

Being the youngest of four older children was very challenging. As a child I have seen a lot of crazy things that my mom has done while being under the influence. Her addiction caused her to allow men to abuse her children and come in and out of their lives. My mom is 37 years old and she has been addicted for 26 years and all 17 years of my life. As a result of her choices she now suffers from cervical cancer, neuropathy, lung cancer, epilepsy, and diabetes.

When my mom entered high school she was probably not aware of the damaging effects of drugs and alcohol. I truly believe that high school students turn to drugs to cure depression, pain and is a way to run away from their problems. Most high school students use drugs and alcohol as a coping mechanism, soon to become a strong addiction. Peer pressure has a lot to do with why teens use drugs and alcohol. They might be afraid to lose their friends, afraid of being talked about and practically lied to.

I also believe that parents who do drugs and drink alcohol somehow give their children the impression that it is okay to drink alcohol and do drugs. Children are like mirrors; we do everything we see our parents do, thinking that it is okay. A child will only do what a parent allows them to do. An addiction is a compulsive physiological need for a habit-forming drug. I believe the most challenging factors of an addiction would be the awareness of the addiction. Most addicts resent the fact that they have a sickness which causes them to show deviant behavior. Most addicts have a hard time believing that what they are doing is unhealthy, selfish and ruins any sort of relationship that they have ever had.

Resisting drugs and alcohol is very hard. What makes it even harder is your peers and parents. Every day you see a friend, family member or a stranger doing drugs and sometimes it can make you curious or willing to give in to trying the drug. One of the best ways to resist drugs and alcohol is to pick and choose your friends wisely. In other words, learn how to say no to drugs no matter who asks you, you always say no. Good strategies to use to resist the use of drugs and alcohol would have to be: know how to say no, get involved in after school activities and keep yourself busy with positive activities such as playing sports or finding a hobby of some sort that your interested in. Also educate yourself on the effects of drugs and alcohol, signs

of abuse and also the statistics of drug abuse .

One of my biggest influences would have to be my mom. Just seeing her abuse drugs and alcohol made me hate any type of drug. I have seen my mother at her worst. I have had to take care of my mom, my brothers and myself. I have had to steal clothes and food for my families well-being. I had to step up and take the roll of mom being the youngest of my sibling, cooking, cleaning and stealing just so that we could get by. There were times when my mom couldn't pay the rent and just in the snap of a finger we were homeless, jumping from home to home trying to find a safe and dry place to lay our heads.

The rough times came when my mom married a drug dealer. My brothers and I would sit in the house hungry and wanting to go out and steal food just to fill our stomachs. I remember when I was riding in the car with my step father and he told me to get into the front seat. I was to weak too pull the door closed, but he sped off causing me to fly out of the car. Bleeding, busted lips and sore body, he never realized that I was no longer in the car, until my brother told him that I fell out of the car. My mom never knew what happened on that day until about a year later.

There was another incident where I could have lost my life. This happened when I was younger and I was playing with my dog and I found a gun inside of the sofa so I put the gun to my head and tried to pull the trigger. My mom stopped arguing just in time to snatch the gun from my hands. I could have died that day, ironically my life was saved by an addict. A year later my mom lost control of herself and lost custody of us; we were put into foster care. I was separated from my family I hated it. They starved me and burned out all of my hair. My second foster home teased me and put all of my business out to everybody they came across. My third foster home was my grand fathers place and he abused me because he was an unhappy alcoholic. I suffered from severe depression and stress. About a year later my moms sister took me in and she was no better than any of the other foster homes I had been in. my mom was focusing on herself and her addiction, and I never saw my father after the age of nine. Growing up without a true mom or a dad was hard but the difference between me and others that have experienced what I went through is that I am a survivor. What happened in my past no longer effects me. My determination in life strengthens me with or without support. I am a survivor and drug free is the best way to be.