PTSD IN CHILDREN AND TEENS  -  Children, youth and families experience trauma in their lives that can have immediate and long-term effects on their ability to function at school, in the home, and with peers. Untreated trauma can have long-lasting effects on our mental and physical health, and our ability to achieve success in adult life. Participants will have an opportunity to identify how different factors and trauma impact brain and emotional development and will gain increased awareness of the signs and symptoms of PTSD in children and youth. (Warren Phillips, PhD) – 6 Hours

Sat., July 19 (9am-4:30pm) - CEDAR RAPIDS   /   Sat., Aug. 2 (9am-4:30pm) - SIOUX CITY
A Step in My Direction

When I despaired, people’s kindness helped me find my way back to my children.

Written By: James X Sumrow

My kids were taken into custody in 2007. I was using meth and selling also.

I never, ever wanted to hurt my kids. I thought I loved them with all my heart.

At the time, Jayme was 2 and Sheryl was 3. My kids loved to be with me. I rode a bike with a trailer attached to the back that the kids loved to ride in. They would cry when I went somewhere by myself.

But I was also using every day.

A Hijacked Brain

I grew up in a home with parents who were good to us kids and I had a lot of friends. I was into sports and BMX racing. But at 12 I drank a beer-and-a-half in our backyard and that’s when I thought I’d arrived. After that, I moved on to weed and coke and eventually meth. My parents did everything they could to keep me on track, and I managed to finish high school, go to barber college and get a job in my dad’s shop, but all my money went to drugs.

By the time my kids were taken, I was living with them in my barbershop and spending my time going up and down alleys stealing copper and aluminum to sell for dope.

My kids had nice clothes and toys, and they ate pretty well. But there were also many times when I’d spent all my money on drugs and they had to eat ramen noodles. Other times I put them in situations they should not have been in.

When my kids weren’t with me they lived with their mother. She and I fought all the time. Still, I thought everything was just fine. I believed that if everyone would mind their business my life would be OK. The truth of the matter is that dope was the most important thing and I could not see it. It is sad to admit but my kids came second.

Allegations of Drug Abuse

Then one day I took some dope over to a motel room where my kids and their mother were staying with a guy who was also selling. I sold him some dope, visited my kids for a few minutes, and left.

The next day both my daughters started vomiting. I just thought they had caught something.

But a couple of weeks later, child protective services contacted my kids’ mother saying there were allegations of drug abuse around my kids. When they tested my kids, they tested positive for methamphetamines at very high levels. My kids had eaten it.

CONTINUE READING JAMES’ STORY