



Discussion Questions for Rachel's Story

RCORP-ETC and Project Hope are producing digital stories that showcase how community members have been affected by opioid use disorder in rural East Tennessee. Digital stories have the power to transform communities, because they help people learn about and understand the experiences of others. To facilitate this, we have created discussion guides to accompany each of our digital stories. Discussing the events and themes of a digital story can improve understanding of the opioid epidemic and its effects, and ultimately reduce the stigma associated with opioid use disorder.

1. Let's start by recapping the video. How has Rachel been affected by the opioid epidemic?
2. What events from Rachel's video struck you the most?
3. Rachel had an advanced degree in social work, owned her home, and appeared to be leading a successful life. What stereotypes can you think of regarding people with substance misuse issues? Did Rachel's story challenge any of your own preconceived notions of what people living with addiction may look like?
4. As Rachel was facing jail for the 5th time, she recounts that she still had no self-awareness that her substance misuse had taken over her life. Describe any thoughts that this statement brought up, if any.
5. What events, resources, and opportunities led to Rachel's sobriety? Do you think her story would be different if she didn't have these resources offered to her? If so, how?
6. Rachel explains that she learned in her recovery that substance use disorder (SUD) is a chronic lifelong disease. Does learning that SUD is a chronic illness requiring long-term care and maintenance challenge your thinking about recovery from substance misuse? If so, how?
7. Approximately two million people currently have opioid use disorder in the United States, and the East Tennessee region has been disproportionately affected by the opioid epidemic. How might you seek to offer support to someone who has been personally affected? What resources might you recommend?
8. How might we extend support to friends, family members, and peers who fear that they risk losing their careers, reputations, etc. by seeking professional help?
9. How, if at all, did your opinion of the opioid epidemic change as you watched the video?

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