

I have noticed many positive things since i've been clean. One of the main things is that i am overall happier. Of course i still have my moments when i am feeling down or depressed but, there is a feeling of happiness when you realize you don't need drugs to be fun or be happy. Coming into ASAP i never thought i could feel this way without drugs/alcohol in my life. Another benefit to becoming clean is that my family is happier. Before ASAP there were constant arguments, they always were stressed when i would walk out the door and everything i did was a lie. I have learned parent ALWAYS find out. I don't think any lie i have told has gone without them finding out. This led to a lot less trust and a lot more of me letting them down. Now, as I am almost finished with the program, I have never had a stronger relationship with my parents as I do now. I am a lot more open, probably because I have nothing to hide which is great. Slowly I am earning more and more trust. Things are better than ever with my parents and that makes me so grateful for ASAP.

When i was at my highest time of using there were many things i did to get away with it, or so i thought i was getting away with. I was constantly lying by omission. For example, I would ask to go to a baseball game with some of my friends. I would actually attend the game, but the part i left out is that i would be smoking before and after the game. A phrase i would use often is "I promise i'm not doing anything bad". Sometimes that would be the truth, but a lot of times that was a form of manipulation. These are only some of the things i would do to try to cover my use. I think some signs that would show I am in relapse mode would be when i am feeling extra down or if i am isolating myself from my family. Another one could be if I start to make poor judgments. For instance, if I am coming home past curfew consistently or if i am doing things without asking for permission.

My top three highest-risk situations to lead to a possible relapse would probably be being at a party, parents leaving me alone for a long period of time (all day long or for a weekend etc) and if i hangout with old using friends. Of course some day when i am a significant number of days clean/sober i will attend parties. At this point in my recovery it would be too much to attend a party with drugs and alcohol all around me. I think it is pretty self explanatory, but if i was left home alone for say a weekend there would be major potential use. I have no parent coming to check on me or breathalyzing me for a number of days. Lastly, I think if i was to hangout with old using friends it would bring back a lot of old habits and old memories that would trigger me to use.

One of my favorite sayings i have heard at ASAP is "Where you are is where you are". I was 70 days clean when i relapsed and this quote really made me change my perspective on starting my days back to one. I was really down and felt like i just

wanted to give up. I thought to myself what is the point now? I am back to one day clean and I have lost most of my trust with my parents. When I heard this quote "Where you are is where you are" I thought to myself, well i got myself in this situation, i'm still going to be at ASAP 3 days a week, and this is where i am. By changing my thinking from what is the point to this is where i am and that's not going to change unless i want it to. My second favorite quote is "If things don't change, things don't change". This one is one i use almost everyday. I think to myself every decision i make is up to me. If relapse or decide i can "only take a hit" things aren't changing. Something else i have realized from this quote is relating it to my relationship with my parents. If i don't do my part by being open to spending time with them or staying clean, nothing is going to change with our relationship. Lastly, "Who drives your bus". This one was very eye opening when i try to relate it to my life. At the beginning of my recovery I always blamed other people or other things. I was constantly thinking im sad, im in pain, i'm hurt, my friends are doing it so why can't i? Looking back i realized all of those things where driving my bus. All of those thoughts let the drugs have the power. Now, i can say that I drive my own bus. Every decision i make is something i decided to do. No one forces you to do something. I decided if i want to let the drugs take over my life or if i don't.

Why is it worth it to me to stay clean? I don't want to be controlled by drugs. I don't want my life to be a constant battle with starting and stopping using. I want to be happy without a substance making me feel that way. One of the biggest lessons i have learned from ASAP is drug happiness is only temporary happiness. It never lasts. The "friends" you use with don't stick around when things get hard. They go to the drug and not you. I have been through a lot of hurt with losing people that i thought were my friends. It is not worth all of the pain for temporary happiness. All in all, i want to stay clean for me. Sobriety is selfish (shoutout to amy for reminding me of this many times) It all comes down to you. What do you want to be? I am so grateful for the opportunity to have been in ASAP. I have learned more than i could have ever imagined and have met some of the best people i know. Not only have i gained knowledge, i have been inspired to become an addiction counselor. If i can change others lives and give love and support like i have received from staff i couldn't imagine anything better.