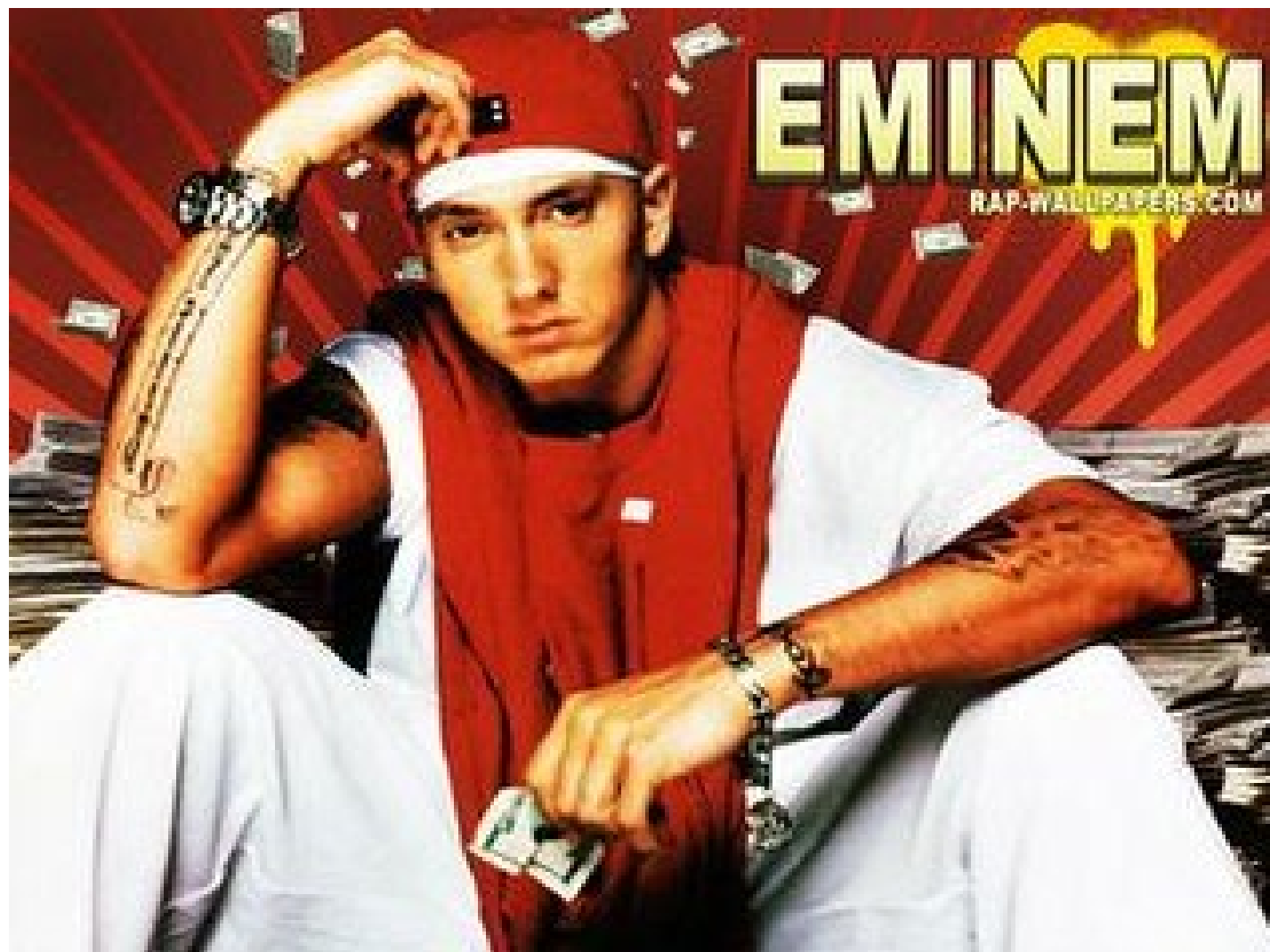
Her father had Alcohol Use Disorder and was and physically abusive to her mother and sister.



## Tupac Shakur

Tupac Shakur's mother had stimulant use disorder.

Source: flicks commons



Source: flicks commons



Jay Z

Source: flicks commons





Nicki Minaj

Her father had substance use disorder.

Source: flicks commons



Rihanna

Source: flicks commons

# The Healing Forest, The Entire Community as the Recovery Center

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Don Coyhis  
Founder, White Bison

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*"Suppose you have 100 acres full of sick trees who want to get well. If each sick tree leaves the forest to find wellness and then returns to the forest, they get sick again from the infection of the rest of the trees. The Elders taught us that to treat the sick trees, you must treat the whole forest. You must create a healing forest. If not, the trees will just keep getting sick again. The community forest is now filled with alcoholic trees, drug-addicted trees, co-dependency trees, domestic violence trees, and trees with mental illness. The soil in which those trees are growing is missing the ceremonies, the songs, the stories, the language and the wisdom of our Elders."*

*Don Coyhis  
White Bison*



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What hidden resources exist within the community that can be a part of a healing forest to support recovery and help break intergenerational patterns?

# The Healing Forest

## The Community as the Treatment Center

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- Families
- Treatment centers
- Faith based organizations
- Other social service organizations
- Persons in long term recovery
- The formerly incarcerated
- Employers-we can learn a lot from Portugal
- Concerned citizens
- Trauma specialist (current and historical)

# Alkali Lake, First Nation Tribe, British Columbia Canada

- One recovery at a time
- AA On the reservation
- Treatment encouraged
- The entire tribe repairs homes of individuals in treatment
- Restoration of the tribal council
- Return to culture
- Redefining addiction as a response to trauma
- Healing historical Trauma
- Personal growth Retreats
- Helping other indigenous Communities



*That's all Folks!*