

## Getting Clean: A Father's Story

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Brett never imagined being an athlete would lead to drug addiction. "Growing up, I never touched drugs," he says. But over the years, Brett suffered a series of sports injuries which landed him in the hospital and required surgery. He was given pain management medications which were quite potent and addictive if misused. "I always knew I had an addictive personality," he admits. "Coming off of the pain meds was a challenge for me. When my prescriptions would run out from the hospital, I would seek pills from other places."

Brett became a full-blown drug addict, taking any type of pills he could lay his hands on. When pills became difficult to obtain, Brett became desperate for an alternative. "After running out of pain killers following a painful shoulder surgery, an acquaintance suggested trying heroin," he recalls. "Pills were nothing after that. From the first try, I was addicted."

Brett was referred to Family Service of the Piedmont's Substance Abuse Services by Treatment Accountability for Safer Communities (TASC). Brett attends classes and counseling sessions three times a week. He recognizes how Family Service helps him stay accountable for his actions, and strives for a drug-free life. "The care and support of my counselor, Harry Suggs, is undeniable," he says. "I know he has true concern for my progress."

In the midst of all of his turmoil, there has always been one important constant for Brett: his daughter. Although his addiction has had a negative effect on their relationship, they maintain a strong bond and Brett even put her through private school. "My daughter is what drives me to do better," he says. "Taking care of her is what motivates me to change."

"Like anything, you get out of what you put in to substance abuse counseling," Brett concludes. "This program is great for those who are serious about getting clean and want to make changes." Now, Brett is leading a new group at Family Service called "Double Trouble," a 12-step format support group geared towards graduates of any substance abuse program.

"Being able to talk with others with similar experiences offers a great deal of support and accountability," says Brett. "In this role, I hope to be a good role model to a group of individuals experiencing similar struggles as myself."